

**Sentimentality and Digital Storytelling:
Towards a Post-Conflict Pedagogy
in Pre-Service Teacher Education
in South Africa**

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my students, who have shown infinite generosity in sharing their stories with me in digital storytelling workshops and beyond. In particular, I dedicate this work to Noni and Lauren, the two students who have allowed me to use their stories and who have continued to support my study over many years. Their courage and passion for working towards a more socially just South Africa has given me hope: hope that this work is not futile but that it is necessary to creating a better world for my children. Ultimately, however, this work would not exist without the story I share with the man beside me. Without him and my collision with his world, I would have never had to try to make sense of race, class and privilege, would have never had to engage with any of the uncomfortable issues I am addressing in this study. I thank you for this.

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Declaration

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Abstract

This study is set against the background of a continued lack of social engagement across difference in South African classrooms. It set out to explore the potential of a specific pedagogical intervention – digital storytelling – as a post-conflict pedagogy in a diverse pre-service teacher education classroom. Personal storytelling has long been used to unearth lived experiences of differently positioned students in the classroom. More recently, the use of digital technologies has made it easier to transform these personal stories into publishable, screenable and sharable digital resources. In general, digital storytelling is lauded in the literature for its potential to facilitate an understanding across difference, allowing empathy and compassion for the ‘Other’. In this study, I question this potentially naive take on digital storytelling in the context of post-conflict pedagogies. I was interested in the emotions emerging – particularly in what I termed a potential sentimentality – in both the digital storytelling process and product. I looked at sentimentality in a specific way: as the tension between the centrality of emotions to establish an affective engagement between a storyteller and the audience, and digital stories’ exaggerated pull on these emotions. This is seen, for example, in the difficulty that we have when telling stories in stepping out of normative, sentimental discourses to trouble the way we perform gender, race, class and sexuality, all of which are found in the actual stories we tell and the images we use. It is also found in the audience response to digital storytelling.

Adopting a performative narrative inquiry research methodology, framed by theorists such as Butler, Ahmed, and Young, all three feminist authors interested in the politics of difference, working at the intersection of queer, cultural, critical race and political theory, I adopted three different analytical approaches to a narrative inquiry of emotions. I used these approaches to analyse stories told in a five-day digital storytelling train-the-trainer workshop with nine pre-service teacher-education students.

Major findings of this study are:

In everyday life stories, students positioned themselves along racial identities, constructing narratives of group belonging based primarily on their racialized identities. However, in some students’ stories – particularly those that offer a more complex view of privilege, acknowledging the intersectionality of class, gender, age, sexuality and race – these conversations are broken up in interesting ways, creating connections between students beyond a racial divide.

Looking at the digital story as a multimodal text with its complex orchestration of meaning-making through its different modes, it became clear to me that conveying authorial intent is difficult and that the message of a digital story can be compromised in various ways. The two storytellers I looked at in more detail drew from different semiotic histories and had access to different semiotic resources, such as different levels of critical media literacy, with this compromising their authorial intent to tell counterstories.

Finally, the genre storytellers chose, the context into which their stories were told, along with their positioning within this context in terms of their privilege, affected the extent to which they could make themselves vulnerable. This consequently shaped the audience response, which was characterised by passive empathy, a sentimental attempt to connect to what makes us the same', rather than recognising systemic and structural injustices that characterise our engagements across difference.

While literature argues that it is exactly the focus on emotions – the sharing of our individual pain and the authenticity found in the personal nature of the stories – that makes digital storytelling so successful, it is not enough in the context of this study, where I am trying to use digital storytelling as a post-conflict pedagogy in order to engage students in a discussion around power and privilege within historically situated power relationships. The sentimentality of the digital storytelling process – the focus on the personal, the vulnerability and the affective connection established – leads to an interest in the Other', which is necessary for an engagement across difference. When we see one another as humans after establishing this affective connection, we might be invested enough to continue our work of critical self-transformation.

However, for a critical digital storytelling process that can become a post-conflict pedagogy, I recommend two steps that go *beyond* the digital storytelling workshop. Firstly, a multimodal testimonial reading of digital stories after the workshop allows us to understand our own biases and preconceived ideas, and how our stories are embedded in socio-cultural and historical contexts - the masternarratives we draw from. This includes a deeper engagement with the emotions emerging in this process, including moving beyond defensiveness, resistance and other sentimental reactions encountered in these conversations. In particular, through zooming in and reflecting on moments of pedagogic affect, the entanglement of thinking, feeling and doing can become evident, and can serve as a teachable moment' for students. Secondly, I suggest a focus on an emerging collective narrative to move towards witnessing, an empathy that goes beyond the feeling-for or feeling-with an individual towards an understanding of the social and political structures of our society. So rather than devaluing sentimental reactions by students – be it defensiveness, denial or desensitization

– I recommend seeing them as openings into necessary conversations about our own and others' emotional socialisation.

Keywords: digital storytelling, digital stories, post-conflict pedagogies, emotions, affect, sentimentality, multimodality, critical emotional reflexivity, pedagogy of discomfort, mutual vulnerability, higher education, South Africa

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Abbreviations

CDS: Center for Digital Storytelling

CH: Chapter

CPUT: Cape Peninsula University of Technology

CRT: critical race theory

DST: digital storytelling

HE: higher education

ISP: Intermediate and Senior Phase

LGBTI: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex

NRF: National Research Fund

PLA: participatory learning and action techniques

SRC: student representative council

UCT: University of Cape Town

Definitions

Active empathy / witnessing: Coined by Boler (1999), active empathy allows the reader of traumatic stories to challenge his or her assumptions and worldviews (p. 165), emphasizing a collective rather than individual educational responsibility. Boler argues that only this form of “bearing witness” (p. 164) can lead to “anything close to justice, and to any shift in existing power relations” (p. 156). In similar fashion, Segal (2007) defines social empathy as empathy that goes beyond the feeling-for or feeling-with an individual and moves towards understanding the social and political structures of our society.

Affective economies: Ahmed (2004) uses the term affective economy to describe how emotions bind subjects together into collectivities and to theorize what the sociality of emotions and affects means in terms of historical changes and power configuration.

Affect/emotions: There is great diversity in how authors define emotions and affect. While some differentiate between emotions and affect, seeing affect as biological and emotions as learnt, as social expression of affect (Probyn, 2005), in this study I follow scholars who use affect in a more generic sense (such as Cvetkovich, 2012), as an energy connecting people (see also affective engagement below), rather than in the more specific Deleuzian sense. Affect, then, can be seen as a category that encompasses affect, emotion, and feeling, and “includes impulses, desires, and feelings that get historically constructed in a range of ways” (Cvetkovich, 2012, p. 4). Affects are always embedded in acts and practices: they are not psychological or mental processes, but they constitute an integral part of the practical activities with which bodies relate to other subjects and objects (Reckwitz, 2012). However, affect also recognises the entanglement of emotions and cognition – or the impossibility of differentiating knowing and feeling – as a “body’s capacity to affect and be affected” (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010, p. 2).

Affective engagement: I use affective engagement to describe the energy that connects bodies through emotions attached to certain bodies and not others.

Affective knowledge: is a term created by Shotwell (2011), referring to knowledge that is not immediately accessible to us, but that impacts on how we understand our engagements with our surroundings in ways that both block and support such understanding.

Asymmetrical reciprocity: assumes that in an encounter of difference, there cannot be symmetrical reciprocity, based on different personal experiences and histories and the fact that we are socially differently positioned in life (Young, 1997).

Critical storytelling / counterstorytelling: are terms originally coined by critical race theorists referring to stories from marginalised groups, usually silenced by dominant discourses or masternarratives (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). However, in this thesis I use counterstorytelling in a slightly different way. All students – both those identifying with privilege and those identifying with disadvantage – need to be encouraged to critically reflect on their stories within a pedagogy of discomfort framework in order to re-story their stories: reflect on the stories they tell and how these are impacted by masternarratives or hegemonic/dominant discourses (Boler & Zembylas, 2003).

Difficult dialogues: Young (2003) describes difficult dialogues as conversations in the classroom in which differences in perspectives are challenged or judged to be offensive. This is often accompanied by participants or observers experiencing intense emotions.

Difficult knowledge: Britzman defines difficult knowledge as the encounter with traumatic experiences and the coming to terms –with various kinds of trauma, both individual and collective” in the classroom (1998, 2000). Zembylas (2014) explains this concept of difficult knowledge further as signifying both representations of social and historical traumas in curriculum and the learner’s encounters with them in pedagogy.

Digital story: A digital story as defined in my study is a personal narrative that documents a wide range of culturally and historically embedded lived experiences combining voice, sound and images into a short video, developed by non-professionals with non-professional tools within the context of a digital storytelling workshop (Lambert, 2010; Reed & Hill, 2012).

Dominant discourses / masternarratives / hegemonic discourses/ stock stories: Within critical race theory, these three terms all mean similar things, namely, the narratives we are exposed to from an early age through media, family, communities and schooling; and which define how we see the world. Stock stories, also called masternarratives or majoritarian stories, –carry layers of assumptions that persons in positions of racialized privilege bring with them to discussions of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordinations” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 28). These stories are generated from a legacy of racial privilege in which stories containing racial privilege seem natural.

Hegemony: Critical pedagogue McLaren (2009) defines hegemony, a concept originally coined by Italian philosopher Gramsci, as the maintenance of domination not by the sheer exercise of force but primarily through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures produced in specific sites such as the church, the state, the school, the mass media, the political system, and the family.

Narratives: I adopted for this study the definition for narratives proposed by Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) which limits narratives to events that are perceived as important, selected, organized, connected and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience.

„Other“: I use Other‘ (in capital letters and inverted commas) to foreground the socially and discursively constructed nature of the other: a distant other‘ who in this case not only doesn’t look like me but to whom I am always in some ways differently positioned in relation to power and privilege. This Other‘ is always positioned as either more or less privileged than I am, and our relationship is always based on an unequal power distribution.

Pity: Pity is defined in this study as unreflexive, sentimental reaction to somebody’s story of trauma, without troubling power differentials and without recognition of one’s own role and responsibility in somebody else’s trauma. Also referred to as false, blind or passive empathy.

Post-conflict societies/pedagogies: Post-conflict societies are societies such as South Africa, Ireland, Israel and Cyprus, which are simultaneously dealing with past trauma and the effects of this past trauma on students of today. Post-conflict pedagogies try to engage with this trauma in the classroom.

Race: I define race by drawing from critical race theory (CRT) (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Solorzano, 1997), which challenges the dominant discourses on race and racism originally within the context of law but more importantly also in the field of education. Race is seen as a socially constructed category, created to differentiate racial groups and establishing power and privilege (Solorzano, 1997). Although CRT would foreground race and see it is endemic and permanent, it acknowledges the intersectionality with other forms of oppression such as gender and class discrimination. CRT focuses on troubling masternarratives, such as the use of cultural deficit models to explain educational inequality. Masternarratives they aim to disrupt are for example discourses around objectivity, meritocracy, colourblindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity. While this movement started in the US, it is equally applicable to the South African context. The South African Department of Education racial categorization distinguishes between African, Coloured, Indian and White students. This is highly contested, but still widely used (Department of Education 1997). However, I prefer the term Black instead of African, as this is the one that my students commonly use. In South Africa, the term Coloured‘ does not have the same connotations as it has in the US or in the UK. The term Coloured‘ in South Africa in general refers to any person of mixed-race‘. In and around Cape Town, where this study is set, Coloured stands for Cape Coloured‘ and is used for descendants of the many slaves that were brought in from the Dutch East Indies.

Sentimentality: In general, the term sentimentality has two connotations, as illustrated by the *Oxford online dictionary*¹, which defines “sentimental” as –1. prompted by feelings of tenderness, sadness or nostalgia” and –2. arousing these feelings in an exaggerated or self-indulgent way”. This illustrates the tension digital storytelling needs to negotiate: affirming the centrality of emotions to establish affective connection – particularly important in an engagement across difference in post-conflict contexts such as South African classrooms – and the tendency to manipulate the audience with an exaggerated pull on emotions (Lambert, 2010).

I have used the term sentimentality in different ways throughout this study, foregrounding different aspects of the digital storytelling process:

1. In the digital story as *product* of the workshop, i.e. in the *content* of the stories and the *narrow genre* of digital storytelling, characterised by universality of themes and a focus on accessibility and closure (Poletti, 2011);
2. In the way storytellers use *multimodal resources* – such as images, narration and background sound – to tell their story and establish affective connection which can allow us to recognise our embeddedness in dominant discourses (Kellner & Share, 2007b); and
3. In the way stories are told and received, including audience responses of guilt, defensiveness, resentment and desensitization to trauma stories (Zembylas, 2011).

Social justice education: Social justice education aims at offering opportunities for transformation for all youth, both privileged and underprivileged, by allowing not only *all* youth to acquire knowledge, but also to question and critique this knowledge for its hegemonic nature (Moje, 2007).

Socially just pedagogies: Socially just pedagogies are pedagogies that allow all learners to have equitable opportunities to learn. This includes more than access to resources, but raises questions, for example, about the acquisition of necessary academic and digital literacies for underprivileged youth.

Storytelling: I see storytelling as co-constructed social practice, embedded in social contexts, impacted on by storytellers’ histories, with certain capacities to act upon/affect storytellers and their audience and maybe most importantly with a clear objective to trouble norms.

¹ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/sentimental>

Trauma stories: in this study, I refer to stories concerning gender-based violence, domestic abuse, drugs, gangsterism, poverty, discrimination and broken families as trauma stories, linked to what Frankish (2009, p. 89) calls the “systemic traumas of [South African] contemporary life”.

Troubled knowledge: Troubled knowledge, a term coined by Jansen is “knowledge in the blood [that] is habitual, a knowledge that has long been routinized in how the second generation see the world and themselves, and how they understand others” (2009, p. 171).

Preface: An outsider's perspective on how to make sense of the elephant(s) in the room

*"We ask for revelations from others, but we reveal little or nothing of ourselves;
we make others vulnerable, but we ourselves remain invulnerable."
Ruth Behar*

Introduction

In this piece I tell my own research story in order to address one of the main challenges that I encountered in my PhD studies as an outsider to South Africa: how to make sense of complex social and historical phenomena, such as apartheid, and the impact this unjust system still has on South African society today and on South African learners in particular.

My PhD explores the potential of personal storytelling to enable students to engage *differently* across difference. It is set in a racially integrated but socially segregated South African HE classroom. Being of Austrian descent, I understand and am inscribed with intergenerational trauma: using Jansen's (2009) expression, it is "knowledge in my blood". The shame and guilt of being associated with a country or a race that enacted genocide, such as the Holocaust or apartheid, is part of my being. However, I also grew up within a Western, middle-class and politically rather unconscious context. Negotiating notions of race and privilege as a political project – one that would dismantle white supremacy and oppression in the classroom – was an uncharted terrain when I started my PhD journey.

This piece thus offers a narrative of my journey, including the challenges I encountered and some of the strategies I employed to respond to these challenges. This is an unfinished story. Not only am I still writing up my PhD, but I also believe as a poststructural feminist thinker that my own understanding of difference is constantly evolving, and my own subjectivity changing and shifting. I believe that I am being constituted by the social-cultural and political context in which I am embedded, the literature I am reading, the people I encounter, talk and listen to. As Butler (2004a, p. 24) notes, "one is undone, in the face of the other, by the touch, by the scent, by the feel, by the prospect of the touch, by the memory of the feel. We are touched by stories we tell." However, I also believe that I have the opportunity to constitute and to affect my world through my practices, and – drawing again on Butler (1999) – specifically through *troubling my world from within*.

Encountering and inhabiting whiteness and privilege

My family and I arrived in Cape Town in 2010. I had for many years travelled around Africa, including four years spent at the University of Botswana. This is also where I met my husband, who was born in Nairobi in Kenya. We have two mixed-raced children. Before

getting married, our long conversations were not about ourselves: somehow that didn't seem important, as in general we encountered openness, support and curiosity when we engaged with others. What we spoke more about was having and raising mixed-raced children: about challenges they might encounter when growing up, their complex identities and their lack of a place called home. I remember us feeling quite smug in our belief that it would be up to *us* to create a home for them. We believed that their rich cultural heritage would ultimately be an advantage to them, making them global citizens in the world.

In 2011, one year after arriving in South Africa, I created a digital story, which captures my understanding of difference at that time. You can find the digital story here: <https://vimeo.com/29823415> . The script to this movie can be found in Appendix 1. I cringe when I show this story. With hindsight, it sounds naïve and sentimental. Nowhere do I reflect on my own privilege: my opportunity to leave home and travel around the world or on what it means to be white in today's world. I knew that I would always be able to move back if things turned difficult. This is a story of a coming to terms with my own individual difference, ignoring any global political dimension.

This rose-coloured view of difference quickly changed after my arrival in South Africa. I realised that race – in my case, being white – mattered in a way that I had never experienced before. I signed the lease for a flat within a month of arrival; I got my bank card within a week; I suddenly had a voice in departmental meetings; I was listened to although I was often the youngest and a woman, a combination that in other contexts had presented a struggle for me to be acknowledged or recognised. I never got stopped by the police; I was never asked for my staff card when entering the library; I never experienced problems booking a table in restaurants ... and the list goes on. I only noticed these things because others, who had a different skin colour, did not share these experiences. My husband started complaining that people overlooked him when they greeted me. He pointed out how people locked their car doors when he passed by. He showed me how women suddenly held their bags closer in a queue at the supermarket when he stood behind them. I was shocked and initially unconvinced. I told him not to be paranoid, implying that he had a chip on his shoulder. That is how blind I was to my own privilege.

But the issue of white privilege started to intrigue me. In our digital storytelling project with final-year education students, I was hit by the depth of trauma and of pain in the stories of black and coloured students – the daily violence they were exposed to – and the lack of knowledge about these stories within the white student body, as well as their lack of engagement across difference. I was similarly fascinated by the surprise of black students when listening to some of the white students' stories of pain and struggle, this showing me

that it made them realise that white people could have problems, too. I was mesmerised by the number of misconceptions students had about the Other. I kept wondering, “Do these students never engage with each other? Never listen to each other’s stories?” Another thing I noticed was students’ seating arrangements: while the class consisted of a diverse range of students, each group of students sat with peers of their own skin colour. When I asked them about the reasons for this lack of an engagement across difference, I was met with uncomfortable silence.

How can I make sense of a phenomenon I did not grow up with?

I became more and more engaged in my students’ stories, so much so that I decided to make this the focus of my PhD research. The question I posed was, “Does personal storytelling allow students to engage *differently* across difference?” But how could I make sense of this as an outsider, as somebody who had not grown up in South Africa, gone to a South African school or directly experienced what it means to be treated differently because of your skin colour from the day you were born?

I am an academic: so as a first step, I started reading. I read about South Africa’s history, on the legacy of apartheid in today’s South Africa and, in particular, on its impact on education and on how learners engage (or not) with each other. I found concepts, that spoke to me, such as the idea of *troubled knowledge* (Jansen, 2009): the indirect knowledge which is passed on from generation to generation, knowledge that is not conscious, but that defines how we see and engage with others. In my social and professional life, I slowly began to see the socially constructed nature of race, class and gender, as well as their intersectionalities and the structural inequalities inscribed into the fabric of South African society. I understood the underlying structural violence – a product of colonial legacies of dispossession, dislocation and oppression – driving my students’ stories.

Because of the strong emotions that my digital storytelling project seemed to elicit from students, I also began to engage with the role of emotions in the classroom, in particular in difficult dialogues. I engaged with the power of emotions to help us understand our own and others’ biases, through what Zembylas would call critical emotional reflexivity’ (2011), trying to understand the historical nature and constructedness of the emotions we encounter. I also discovered concepts such as mutual vulnerability’ (Keet, Zinn, & Porteus, 2009), a key humanizing concept in post-conflict societies which assumes that we are all wounded in different ways and to different extents by the inhumane structure of apartheid.

I kept reading and enjoying what I discovered, but I often also wondered how this could be translated into practice. Literature on emotions and the affective turn were particularly troubling. What did Clare Hemmings (2012) mean when she said that in order to know

differently we have to feel differently? How could one bring out and engage with emotions in the classroom, in particular the difficult, explosive emotions that are likely to accompany conversations around race and privilege in South Africa? How would critical emotional reflexivity work in practice? How could one reflect on one's emotions to understand the social constructedness and political nature of affect? How could one marry beautifully crafted, idealistic, visionary theoretical constructs with the messiness of a South African classroom, characterised by silence and defensiveness when notions of race and privilege popped up?

Shifting my understanding of difference through dialogue

I felt I needed a sounding board, somebody with whom I could thrash out ideas while I engaged with and challenged this literature. A conversation was missing, or at least was not accessible to me: a conversation around race and engagement across difference. Whenever I tried to engage my students, colleagues and supervisors in conversations around race, discomfort and silence prevailed. At times, I questioned myself. Was my obsession with race outdated, unimportant in a South Africa portrayed in the media and policy as the rainbow nation? I decided to look for this sounding board outside academia. I needed a place where I could engage with issues around race and privilege in a different way: less theoretical and academic; and where I could test theoretical constructs I was reading about in order to see whether they would be applicable in real life or not. Ultimately, I felt research must be of benefit to the lived experience of research participants within the quest for social justice in education.

Eventually a few other women and I decided to start a group called 'The Dialogue Thing'. This group was founded in the spirit of hooks's feminist consciousness-raising groups (2000c, p. 8). Women of all colours and walks of life met on a monthly basis to engage in conversation and ask uncomfortable questions about what it meant to be human in today's South Africa. We embraced hooks's principles for these groups: meeting at somebody's house, honouring everybody's voice, creating an alternative space focusing on the lived experience of participants. We thus clearly distinguished these encounters from the theoretical, guarded, disembodied and – unfortunately – often predominantly white debates on race and reconciliation in South Africa found in academia. We framed these dialogues with the intent of creating an *uncomfortable safe space*, a term borrowed from Freeth (2012, p. 3) who facilitates difficult dialogues in the South African setting:

– In other words, uncomfortable safe spaces have an edge. We are working at the edges of our comfort zones, at the edges of change, and at the edges of our

relationships with one another. And in the South African context, there are edges between healing the past and the restoration of hope for the future.”

In our mission statement, we foregrounded the importance of discomfort and our willingness to open ourselves up and learn. And for a while, we had fantastic conversations and felt really good about ourselves. We spoke about our own biases, stereotypes and assumptions. We thrashed out notions of white privilege, double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), internal oppression and the colonized mind (Fanon, 1963). We agreed that it was time to decentre whiteness. Consequently, our role as white group members was to listen and to foreground the black experience in the group. Suddenly theoretical concepts I had read about started to come alive. We shared, cried, and learnt from and with one another. We had fun and became friends. We got comfortable and quite proud of what we saw as provocative and innovative engagement across difference. From these sessions, I acquired and practised a vocabulary and strategies to talk to my students, to respond to their questions and to call them out on their biases. Some things were more difficult to address than others. We skirted around the issue of class, for example: our group being mostly middle-class, educated women, we shied away from the question of how relevant our conversations were to the majority of South Africans.

My position in this group was initially rather comfortable. Yes, I was white, but I was not South African white, so in some ways I did not carry the guilt of apartheid with me. Most importantly, I was married to a very black man and had mixed raced children, so I couldn't really be racist, could I?

Negotiating tensions between theory and lived experience

But slowly things changed. Conversations became deeper and more difficult, and in some ways divisive. We were not one group anymore, but two groups, defined by our skin colour. I perceived black group members as more and more demanding, and whites being pushed into defensiveness. In particular, the notion of *mutual vulnerability* and pain, a central element of my own theoretical framework, became a bone of contention in the group. While our black group members recognised white pain, they also in some ways invalidated this pain in relation to their own, and threw the term *white fragility* into our faces, warning us that listening to white pain could potentially re-traumatise black group members. White fragility is a term promoted by Robin DiAngelo (2011), an American anti-racist educator, which has been increasingly used in recent years to refer to white defensiveness in conversations around race. Our debates coincided with the #RhodesMustFall movement, calling for the removal of the Rhodes statue at the University of Cape Town. Many of our black dialogue members actively joined this movement, which was clearly defined as a black movement.

White allies were called upon to show silent support, emphasising the centrality of black voices and black pain (The Rhodes Must Fall Movement, 2015). Mutual vulnerability was the last thing on their mind. These conversations left me reeling, questioning all that I had believed in, read and used as central tenets for my PhD study. If I didn't believe in reconciliation and the possibility for white and black students to find a shared space and shared vulnerability which would allow them to imagine and fight for a better future, what did I believe in? Where did this leave me, my students and my study?

Making myself vulnerable

Over these months I started the painful process of realising my own biases, as well as my comfort in hiding behind my black husband, my mixed race children and my mostly black friends and colleagues, and my own unwillingness to step out of these comfort zones. I realised the hurt I felt when labelled as white, the desire I had to belong and – at least in this group – what I interpreted as disinterest from others to engage with somebody like me. I learnt that black women's reactions to me were not necessarily geared to me as an individual: I could trigger reactions based on their collective experience of everyday racism. I had to validate and recognise these feelings. I saw that my own hurt at feeling misrecognised in my pain – this feeling of unjust treatment – was a necessary emotion and a step to understanding the black experience of being consistently silenced, overlooked, labelled and dehumanised.

Appendix 1 also features a script to a digital story I wrote last year in a workshop on institutional transformation. This story illustrates my shift in understanding difference during the course of my PhD journey. Listening was not enough anymore. What my black group members wanted was for me to open up, make myself vulnerable and share my humanity and my own pain (not necessarily white pain) with them. I realised that I had to do my own work as well. I couldn't rely on my group participants or my students to do the work for me. The following quote by white American educator and activist Minnie Bruce Pratt struck a chord for me.

–was using Black people to weep for me, to express my sorrow at my responsibility, and that of my people, for their oppression: and I was mourning because I felt they had something I didn't, a closeness, a hope that I and my folks had lost because we tried to shut other people out of our hearts and lives. Finally I understood that I could feel sorrow...yet not confuse their sorrow with mine, or use their resistance for mine.... I could hear their songs like a trumpet to me: a startling...a challenge: but not take them as a replacement for my own work." (Pratt, 1988, p.41 cited in Boler, 1999, p. 164)

Over time, I started slowly to understand what *critical emotional reflexivity* could mean in practical terms: the painful process of coming to terms with my own whiteness and all the emotions attached to it, whether in the group, alone or in conversation with others. It was hard, and is still hard. My defensiveness shows up over and over again. Buhle Zuma (2015), a lecturer in the Psychology Department at UCT, made a strong statement in a recent talk about violence in the past, the present and the future of South Africa: *whiteness is not able to commit suicide*. I think what he meant by this is that whiteness is constructed as an absolute being or as a closed system. There is no room for doubt or change, and suffering and injustice is externalised and happens outside this system. How can we be something else other than what we constructed ourselves to be? Ahmed (2004) explains this defensiveness as symptom of affective investments in social norms, accumulated over a lifetime, that make it so hard to shift our world views.

Over time, the monthly meetings I attended became a unique and indispensable space to “theorize from the flesh” (Benmayor, 2008, p. 189) some of the concepts I was encountering in my studies, the literature I was engaging with and the data I collected. This experiential approach – moving from knowing to feeling and understanding – helped me gain confidence to *write for and write back* to existing literature and theories (Oppermann, 2008), critically evaluating the concepts and standpoints I encountered. I was reminded every month how critical an engagement with race and privilege still is in this supposedly transformed rainbow nation. This process also helped me understand and develop empathy for my students’ defensive reactions when we talked about race, and I learnt tools and processes to help them move beyond their defensiveness. I realised what a slow process the coming to terms with our own racism is. This structure and system forms us from early on, and we can only fight and counteract it when feeling, seeing and knowing it. I started to understand the role of emotions in this process: the recursive process of feeling and knowing, and knowing and feeling.

Concluding thoughts

I came into South Africa’s complex space as an outsider, and decided to embark on difficult research about how to negotiate conversations around race and privilege in a classroom. The most important strategy that I employed was to engage with as many avenues as possible to understand and make sense of this space. Reading both theory and fiction, is a good start. However, while the PhD process can often feel quite lonely, being spent reading in an office or at home, in my case, the biggest leanings were won out there when I brought theory into conversation with lived experience. It helped me challenge both common sense observations and theory when – as Britzman (2002) argues – it antagonised lived experience.

I also realised that I had to challenge my own beliefs and assumptions continuously. I learnt to embrace the turmoil of emotions that accompanied my own paradigm shifts, especially the helplessness and defensiveness I felt when my worldview was under attack. I had to learn to make myself vulnerable in my writing and with my students, the community and the outside world. I had to find different ways of writing and journaling to trace my own journey of transformation. I realised that my interpretation of data and my reading of my own and my participants' stories will always be impacted by Eurocentric thought and structures (Chaudry, 2009). Reflecting on and dismantling my own biases, my own – very likely colonizing - frames of thought, might be the most important thing I did in this type of research. Burcu Simsek's words from her own thesis resonate strongly with my own experiences in this context:

–As a researcher and DST facilitator, I had to make hard decisions about that process, and sometimes needed to be critical of my own researcher position. In other words, in addition to experimenting with the facilitation of DST workshops in Turkey, I had to question my own position as a feminist mother, a researcher, a DST facilitator and a woman in the context of the workshops as well as in my personal life.” (2012b, p. 13)

This study made me question and challenge myself in all parts of my life: as mother, wife, student, academic and researcher. At the end of the day, research is always Me-search'. In particular, when one is exploring difficult topics such as race and privilege in social justice education, know thyself' is an essential step. However, self-reflection can become sentimental navel-gazing. To avoid this, we need collective witnessing' (Boler, 1999): to put ourselves out there to be challenged, critiqued and ultimately transformed in relationship with others.

CH 1: Introduction

*“It’s not our differences that divide us.
It is our inability to recognize, accept and celebrate those differences.”
Audre Lorde*

1.1 The unfinished business of race and reconciliation

Twenty years after the demise of apartheid, South Africa is still a highly unequal and segregated society. Cape Town’s neighbourhoods remain spatially and socially segregated by race and income distribution. There are stark differences between privileged white spaces, characterised by natural beauty, affluence and Western standards, and the realities on the ground for a majority of the inhabitants of the city, who live under extreme conditions, with little to no access to water, sanitation and formal housing.

The 2012 *South African reconciliation barometer survey* (Lefko-Everett, 2012) showed that youth’s primary association is language, followed by ethnicity and race. Nearly half of young South Africans rarely or never speak to someone of another race. When it comes to socialising in their own homes, these numbers drop even more, with only about a quarter of South African youth socialising across racial lines. Socio-economic background is a key determinant of social interaction across racial lines: income is perceived as the strongest divider in this country today.

Inequality and segregation are a breeding ground for both subtle and overt racism. Racist incidents in and around Cape Town regularly make headlines. Whether being denied access to restaurants or night clubs (Molefe, 2012; Ranchod, 2015), being beaten with a sjambok or mistaken for a sex worker (Davis, 2015), being mobbed at work or feeling alienated on a university campus (Masondo, 2015), the black experience in Cape Town is represented as one of open and subtle oppression. In November 2014 alone, prosecutor Nathan Johnson listed ten racist incidents going through the legal system to the Wynberg Magistrates’ Court (Davis, 2015). Hate wars are being waged over social media (-Zille, Dana argue on Twitter over racist Cape Town,” 2011); and any major events, from natural disasters to literary festivals in Franschhoek, are discussed through a racial lens (Brown, 2015).

1.2 Challenging a continued lack of social engagement across difference

While racism affects everyone across all spaces of life, this study is particularly interested in how race plays out in higher education (HE). Since 1994, South African HE has undergone

major transformations, driven by the twin imperatives of racial transformation and pressures for efficiency (Department of Education, 1997, 2001a). However, research into the progress of transformation, such as the 2008 Ministerial Committee into Transformation and Social Cohesion in Higher Education (Soudien *et al.*, 2008), draws a dire picture of the state of South African HE, confirming the pervasiveness of race and racism in educators and students' lives. The 2015 protests at the University of Cape Town around the removal of the Rhodes statue – experienced as a symbol of the colonial oppression, the continued legacy of apartheid and lack of transformation – are a powerful reminder of the discontent and alienation black students and staff feel at many institutions of higher learning in South Africa (Hodes, 2015).

In the literature, one of the reasons given for the continuation of open and subtle racism in the classroom is learners' lack of social engagement across difference, and the resulting deep-seated, unquestioned assumptions and beliefs that we have about the Other² (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Bozalek, 2011; Jansen, 2009). Even in racially integrated classrooms, students tend to identify strongly with their racial background and actively construct identities in opposition to each other (Bozalek, 2011; Pattman, 2010; Rohleder, Swartz, Bozalek, Carolissen, & Leibowitz, 2008; Swartz *et al.*, 2009). It is important to say that, while race tends to bubble to the top in South African conversations and is often used as a primary group identifier, it is deeply entangled with other forms of oppression such as class, religion, gender, sexuality or age, as shown in the aforementioned *South African reconciliation barometer survey* (Lefko-Everett, 2012).

Authors such as Jansen (2009) or Zembylas (2012a) define South Africa as a post-conflict society. Post-conflict societies have to respond simultaneously to the consequences of current conflicts and to the factors which gave rise to these conflicts in the past (Pattman, 2010). They argue that what keeps students from engaging across difference is indirect knowledge (Jansen, 2009, p. 52), the powerful ideas and constructs about the past, present, and future (*ibid.*, p. 260), passed on from generation to generation. This indirect knowledge unconsciously impacts on our choice and negotiations of social engagements. It is also troubled, as it is steeped in discourses of power and privilege and draws out the worst racial stereotypes, prejudices and aggressions among students (Jansen, 2004, p. 121). It is knowledge that makes it possible for five white students to racially insult and assault a black woman outside a Capetonian night club, for a raging white swimming coach to attack a black woman because he assumed she was a prostitute, for another student to urinate on the head of a black taxi driver from the balcony of night club in Cape Town's

² I use Other in capital letters and inverted comma, to foreground the socially and discursively constructed

Southern Suburbs, and for a dentist to beat a Malawian gardener with a sjambok, a symbol of apartheid oppression (Thamm, 2014). Thamm (2014, n.p.) asks important questions in this context:

–The fact that some white born free children might find themselves acting out the unresolved anger and rage of their parents is a matter worth exploring. What is it their parents are telling them about the past? How do they explain their own lives, their own histories?”

This indirect knowledge is also a deeply defensive knowledge that can evoke strong emotions in both white and black students, such as guilt, defensiveness and anger, further complicating or preventing transformatory or reconciliatory engagement across difference.

Against this background, there is a dire need to develop pedagogical interventions that would allow a recognition and disruption of this troubled knowledge, starting an honest and candid engagement with the legacies of apartheid beyond Nelson Mandela’s attempt at nation building and rainbow nation discourse addressing issues of privilege and systemic oppression.

1.3 Digital storytelling, emotions and an engagement across difference

How can one create spaces that could facilitate difficult conversations, such an engagement across difference: spaces that would *trouble* this troubled knowledge? What would such an engagement look like in practice?

Storytelling has been long used as a pedagogical tool that allows diverse learners in the classroom to unearth lived experiences and to allow a more nuanced understanding of difference (Aveling, 2001). The increased use of digital technologies has allowed personal storytelling to extend its reach beyond the act of telling a story, by making a story recordable and shareable. Digital storytelling – a *method* and a *genre* – leverages the power of digital media to give voice to stories that are usually not heard in mainstream media (Lambert, 2013). A digital story as defined in my study is a personal narrative that documents a wide range of culturally and historically embedded lived experiences combining voice, sound and images into a short video, developed by non-professionals with non-professional tools within the context of a digital storytelling workshop (Lambert, 2010; Reed & Hill, 2012). It is important to note that while the *digital* in digital storytelling may point to the openness of the digital space, this study focuses on the how the digital storytelling process plays out in a

physical space, i.e. in the space of a digital storytelling workshop and a pre-service teacher education classroom.

Although originally developed as a community engagement tool, digital storytelling has entered HE over the last decade (Benmayor, 2008; Coventry, 2008; Oppermann, 2008). Currently there seems to be a perception of digital storytelling as a magic bullet for an array of learning outcomes in HE, from developing a range of digital literacies (Gumble, 2012; Jean & John, 2008; Robin, 2008), to improving student engagement and reflection (Long, 2011; McKillop, 2004; Sadik, 2008), to developing a professional identity (Jamissen, 2010) or a more confident academic voice (Benmayor, 2008; Coventry, 2008; Oppermann, 2008).

Of particular interest to my study is the fact that the sharing and development of personal digital stories has been increasingly used and highly lauded as a pedagogical tool to engage multicultural classrooms in conversations around difference (Benick, 2008; Kobayashi, 2012; Sleeter, & Tettegan, 2002; Walters, Green, Wang, & Walters, 2011). In the context of social justice education, digital storytelling is seen as a tool for breaking silences, which in turn is seen as central for moving towards a more socially just education, both by foregrounding voices that are usually silenced or marginalised, and by tackling sensitive issues and topics usually not voiced in class (Thumbran, 2010). Literature terms this critical digital storytelling or digital counterstorytelling (Rolon-Dow, 2011; Vasudevan, 2006): the telling of stories that counter dominant or hegemonic narratives (Delgado, 1989).

At the core of the digital storytelling process is the belief that telling of personal stories can make a difference in people's lives and in how people engage with each other across difference. Storytelling can lead to wisdom, compassion and conscience, as Reed and Hill (2012, n.p.) explain:

—... personal stories can inspire, educate, and move people deeply, and [...] when it comes to confronting complex social issues, the connections forged through storytelling can help people bridge the vast differences that often divide them and instead act with wisdom, compassion, and conscience.”

Proponents of digital storytelling foreground the centrality of emotions shared and expressed in the process of developing a digital story, such as the establishment of an affective connection with the audience. As Burgess (2006, p. 210) reminds us:

—For the storyteller, the digital story is a means of becoming real to others, on the basis of shared experience and affective resonances. Many of the stories are, quite literally, touching.”

This study is set in the context of South African pre-service teacher education and is based at the School of Education and Social Sciences at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). Over the years, this project has become a space to reflect on students' often traumatic pasts and presents. Stories of gender-based violence, domestic abuse, drugs, gangsterism, poverty, discrimination and broken families dominate, foreground what Tarryn Frankish (2009, p. 89) calls the "systemic traumas of [South African] contemporary life". In their feedback, students emphasized the importance of engaging with their own and their peers' stories. They talked about how, often for the first time, they were allowed a glimpse into one another's lives, how this helped them see each other in a different light and how this experience brought the class closer. In particular, the vulnerability experienced and the emotions shared across race, class and gender as responses to lived trauma allowed them to recognise a shared humanity (Chigona, Condy, Gachago, & Ivala, 2012a; Condy, Chigona, Gachago, & Ivala, 2012; Gachago, Ivala, Chigona, & Condy, 2013; Gachago, Ivala, Condy, & Chigona, 2015). Students usually also revealed a complex range of emotions reflecting the power relations in the classroom. Students identifying with privilege often expressed feelings of guilt and shame when listening to other students' stories of hardship and struggle, while students identifying with disadvantage showed anger at what was perceived as a potentially condescending or patronising display of pity.

I started to wonder how the emphasis on individual pain, even if shared, enabled or limited students' recognition of the systemic inequalities responsible for the individual pain. The emergence of these strong emotions, which I often experienced as *sentimental*, left me uncomfortable and looking for literature on the role of emotions and sentimentality in digital storytelling.

1.4 Sentimentality and digital storytelling

In general, the term 'sentimentality' has many connotations, as illustrated by the *Oxford online dictionary*³, which defines "sentimental" as "1. prompted by feelings of tenderness, sadness or nostalgia" and "2. arousing these feelings in an exaggerated or self-indulgent way". Sentimentality also challenges authenticity: what is at stake, is the spontaneity, sincerity, legitimacy of emotions as Howard (1999, p. 69) notes: "Although not always stigmatized, sentimentality is always suspect". And finally, sentimentality alludes to the manipulation of emotions through media (Burnetts, 2011). Sentimentality, thus has negative connotations - maybe because it is always used in combination with emotion and emotions in general are treated with suspicion (Knight, 1999).

³ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/sentimental>

In my reading of the literature on digital storytelling and sentimentality (Burgess, 2006; Hartley & McWilliam, 2009; Hill, 2010; Lambert, 2010, 2013; Reed & Hill, 2012), I find that, at least in this field, sentimentality is seen as one of the most powerful elements within digital storytelling and for a very specific reason: *it lowers the barriers to empathy with the „Other“*. As Burgess reminds us (2006, p.210, my emphasis):

–Somewhat paradoxically from a critical perspective, it is the very qualities that mark digital stories as uncool, conservative, and ideologically suspect – stock tropes, nostalgia, even sentimentality – that give them the power of social connectivity, while the sense of authentic self-expression that they convey *lowers the barriers to empathy.*”

Empathy has become, as Pedwell (2014) argues, an Euro-American political obsession, and is in general viewed as a positive, if not essential, skill to live in our increasingly diverse world. Empathy – being the ability to put oneself in somebody else’s shoes – is seen as an essential step to both create a more just society built on greater respect, cooperation and equality, and to heal societies experiencing oppression and violence (*ibid.*). However, as I will discuss in more detail in later chapters, there are scholars who challenge this overly positive and simplistic view of empathy. These authors, whom I draw from, critique this empty or false empathy – often also termed pity – that focuses on the individual, rather than the collective experience, without a recognition of the unequal systemic power structures governing our lives (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Young, 1997). What they call for is a form of empathy, that they call active empathy or witnessing, which rather than allowing someone to put him or herself in someone else’s shoes, allows a connection between storyteller and audience based on an understanding of what makes them *different*, moving us towards an understanding of the social and political structures of our society.

Authors such as Benmayor (2008) and Opperman (2008) and their attempts to expand the digital storytelling process through critical readings or combining digital storytelling with reflective essays, show us that to facilitate a more critical understanding of the difference between students, more than the creation and sharing of digital stories is needed. Thus I ask, what do digital stories, characterised by “their sincerity, warmth and humanity” (Burgess, 2006, p. 208) actually do? How do they affect storyteller and audience? What kind of empathy do they produce? I try to answer these questions by exploring the role of emotions in digital storytelling, both as a process and a product.

1.5 Aim of the research

This study explores the potentials and possible limitations of digital storytelling as a sentimental genre within the context of a post-conflict classroom to facilitate a *different* engagement across difference for students: one characterised by active empathy, recognition of mutual vulnerability and unequal power relationships, and a critical look at the emotions that accompany these engagements. This study thus addresses a dearth of theory and practice on how to disrupt students' troubled knowledge and engage in difficult conversations around race, class and gender and other forms of oppression in post-conflict societies. As such, this is a critique of digital storytelling as a post-conflict pedagogy.

Research question: To what extent does sentimentality within digital storytelling enable and/or challenge students' critical engagement across difference within the context of South African teacher education?

Sub-questions:

1. How do students construct/perform notions of self, Other' and difference in everyday conversations? What stories do they tell? How do they position themselves vis-à-vis each other? How do they position themselves vis-à-vis dominant discourses?
2. What is the potential of a digital storytelling process to construct *counterstories* that trouble dominant discourses? What subject positions are available and/or are (co)constructed by students in their digital stories? To what extent does the digital story as multimodal text (re)produce or trouble students' subjectivities? And, in particular, how do students' semiotic histories and access to semiotic resources impact on the meaning of a multimodal text?
3. How does the telling of these digital stories impact on an *audience's affective engagement* with the Other', in particular in terms of an audience's empathy? What are the capacities of personal stories within a digital storytelling process to trouble students' engagement with the Other'?

1.6 Framing of the study

In this study, I draw from authors working at the intersection of critical race theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Yosso, 2006), queer theory (Butler, 1999, 2004b), cultural theory (Ahmed, 2004) and political theory (Young, 1997, 2011). Critical race theory allows me to see race as socially constructed category, created to

differentiate racial groups and establishing power and privilege. Adopting Butler's (1999) notion of performativity of gender, race, class, sexuality and her call for troubling norms and subjectivities *from within* I look at digital storytelling's potential, both as a process and a product, to *trouble* the stories that students tell about themselves and others. The potential of digital storytelling to establish an affective connection in diverse classrooms is central to this study. I am particularly interested in what the emotions performed in this process *do* to both storyteller and listeners, positioning my study theoretically in the so-called affective turn of the social science and humanities disciplines as expounded by a number of authors (Ahmed, 2004; Berlant, 2008; Hemmings, 2012; Pedwell & Whitehead, 2012). These authors contend that feeling and knowing – or ontology and epistemology – are not separate theoretical constructs, with one concerned with who we are and what we feel, and the other concerned with what and how we know. Hemmings (2012, p. 215, my emphasis) reminds us that *...in order to know differently we have to feel differently.* Young's (1997) asymmetrical reciprocity was helpful to unpack the importance of recognising how students are differently positioned in the classroom based on different personal experiences and histories and the fact that they are socially differently positioned in life.

In my attempt to understand what the often explosive and uncomfortable emotions *do* in a digital storytelling workshop, my conceptual framework (see Figure 1 below) is based on literature addressing emotions in teacher education in post-conflict pedagogies, such as troubled knowledge, mutual vulnerability, pedagogy of discomfort and critical emotional reflexivity.

Underpinned by a critical pedagogy perspective but also by poststructural thought, a pedagogy of discomfort stipulates that for both educators and students to develop a deeper understanding for their own and their shared past and present, it is necessary to move outside their comfort zones (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). Boler and Zembylas (2003, p. 112) argue that experiencing discomforting emotions can help one to challenge dominant beliefs, social habits and normative practices that sustain social inequities, and might ultimately lead to individual and social transformation.

In South African classrooms, such work with emotions emerging in conversations on difficult issues, such as the continued legacy of apartheid, is useful and hopeful. It is important to note that this pedagogy framed by the affective turn, emphasizes the political nature of emotions (Boler 1999; Boler & Zembylas 2003), as opposed to seeing emotions only on an interpersonal or intrapersonal level (see more on Ahmed's cultural politics of emotions in chapter 4). Furthermore, I draw on literature on personal digital storytelling, and in particular on studies exploring the adoption of digital storytelling in HE based on critical theory, such as

Benmayor's (2008) and Oppermann's (2008) research on digital storytelling in the humanities, and the use of digital storytelling to tell counterstories (Rolon-Dow, 2011; Vasudevan, 2006).

Methodologically, I applied a performative narrative inquiry research methodology (Riessman, 2008), focusing on narratives performed by nine students who took part in a five-day, train-the-trainer, digital storytelling workshop. Performative narrative inquiry is useful in this study as it explores how identities are situated and constructed within specific contexts for a specific audience. It has allowed me to explore what stories performed in this process *do*, and how stories are co-constructed between storyteller and the audience. I apply three different analytical approaches (Baldry & Thibault, 2006; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Frank, 2010).

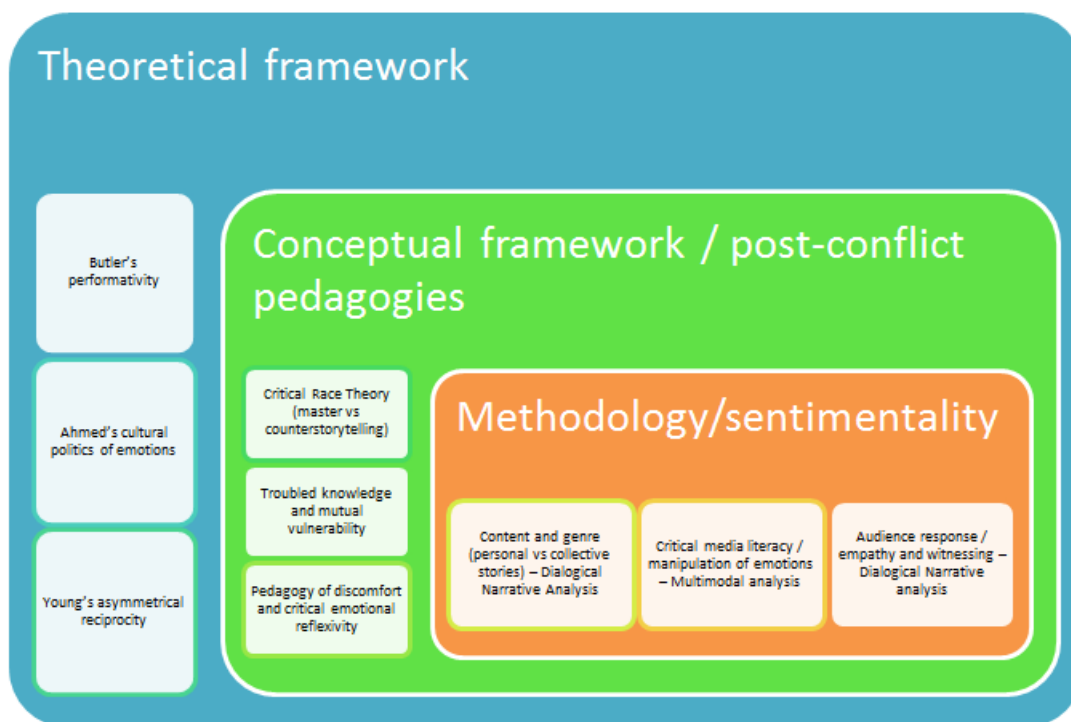


Figure 1: Framing of the study

1.7 Envisaged contribution of the study

Theoretically, this study focuses on the role of affect in students' engagement across difference, with a particular focus on how affective investments in social norms impact on this engagement. I will explore the entanglement epistemology and ontology (knowing, feeling and doing), a field that, despite experiencing a growing interest internationally, is under-researched in the realm of HE in South Africa.

Pedagogically, I address a gap in the general literature around the “emotional complexities of teaching for/with compassion and/or empathy” (Zembylas, 2013, p. 506) in the context of social justice education. I do this by proposing a digital storytelling process designed as a post-conflict pedagogy (Jansen, 2009; Zembylas, 2013b, 2014) to allow students to engage differently across difference. By doing this, I respond to Zembylas’s (2014, p. 404) call to explore “conditions in the classroom for addressing the complex psychosocial dimensions of difficult knowledge through a strategic engagement with one’s affective investments in relation to social and political norms”. It is my aim to create playful, creative spaces for my students to imagine a more hopeful future (Ford, 2004; Lugones, 1987), ultimately leading to a more socially just education. This is of importance in any classroom in South Africa, but even more so in teacher education, tasked with preparing teachers to engage in classrooms where, as Jansen (2009, p. 258) notes, “contending histories and rival lived experiences come embodied with indirect (and sometimes direct) knowledge into the same pedagogical space to create deeply complex challenges for teachers”.

Methodologically, I designed an analytical framework drawing on three different approaches of narrative inquiry to focus on what emotions performed in narratives *do*, allowing me to explore sentimentality in various aspects of digital storytelling. Exploring emotions is one of the most problematic areas of narrative research, this being one of the reasons that narrative analysis seldom focuses on this issue (Kleres, 2010; Squire, 2008a).

1.8 Description of the study

While drawing on the traditional CDS workshop model, the digital storytelling model we developed at CPUT has been shaped considerably over time. Most importantly, the theoretical frameworks of CRT and the affective turn, along with literature on post-conflict pedagogies, have strongly influenced how I design and run the initial five-day train-the-trainer workshop where I train peer facilitators who in turn support their peers during a six-week digital storytelling project. (See Appendix 3 for a detailed description of this critical digital storytelling process.) This study focuses on the 2013 train-the-trainer workshop and the stories constructed in and beyond this workshop by nine peer facilitators. Chapter 5 contains more detail on context and the workshop.

1.9 Outline of the thesis

My thesis is set out in three parts and ten chapters. Chapter 1 (Introduction) and chapter 10 (Discussion, conclusion and recommendations) frame these three parts of my study.

- Part 1 covers my conceptual and theoretical framework;
- Part 2 introduces the research methodology; and
- Part 3 presents the findings of this study.

Table 1: Outline of the study

CH1: Introduction	
Part 1: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework	CH2: introduces first resources for post-conflict pedagogies such as the <u>pedagogy of discomfort</u> , <u>troubled knowledge</u> and <u>critical emotional reflexivity</u> , concepts that all draw from the affective turn.
	CH3: discusses digital storytelling as a pedagogical intervention to engage across difference in post-conflict societies. I discuss the use of personal storytelling as a means to unearth students' lived experiences, but also its limitations and the need for critical personal storytelling, framed by Critical Race Theory, linking the personal to the collective story. Furthermore, I introduce digital storytelling as a pedagogical intervention within HE and discuss studies that focus on engagement with difference through digital storytelling.
	CH4: introduces the theoretical framework underpinning my study. I draw from queer, political and cultural feminist theorists, such as Butler's (1999, 2004b) work on gender performativity. I introduce authors associating with the affective turn, such as Ahmed (2004), who sees emotions as politically and socially constructed. Lastly, I address Young's <u>asymmetrical responsibility</u> , which describes how in an engagement across difference it is crucial to recognise our differences.
Part 2: Research Methodology	CH5: positions my study within narrative inquiry following poststructuralist and feminist movements (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008). I introduce the context of my study and the participants, and provide an overview of how I modified the original digital storytelling workshop, being the elements I added to make it a critical digital storytelling process. A discussion on how I establish trustworthiness in narrative inquiry and address concerns around research ethics in digital storytelling concludes this chapter.
	CH6: presents the steps of narrative inquiry, which consist of the facilitation of the telling of stories in narrative interviews, the

	<p>representation/transcriptions of narratives and the analysis of these narratives. For this study, I drew from three narrative analytical approaches: the small story positioning analysis (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008), multimodal narrative analysis (Baldry & Thibault, 2006; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001) and dialogical narrative analysis (Frank, 2010).</p>
<p>Part 3: Findings</p>	<p>CH7: looks at the <u>small stories</u> the nine students created during group conversations in the course of the digital storytelling workshop. Using Bamberg’s positioning analysis for small stories (2012), I analyse the content of students’ narratives, including how they positioned themselves vis-à-vis their peers and vis-à-vis dominant discourses.</p>
	<p>CH8: looks at two of the student stories in more detail as crafted products and examples of the digital storytelling genre. Using multimodal narrative analysis (Baldry & Thibault, 2006), I demonstrate how the conscious and unconscious orchestration of images, text, narration and sound define students’ stories as simultaneously reproducing and troubling dominant discourses, pointing to the entanglement of student narrative genres, semiotic histories, authorial intent and student subjectivities.</p>
	<p>CH9: explores the different audience response to the two stories covered in chapter 8, employing Frank’s dialogical narrative analysis I further use Watkins’s (2015) “moments of pedagogic affect” to facilitate a reflection on beliefs and assumptions students display in these highly emotional responses to one another.</p>
<p>CH10: offers a summary of discussion of findings, conclusions, recommendations, limitations of the research and ideas for future research. I argue that while I see the digital storytelling process as a first necessary step towards a different engagement across difference – one where students can experience and recognise their shared humanity and what makes us same – it should only be seen as part of a journey continued within and outside the classroom towards a more critical understanding of our differences.</p>	

1.10 Concluding thoughts

This chapter introduced my study, which explores the use of digital storytelling as a post-conflict pedagogy to facilitate an engagement across difference in pre-service teacher education in South Africa. I discussed the background to the study, painting South Africa as a context that is still defined by the legacy of a deeply unjust history. I also provided the rationale for this study: the necessity to engage students in engagements across difference, to disrupt the troubled knowledge they bring to class. I outlined the context of the study – the pre-service teacher education classroom this project is set in – and the aim of the study: exploring the potential but also limitations of the mostly positively seen digital storytelling work. This chapter also provides the framing of the study, which draws theoretically from queer feminism, the affective turn, and work around social justice, conceptually from post-conflict pedagogies, and methodologically from narrative inquiry. Lastly, I outlined envisaged theoretical, pedagogical and methodological contributions and provided a short overview of the work. The next chapter will introduce elements of post-conflict pedagogies, such as troubled knowledge, mutual vulnerability and the pedagogy of discomfort, in more depth.

PART 1: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CH 2: Post-conflict pedagogies

*“People are hungry for stories. It’s part of our very being.
Storytelling is a form of history, of immortality too.
It goes from one generation to another.”
Studs Terkel*

*“It’s hard to hate anyone whose story you know.”
Roslyn Bresnick-Perry*

2.1 Introduction

My study sets out to explore the extent the sentimentality inherent in a digital storytelling process as a post-conflict pedagogy can enable or challenge students engagement across difference. The context for this study is very specific: it is placed in a diverse classroom with final year pre-service teacher education students in Cape Town, South Africa. It is a post-conflict context in which the legacy of apartheid is still acutely felt every day, as demonstrated through the lack of social engagement across difference among students, exemplified in the way they sit and engage in class. In this chapter, I explore pedagogical interventions that create spaces where students are encouraged to shift some of their deep-seated assumptions and beliefs about the Other through personal storytelling.

I first place race and racism in education within the context of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and then discuss elements of pedagogical interventions that allow students to engage with each differently and to shift some of their beliefs about the Other, and which move beyond the binary thinking of critical race theory. Boler and Zembylas’s pedagogy of discomfort, for example intentionally creates a space for students to move out of their comfort zones, a first step in disrupting some of the troubled knowledge we bring to the classroom. Keet, Zinn and Portues’s call for mutual vulnerability goes beyond critical pedagogy’s dichotomy of oppressed and oppressors towards a space where we acknowledge that we are all in pain. Zembylas’s critical emotional reflexivity urges students to take a reflective stance on the

emotions they experience when engaging with their Other in order to learn new, more hopeful ways of being with that Other.

2.2 Critical race theory and education

In my work with students around race and racism, I draw from critical race theory (CRT) (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Solorzano, 1997), which challenges dominant discourses on race and racism; originally within the context of law but more importantly also in the field of education. Race here is seen as a socially constructed category, created to differentiate racial groups and establishing power and privilege (Solorzano, 1997). Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that emerged in the mid to late eighties, stemming from within legal studies, but later adopted by a wide range of critical studies. Solorzano (1997, p. 6) defines CRT as a “framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of society that maintain the subordination and marginalization of People of Color”. CRT is based on five tenets that are critical to the field of education (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Solorzano, 1997):

1. The centrality and intersectionality of race and racism in peoples’ lives (intersecting with other forms of subordination such as gender and class);
2. The challenge to dominant ideologies/discourses of objectivity, meritocracy and equal opportunities;
3. The commitment to social justice and elimination of racism;
4. The emphasis on utilizing experiential knowledge to analyse race and racism (with a focus for example on students’ personal narratives);
5. And the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches in CRT based research with the need to contextualise and historicise race and racism.

Racism in education is often not open, but subtle, manifested through what CRT calls micro aggressions. These are defined as “small acts of racism, consciously or unconsciously perpetrated, welling up from the assumptions about racial matters most of us absorb from the cultural heritage in which we come of age in the United States” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 2). This tendency to racially stereotype students can lead to placing the responsibility for failure and unequal outcomes of students on themselves rather than onto society and educational institutions. The theoretical foundation for this deficit thinking can be linked to two traditions: genetic determinism and cultural deficit models, which are more prominent in current educational contexts. In a cultural deficit model, students’ educational failures are linked to dysfunctional cultural values transmitted through families and a

deficient internal social family structure. Main solutions for socio-academic failure then become a student's assimilation into the hegemonic culture and the applied discourse is, for example, one about at-risk students and disadvantaged students of colour (Solorzano, 1997).

These microaggressions, –encoded in the norms and behaviour of institutional cultures”, build up, leading to considerable frustration and aggression among the student body and being –notoriously difficult to change” (Pattman, 2010, p. 954). Hemson, Moletsane and Muthukrishna (2001, p. 87) explain that these microaggressions are more than stereotypical labelling and related mistreatment; they are always linked to relations of power:

–Mistreatment is systematic and constitutes racially divided people not just as opponents, but as either privileged or subordinated. Racism is learnt, and one educational task is to expose how it was learnt, so as to enable more reflective and critical processes of learning to take place.”

While CRT was developed in the United States, race and racism is equally prominent in the South African education context. With the fall of apartheid, the former strict segregation of schools based on learners' racial and ethnic backgrounds was abolished. This led to a rapid transformation of classroom demographics, especially in former white and Indian schools and meant that teachers had to quickly adjust with the new reality of teaching in a racially, ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse classroom (Mentz & van der Walt, 2007). However, while the official discourse in South Africa is one of non-racialism, or rainbowism, the situation on the ground is still marked by this racialised past. There are numerous research accounts of how educators and students are influenced in their day-to-day teaching and learning practice by each other's perceptions of race, social class, religion and gender (Leibowitz, Bozalek, Carolissen, *et al.*, 2010; Suarez-Orozco *et al.*, 2015; Swartz *et al.*, 2009).

Gqola warns that this –rainbowism” (2001, pp. 98–99) stultifies –rigorous discussion of power differentials, leading to labelling through differences but preventing its discussion. In similar fashion, Carrim (2000, p. 3) argues that by attempting to de-racialize South Africa one fails –to address the problems related to race [which are still very pertinent in South Africa's schools]...with the added consequence of not providing the support black and white students need or putting into place programmes that would address such issues more effectively”. Silencing issues such as race, keeps the status quo in a society in which teachers encounter their learners based on stereotypes and myths (Alexander, 2011), leading to the small acts of conscious or unconscious everyday racism, or microaggressions as mentioned before.

2.3 Troubled knowledge

When first thinking about this study, I was inspired by CRT's attempt to foreground race and its intersectionality with other forms of oppression, its challenge to dominant discourses and continued commitment to social justice education (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). However, when discussing some of the basic tenets of CRT with my students, I quickly discovered the limits of this theory, which tends to box and label students on the basis of their skin colour. What I found most difficult to work with was the resistance and defensiveness that students identifying with white privilege displayed. In some ways, I had lost them right from the start of the project. In my search for alternative literature on engaging with difference, power and privilege, I encountered other authors who critiqued critical theory exactly because it paints a world that is defined by dichotomies, dividing the world into oppressed and oppressors, and taking the side of the oppressors. Such a polarizing approach to difference does not always work in classrooms where all students are wounded by and carry knowledge entrenched in the legacies of the past. Something new was needed: something that would accommodate both students identifying themselves as formerly (and still) oppressed, and those who still benefited from privilege passed on from generation to generation. The concepts of 'troubled knowledge' (Jansen, 2009) and 'mutual vulnerability' (Keet et al., 2009) provided such an alternative approach to engage *all* students in my classroom.

Reflecting on his experiences at the University of Pretoria, Jansen argues that although today's students have not directly experienced apartheid, there seem to be "powerful ideas and constructs about the past, present, and future" (2004, p. 120) that students bring to school and university. Borrowing from Hoffman's account of second generation Holocaust survivors (2004), he develops a conceptual framework built on the key construct of this "troubled knowledge" (2009, p. 52). This troubled knowledge – or as he also calls it "knowledge in the blood" (p. 171) – is "knowledge embedded in the emotional, psychic, spiritual, social, economic, political, and psychological lives of a community" (p. 171).

An example of such knowledge in the blood is what guides us when we racially profile a stranger encountered in the street. Do we feel more comfortable if this stranger is of a certain racial identity? What knowledge makes us more comfortable with people of a certain skin colour than others? Jansen (2009, p. 171) explains that this indirect knowledge is passed on across generations: "knowledge in the blood is habitual, a knowledge that has long been routinized in how the second generation see the world and themselves, and how they understand others".

Studies such as Jansen's (2009) on the University of Pretoria and Pattman's (2010) on the University of KwaZulu Natal show that in many racially integrated classrooms in South Africa, students still identify strongly with their racial and ethnic backgrounds and actively construct identities in opposition to each other: "social patterns of students' social lives were segregated by race and ethnicity even though they shared the same university campus" (Jansen, 2009, p. 135). This knowledge also draws out the "worst racial stereotypes, prejudices and aggressions among students" (Jansen, 2004, p. 121).

Jansen attributes troubled knowledge mainly to isolated communities, such as the Afrikaans community in South Africa. However, I would argue that troubled knowledge is found everywhere where children are socialised in largely homogeneous contexts lacking cultural, ethnical, racial, linguistic and economic diversity.

2.4 Mutual vulnerability

Another key concept that I found useful within the context of post-conflict pedagogies is the recognition of 'mutual vulnerability'. Jansen suggests that a post-conflict pedagogy necessitates both the oppressed and the oppressor to move towards each other, in what he calls a "pedagogical reciprocity" (Jansen, 2009, p. 268):

... the white person has to move across the allegorical bridge toward the black person; the black person has to move in the direction of the white person. Critical theory demands the former; a postconflict pedagogy requires both." (2009, p. 268)

It is important to note here that post-conflict pedagogy still thinks in and applies binarisms, such as oppressed/oppressors and black/white. As such, it hasn't moved beyond these essentialising terms. However, in a context where students identify strongly along racial divides and construct identities in opposition to one another (Pattman, 2010), this vocabulary is helpful to start a conversation about how to engage with each 'Other' differently. One of the dilemmas of my study, is to find a vocabulary that is accessible to students, and doesn't negate or ignore the systemic and institutionalized character of oppression and social injustice while also avoiding the trap of essentialising difference. How can one raise an awareness of race and how race affects power and privilege, while at the same recognising that these power dynamics are complex and messy?

For post-conflict pedagogues, this seems to involve a recognition that all involved parties are wounded by the past. Keet *et al.* (2009) for example, suggest that only when all parties become "naked and vulnerable unequal power relations can be broken down" (p. 110). Kwenda (2003) adds that, by acknowledging this mutual vulnerability, the burden and the responsibility for conflict needs to be equally shared.

The basic idea that educators need to facilitate transformation for learners identifying with both privilege and with disadvantage is an important one. I would agree with McKinney (2005, p. 380) who argues: “Particularly in the post-apartheid context, true social change is dependent on the re-education of the privileged, as well as the disempowered.” I am fortunate that my classroom is diverse and includes both students identifying with privilege and those identifying with disadvantage, and as such should allow for such ‘mutual re-education’ to happen. However, as Zembylas argues, acknowledging the asymmetries of suffering is important as well: “It is not a ‘recognition of potential sameness’ – you are in pain and so am I, so we both suffer the same – but a realization of our own common humanity, while acknowledging asymmetries of suffering, inequality, and injustice” (2014, p. 513). As he (2012b, p. 114) rightly says, it must be highlighted that “classrooms are not homogeneous environments with a common understanding of oppression, but deeply divided places where contested narratives are steeped in the politics of emotions to create complex emotional and intellectual challenges for educators”. The notion of privilege is complex and messy, and needs to be unpacked accordingly.

Lugones’s (1987) concepts of ‘world-travelling’ and ‘playfulness’ are useful in unpacking questions the complexity of privilege and responsibility. Lugones writes from an experience of an outsider, a black Latino woman among a White/Anglo organisation of life in the US. She argues that for engaging emotionally with the other, learning to love the ‘other’, *it is necessary to travel into her world.*

What is of particular interest for my study is her suggestion that such travelling might be more difficult for those who are most at ease and comfortable in their lives. She attributes an unconscious arrogance to these people, which makes them “graft the substance of others onto ourselves.” Arrogant perception involves projecting one’s sense of others onto them, usurping their substance (Ford, 2004). As Lugones (1987, p. 7) vividly describes, this arrogance leads to those in power to “... ignore us, ostracize us, render us invisible, stereotype us, leave us completely alone, interpret us as crazy. All of this while we are in their midst.”

This lack of connection and denial of our entanglement with the other, leaves us, ‘incomplete and unreal.’ (*ibid.*, p.8) It is important that outsiders to the mainstream “practice ‘world-travelling, mostly out of necessity.” (p. 3). This is closely related to Du Bois’ (1903) concept of ‘black double consciousness’, being the necessity of seeing oneself through the eyes of ‘Other’ as a survival technique long practised by oppressed groups.

Lugones characterises this practice of world travelling as “skillful, creative, rich, enriching and, given certain circumstances, as a loving way of being and living” (p.3). She uses Frye’s

(1985, p. 75) sense of love, relating the loving eye to ~~the~~ one who knows that to know the seen, one must consult something other than one's own will and interests and fears and imagination". Seeing with loving eyes would mean travelling into somebody else's world, experiencing somebody else's world, not in her place, but *with or next to her*. I further explore this idea of being *with* someone rather than being in someone else's shoes in the chapter 4 when I discuss Young's asymmetrical reciprocity as an answer to a sentimental view of sameness.

A world for Lugones is not an utopian world, but a world inhabited by people, either flesh and blood or imaginary. A world may be an ~~in~~complete visionary non-utopian construction of life or it may be a traditional construction of life" (p. 10). This world-travelling needs what she calls playfulness'. Ford (2004, p. 341) interprets such playfulness as necessary ~~---~~ to unsettle what I would refer to as a hegemonic desire for frames of reference about a common world".

2.5 Pedagogy of discomfort

Disrupting troubled knowledge by raising doubts about its certainty and shaking the strong foundations that define students' identities, can lead to strong emotional responses by students, such as anger and distress. This disruption is uncomfortable both for the educator – who is seldom equipped to deal with these emotions – and the student. Consequently, it is not difficult to see why educators usually shy away from such difficult conversations.

Jansen (2009, p. 259) emphasises the critical role of educators, themselves carriers of this indirect knowledge, in creating a safe space for students to voice, listen to, analyse and reflect on one another's indirect and direct knowledge. He points to the need for teacher education programmes to prepare future teachers to deal with this knowledge and to consciously create spaces that allow for this knowledge to be disrupted:

---. the success of postconflict-pedagogy depends almost entirely on the qualities of those who teach this means listening for the pain that lies behind a claim, the distress that is concealed in an angry outburst, the sense of loss that is protested in a strident posture." (p. 263–264)

Jansen, Boler and Zembylas suggest that engagement across difference cannot happen only on a cognitive level, but also relies on emotional labour. They argue that for the barriers to an engagement across difference to be transcended, one needs to acknowledge the politics of emotions that govern our classrooms.

Boler's book *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education* (1999) is a passionate call to reclaim emotions as a pathway for social transformation within the context of education. In the preface of the book, she states: "the 'risky' business of addressing emotions within our classrooms is a productive and necessary direction for the exploration of social justice and education" (p. xii). Her aim is to develop a theory of emotions and education that begins from an examination of power relations: "how structures and experiences of race, class, and gender, for example, are shaped by the social control of emotion, and how political movements have resisted injustice by drawing on the power of emotions" (1999, p. 5). Throughout her book, she draws attention to how gendered emotional rules have been used to keep women in subordinate roles. Boler points to the deliberate absence in the educational literature around emotions to demonstrate how they have become an unchallenged site of social control. She argues that "culturally patterned, inscribed habits of inattention" (p.17) are accountable for this silence. However, once this silence is challenged and "outlaw" emotions are expressed, they can empower an oppressed group to resist their subordinate status (p.12). She notes that Foucault and poststructural thought can help us view emotions not as internal, individualised states, but as shaped by dominant discourses and ideologies, allowing us the possibility to resist these through emotional knowledge and critical inquiry. Challenging these emotional rules and reclaiming emotions "as part of our cognitive and ethical inquiry" could "provide the students hope for changing the quality of their lives and taking action towards freedom and social justice" (Boler 1999: xi).

Like Jansen, Boler argues that educators should allow these emotions into the classroom, in a *controlled* way. Drawing on the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci, Boler and Zembylas refer to comfort zones as the "inscribed cultural and emotional terrains that we occupy less by choice but by virtue of hegemony" (2003, p. 111). Referring to a 'pedagogy of discomfort', Boler and Zembylas (2003) stipulate that for both educators and students to develop a deeper understanding of their personal and shared pasts and presents, it is necessary for them to move outside their comfort zones. Do Mar Pereira (2012, p. 213) rephrases this sentiment: "... feeling uncomfortable can allow students to notice their surroundings, sometimes for the first time".

Hegemony in this context stands for a domination of the ruled, not through sheer force but through thought, by extending the worldview of the ruling class with the help of intellectuals and political society (led by public institutions) (Bates, 1975). While public institutions can coerce their citizens to conform to certain norms, Bates posits that intellectuals "succeed in creating hegemony to the extent that they extend the worldview of the rulers to the ruled,

and thereby secure the free consent of the masses to the law and order of the land” (*ibid.*, p.353). In similar fashion, McLaren (2009, p.67, my emphasis) defines hegemony as:

—.. the maintenance of domination not by the sheer exercise of force but primarily *through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures* produced in specific sites such as the church, the state, the school, the mass media, the political system, and the family.”

Boler and Zembylas’s argument is also based within poststructural thought, inasmuch as difference is seen to be not biologically determined, but discursively and relationally produced between the self and others (2003, p. 123). This means that the notions of self, emotions and difference are not pre-given, but are socially constructed and produced/performed through a variety of discourses (2003, p. 120). It follows then, that identity and the self are never fixed, but in –continuous construction, never completed, never fully coherent, never completely centered securely in experience” (*ibid.*, p.125).

For transformation that could lead to better understanding among diverse groups of students, it is consequently crucial that the educator directly confront underlying problems that render human relationships among students from different backgrounds difficult – such as issues around historical origins of power and privilege. This can lead to deep unsettlement in learners, a sense of personal loss and highly charged emotions, such as anger, grief, disappointment and, most importantly, resistance. However, Zembylas and Boler argue that it is exactly these discomfiting emotions and the process of critically reflecting on their origins that is so powerful. They insist that only through this process of reflection, can dominant beliefs, social habits and normative practices that sustain social inequities be challenged and possibilities for individual and social transformation be created.

While this process can be deeply unsettling, a critical engagement with the emotions experienced can also lead to critical thinking and inquiry (p. 128), as well as –self-discovery, hope, passion and a sense of community” (p. 129). These are hopeful assumptions, since they allow, once we acknowledge that we are a product of hegemony, we are better placed to accept the ambiguity and messiness of power relations and for spaces for transformation to open up. However, the pedagogy of discomfort doesn’t end here: Boler and Zembylas’s focus on social justice education necessitates action for change. Hence they call for –students and educators to take responsibility and even action in the collective struggle for social justice” (p. 131), as it is only in the students’ actions that one can assess the success of post-conflict pedagogies.

The notion of the pedagogy of discomfort is of particular interest for this study for a variety of reasons:

- The authors work from a poststructural feminist theoretical framework, but are also associated with the *affective turn*, which is the framework I have adopted for this study. Within this framework, terms such as gender, difference and emotions are seen as socially constructed and always carry notions of power and privilege.
- Boler and Zembylas are both working in the field of teacher education. Boler teaches in the Teacher Education Programme of the University of Toronto, while Zembylas is a Professor of Education at the Open University of Cyprus and also involved in teacher education.
- Both their teaching and research are focused on difference and social justice education. Their aim is for students to transform the ways they engage with Others on the premise that this will help achieve social justice in education. In particular, Zembylas's work on post-traumatic or post-conflict contexts, such as Cyprus and Ireland, is important for anybody working not only through the past trauma of apartheid in South Africa but also the ongoing, everyday trauma (Frankish, 2009) that characterises many students' lives and narratives brought to the classroom.
- They argue that the pedagogy of discomfort can be intentionally adopted to help students who struggle to understand what social injustice means (Zembylas & McGlynn, 2010), which is of particular importance when for example trying to engage white students with the notion of privilege.
- They focus not only on the empowerment of the oppressed but also on the transformation of students identifying with privilege. They argue that hegemonic values not only affect members of the dominant culture but also members of the oppressed cultures, making this pedagogy particularly useful in our diverse classrooms. Thus they ask everybody to "re-examine the hegemonic values inevitably internalized in the process of being exposed to the curriculum and media that serve the interests of the ruling class" (Boler & Zembylas, 2003, p. 117).
- Their pedagogy emphasizes the political nature of emotions (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Boler, 1999), as opposed to seeing emotions only on an inter-personal or intra-personal level. This view of emotions, as opposed to an

individual/psychological approach, makes it possible to engage with these emotions in a classroom on a political level without explicit therapeutical intentions. Instead of seeing emotions as individual states belonging to an individual person, they try to understand how these emotions are socially generated and passed on from generation to generation (p. 126).

- Lastly, both Boler and Zembylas have written about and collaborated with South African educators in introducing a ‘pedagogy of discomfort’ into the classroom (Bozalek, Leibowitz, Carolissen, & Boler, 2014; Zembylas, Bozalek, & Shefer, 2014).

2.6 Studies on the pedagogy of discomfort in HE

Both Boler and Zembylas are prolific writers, and giving an overview of their complete works is beyond the scope of this study. I thus focus on studies that explore the pedagogy of discomfort in post-conflict societies. Examples of such studies stem from their own teaching and learning practices and from collaborative research across the world, such as in Ireland (Zembylas & McGlynn, 2010), Israel (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012) and South Africa (Boler, 2014; Zembylas, Bozalek & Sheffer, 2014; Zembylas, 2012a, 2012b), with some comparative studies across all contexts (Bekerman, Zembylas, & McGlynn, 2013; Bekerman & Zembylas, 2010).

Zembylas’s own practice in teacher education at the Open University of Cyprus is aimed at facilitating an intentional encounter and engagement across difference for his students, particularly focused on reconciliation between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. He does this, for example, by asking adult learners enrolled in an online course to keep an emotional journal to reflect on their journeys when engaging with topics on cultural diversity and discrimination. This foregrounds the importance of ‘critical emotional reflexivity’: the potential of emotions to be engaged as critical and transformative forces (Zembylas, 2008a, 2012b). His study on teachers’ capabilities to engage with issues of diversity in multi-cultural schools provides a reflection on the role of their emotions and affects in dismantling structures of power, privilege, racism and oppression (Zembylas, 2010). His research in Ireland is focused on integrated schools and explores how school children reacted to a pedagogical intervention in which they were exposed to random discrimination (Zembylas & McGlynn, 2010). This study raises important questions on an ethical approach to a pedagogy of discomfort, which intentionally positions students in a vulnerable place.

A small but growing body of knowledge adopts a pedagogy of discomfort in addressing notions of difference in South African HE. An early example is Hemson, Moletsane and Muthukrishna's (2001) account of an experiential teaching and learning intervention addressing uncomfortable issues in a South African teacher education programme. Students engaged with topics such as racism and sexism using a critical antiracism approach (Carrim, 1995). This project was met with considerable resistance from students and, often, explosive emotions, especially pertaining to issues of race. The authors emphasise the importance of concluding the experiential learning process with a re-evaluation of the experienced emotions to help students locate themselves in the wider socio-economic context and explore the complex interrelationships among different forms of oppression.

Another example of using a pedagogy of discomfort in HE is Bozalek *et al.*'s numerous accounts of an inter-institutional, interdisciplinary, collaborative teaching experience aimed at exploring issues of diversity with social work, psychology and occupational therapy students in two very differently placed universities in the Western Cape (Bozalek & Biersteker, 2010; Bozalek, 2011; Carolissen *et al.*, 2011; Leibowitz, Bozalek, Rohleder, *et al.*, 2010; Leibowitz, Bozalek, Carolissen, *et al.*, 2010; Rohleder *et al.*, 2008; Swartz *et al.*, 2009). By providing students the opportunity to engage collaboratively on topics such as community, self and identity, they became more aware of differences and inequitable socio-economic, cultural and political practices (Bozalek, 2011, p. 475).

2.7 Sentimentality and critical emotional reflexivity

Boler and Zembylas and other authors warn us that a pedagogy of discomfort might not necessarily be successful. On the contrary, more often than not, it might not be transformatory in the way educators intend it to be. Literature (such as Macdonald, 2013) remains cautious, arguing that introducing a pedagogy of discomfort to disrupt some of the discourses, assumptions and beliefs governing our classrooms and engagements with the Other, is a difficult and messy task. For example, the researchers in the collaborative project mentioned in the previous paragraph suggest that "... learning to talk about difference is a *process*, during which students may require sufficient support and a level of explicit enquiry to break through the polite rhetoric' of the rainbow nation" (Leibowitz, Bozalek, Carolissen, *et al.* 2010, p.126, my emphasis). They conclude that many of their students remained defensive and tended to essentialise the Other.

Two concepts that Zembylas regularly revisits in his writing are what he terms sentimentality' in the context of students' reactions to trauma narratives; and, in countering this sentimentality, the need for critical emotional reflexivity' (2007, 2008, 2011).

Quoting Wang (2005) for example, Zembylas & McGlynn argue that privileged students may –resort to rational arguments or *sentimental reactions* and fail to acknowledge how their own emotional attachments affect their knowledge and practices, despite the discomfort that their educators may create for them” (2010, p.5, my emphasis).

Zembylas defines sentimentality as (2011, p. 20, my emphasis):

–first, a *sentimental reaction* by students who identify with privilege and *respond defensively* yet feel uncomfortable and *guilty*, fearing that they will be exposed as immoral by refusing to bear any longer a population’s collective suffering; second, an intense *resentment* by those who feel subordinated and may eventually get stuck in victim politics; and third, the *desensitization* of the student-spectators who get irritated by the scenes of suffering in some way, refuse engagement with it or minimize its effects, misread it conveniently, and reduce it to a few pedantic phrases.”

In similar fashion, Boler (1999) sees the danger of passive empathy’ (her equivalent to sentimentality), specifically in the risk of students ranking their oppressions’ –in such a way that we are pitted against one another to produce guilt rather than empathy” (p. 164). Like Zembylas, she concludes that this may lead to feelings of pity on the part of the person identifying with privilege and anger, and resentment in the subjugated storyteller.

In this process, *how* somebody *tells* a story is as important as *how* others *receive* this story. Zembylas argues that through the telling of trauma stories, victims can create a social and political space to reconstruct memory. However, whether these narratives lead to healing or perpetuation of the trauma depends on how others respond to the trauma. Thus it is crucial for students to develop this critical emotional reflexivity (Zembylas, 2008c) or – as he later refers to it in his book, *The politics of trauma in education* (2011, p. 1) – *critical emotional praxis*” to allow for a transformative telling of and listening to trauma stories. He defines emotional reflexivity as the process of reflecting on emotions and particularly on the emotional work conducted. He adds the concept of criticality to allow for emotions to be engaged as critical and transformative forces to address unequal power relations in the classroom (2008, p. 62).

Zembylas defines this concept along three dimensions (2008b, p. 2, my emphasis):

–First, critical emotional praxis is grounded in a *historical and political understanding* of the role of affect in trauma culture and its implications for education. Second, critical emotional praxis consists in the *ability to question* affectively charged,

cherished beliefs, exposing how privileged positions and comfort zones inform the ways in which educators and students recognize what and how they have been taught to see/act (or not to see/act) and empowering *different ways of being with/for the Other*. Finally, critical emotional praxis translates these affective understandings into relationships, practices, and enactments that benefit teaching and learning for *peace, mutual understanding, and reconciliation*.”

Closely related to this is Boler’s concept of “testimonial reading” (1999, p. 165), where the reader is forced to rethink his or her own assumptions when engaging with critical texts, such as accounts of Holocaust survivors. Testimonial reading can lead to active empathy, or *witnessing*, in which the reader recognizes his or her position of power provided through the distance to the event recounted in the text. Active empathy allows the reader to be drawn into challenging his or her assumptions and worldviews (p. 165), emphasizing a collective rather than individual educational responsibility. Boler argues that only this form of “bearing witness” (p. 164) can lead to “anything close to justice, and to any shift in existing power relations” (p. 156). On the contrary, “passive empathy” (p. 162), does not lead to an identification with the deeper implication of the storyteller, be it an account of a Holocaust survivor or a victim of apartheid: “Passive empathy absolves the reader through the denial of power relations. The confessional relationship relies on a suffering that is not referred beyond the individual to the social” (p. 162). She as well emphasizes the need for action:

“Ideally, testimonial reading inspires an empathetic response that motivates action: a ‘historicized ethics’ engaged across genres, that radically shifts our self-reflective understanding of power relations.” (p. 157)

2.8 Students’ reactions to a pedagogy of discomfort and the need for compassion

The pedagogy of discomfort openly talks about engaging students in moments of ‘crisis’ or ‘trauma’. While this may sound provocative, authors such as Felman (1995) suggests that learning through crisis is not only ethical, but also necessary when working against oppression. A classroom in crisis can have many faces: in Felman’s study, her class reacted to the reading of a Holocaust text with ceaseless engagement, while in Rak’s (2003) study, her class exhibited total silence after reading a text on incest. While the reactions differed, in both cases the class was “suspended in its affective response [...] not able to carry on its ‘normal’ business of speaking, writing and learning because the students had been confronted by material which literally stopped daily life for a time” (2003, p. 54).

If entering crisis is a required and desired part of transformative learning to allow students to learn to be critical of oppressive practices, power and privilege in the classroom, how can one negotiate this moment of crisis in an ethical way? Felman (1992, p. 53) suggests, that it is not the entering of the crisis that is unethical, but the leaving of students in such harmful repetition:

–If teaching does not hit upon some sort of crisis, if it does not encounter either the vulnerability or the explosiveness of a (explicit or implicit) critical and unpredictable dimension, it has perhaps not truly taught I therefore think that my job as a teacher, paradoxical as it may sound, was that of creating in the class the highest state of crisis that it could withstand, without driving the students crazy, without compromising the students' bounds." (p. 53)

However, as anti-racist educator Kumashiro's work (2002) shows, it is important to be aware that not all students accept such teaching, and not all benefit from it. On the contrary, some may reinforce their positions rather than risking self-transformation:

–Once in a crisis, a student can go in many directions, some that may lead to anti-oppressive change, others that may lead to more entrenched resistance. Therefore, educators have a responsibility not only to draw students into a possible crisis, but also to structure experiences that can help them work through their crises productively." (pp. 74–75)

In similar fashion, Boler (2014, p. 26) describes three categories of students that she encounters in her teaching:

–There are those willing to walk down the path of critical thinking with me, who find their world views shattered, but simultaneously engage in creatively rebuilding a sense of meaning and coherence in the face of ambiguity. Secondly, there are those who angrily and vocally resist my attempts to suggest that the world might possibly be other than they have comfortably experienced it. Third, there are those who appear disaffected, already sufficiently numb so that my attempts to ask them to rethink the world encounter only vacant and dull stares."

Studies engaging with the pedagogy of discomfort raise important ethical questions around the conditions that should be in place to allow for an ethical engagement that creates empathetic and caring environments for all students, particularly when resistance is encountered (do Mar Pereira, 2012). For each of Boler's categories of students to be engaged and supported, different strategies are required; and as Boler (2014, p. 34) argues,

the ones who show initial resistance may be the ones who learn the most, but who also need the most of compassion:

–A particular compassion might be required for those who feel their self is being annihilated and who are angrily protesting, not necessarily because they cannot see how power operates but because they need something to replace what I am threatening to take away from them.”

In similar fashion, Zembylas (2012a, p. 2) reflects on his difficulties:

—... the challenge in traumatized communities is often how to deal with the student who resists or rejects critical perspectives and who openly expresses racist or nationalist views because his or her privileges are being threatened or lost; or the student who is so traumatized from racism or nationalism that he or she feels that nothing can be done to rectify the situation.”

Ivits (2009), who explores the ethical boundaries of a pedagogy of discomfort, suggest the following three strategies for an ethical practice that wouldn't inflict ethical violence (Butler's 2005 term):

1. Being explicit in the teaching of moral distress / fostering a deeper understanding of the social function of certain kinds of moral distress before the encounter, so that the social consequences of these feelings may be better understood;
2. Destabilising dominant understandings of subjectivity through alternative readings, that do not reify the autonomous, coherent subject, but rather focus on fragmented narratives drawing –attention to what is forgotten, left unsaid, or altogether unsayable, illustrating the inevitable unknowability of both the self and the Other” (p. 567); and
3. Working together with learners to committing testimonies of trauma to the public memory, such as through creating installations, public narratives shared on the web.

My study differs slightly to the explored above, as the discomfort my students experience is not a reaction to lecturer-chosen external texts of trauma, but comes with the sharing and listening to their own and their peers' personal life histories. South African stories are stories of the –systematic traumas of everyday life' (Frankish, 2009, p. 89). I will explore the use of personal narratives as a post-conflict pedagogy in more detail in the next chapter, and reflect on the ethical issues of facilitating the sharing of these kinds of stories within the context of a pedagogy of discomfort in more detail in chapter 5 under ethical considerations and in my conclusions (section 10.3.2).

2.9 Concluding thoughts

This chapter introduced some resources that support post-conflict pedagogies and allow students an engagement across difference which can shift the way they think about themselves and the Other to ultimately transform their social engagements. I began by discussing race and racism in education within CRT, followed by Jansen's idea of troubled knowledge, which allows us to transcend the limiting dichotomies of the past by acknowledging that learners on all sides of the community are wounded. This notion of a mutual vulnerability can help us alleviate the tensions that arise in a critical pedagogy classroom, and the risk of alienating students identifying with privilege. The pedagogy of discomfort as developed by Boler and Zembylas intentionally focuses on surfacing emotions that students experience in difficult encounters across difference. Critically analysing these emotions can allow students to question established beliefs, norms and practices.

This pedagogy is not without its critics, who challenge its potential to engage with students' vulnerabilities in an ethical way. It is not hard to understand why difficult conversations around power and privilege are often avoided by educators and learners for fear of possible explosive emotions and lack of confidence in handling them. It takes courage and highly reflective approaches to teaching and learning to tackle some of the issues described above. I would argue that an engagement with such pedagogical practices is necessary in the fight against ongoing overt and subtle racism and for more open and inclusive social engagements in our classrooms in the context of social justice education. There is still a lack of literature around pedagogical practices that would encourage that, as Zembylas (2012b, p. 12) concludes in one of his papers:

-Pondering upon these questions and reading through some of the examples found in existing literature, it is clear that the practice of troubled knowledge in posttraumatic contexts encompasses a set of complex issues that are only beginning to be adequately acknowledged and analyzed."

I agree with Swartz *et al.* (2009, p. 11) that "... we have both a right and a responsibility to require students to engage in such discussions", even if this is a painful, messy and difficult process for both facilitators and learners, and one which may not always yield the expected results. However, if we embark on this difficult journey, we have to do so ethically and compassionately.

The next chapter looks at one specific pedagogical practice to engage students in conversations around their social and cultural backgrounds: the sharing of (digital) personal stories in the classroom.

CH 3: Digital storytelling and sentimentality

“Sentimentality, the ostentatious parading of excessive and spurious emotions, is the mark of dishonesty, the inability to feel; the wet eyes of the sentimentalist betray his aversion to experience, his fear of life, his arid heart, and it is always, therefore, the signal of secret and violent inhumanity, the mask of cruelty.”
James Baldwin

3.1 Introduction

My study's aim is to explore the potential and possible limitations of the sentimentality within a digital storytelling process to transform students' engagements across difference as post-conflict pedagogy. In the previous chapter, I focused on a range of elements for a post-conflict pedagogical toolkit'. In the current chapter, I explore what I find to be a missing element in a post-conflict pedagogy: the emotional investment, the *interest* needed for students to enter a space of critical emotional reflexivity by their breaking down their defences, and listening to and opening up to the Other'. I discuss the idea of critical digital storytelling' as a method for opening up a pedagogical space within which one can enter into dialogue with the Other', a space full of ~~bodies~~...who carry knowledge within themselves that must be engaged, interrupted and transformed” (Jansen, 2009, p. 258).

3.2 Spaces for caring and mutual vulnerability

The approach of the pedagogy of discomfort – to move people outside their comfort zones to critically engage with their dominant beliefs, social habits and normative practices – is based on the premise that self-awareness precedes social action (Morgan & Ramanathan, 2005). Zembylas suggests doing this by facilitating critical emotional reflexivity' in students, by which he means their ability to reflect on the socio-cultural and political origins of the emotions that are evoked in such a process. What interventions allow students to access and critically reflect on their emotions? And how can one motivate students to listen, care about and develop what I would call an affective engagement' with the Other' in the first place? How does one generate such an *interest* in the Other' (Probyn, 2005)?

Shotwell (2011, p.99, my emphasis) refers to anti-race activist Michelle O'Brian to emphasize the importance of *caring* in social justice work:

~~Let's~~ assume my complicity and participation in white supremacy is, to some extent for all white people, unavoidable. I don't get off scot-free, I never get to feel just good about myself, and that's not the fucking point. Being antiracist isn't the same as carefully avoiding ever doing or saying the wrong thing; it's about actually *caring* about real people and actually helping to make a different kind of world.”

How can one create such caring spaces? And how can the single story' (Adichie, 2009) told to learners growing up in homogeneous communities, largely "uninterrupted by counternarratives" (Jansen 2009, p.88), be disrupted? Troubling these homogeneous narratives is a difficult task. Jansen suggests that one way to achieve this is through personal engagement and encounter with the Other' in a series of critical incidents leading to pedagogic dissonance. This dissonance can then "begin to erode sure knowledge" (2009, p.151). These critical incidents can either be unintentional – as in Jansen's (2009) description of a disruptive encounter during a foreign student exchange programme, which forced the student to face realities she had been largely shielded from at home – or intentionally designed as pedagogical activity, such as a visit to the apartheid museum. In both instances, these critical incidents forced students to look beyond their known narratives. In some cases, these counternarratives may cause cracks in students' belief systems and allow them to revisit and change some of the assumptions and beliefs they have about the Other'.

Another way of encountering and learning about the Other' is through sharing personal stories. Storytelling has a long history of being used to make sense of one's own life and to understand the Other'. The act of sharing one's story not only leads to a better understanding of oneself, but also allows for connections to be established across difference by allowing oneself a position of vulnerability, as Brown (2010) argues in her famous TEDxHouston talk on the power of vulnerability:

"The thing that underpinned [connection] was excruciating vulnerability, this idea of, in order for connection to happen, we have to allow ourselves to be seen, really seen."

Keet *et al.* (2009, p. 110) notion of mutual vulnerability introduced in chapter 2, also focuses on the importance of vulnerability: "Central to mutual vulnerability' is the pedagogical process that allows teachers and other authority figures to open up and render their frames vulnerable for learners and students to risk their full participation in the pedagogical transaction." I would argue that sharing one's personal story is one way of entering this space of mutual vulnerability and caring for both educators and learners.

3.3 Critical storytelling within feminist epistemology and critical race theory

Student voices, experiences and narratives are central within critical (feminist) pedagogies and they ask questions about whether and how these stories constitute the storyteller and his/her audience. Various authors have shown that the mere telling of personal stories may

not always be transformative or empowering (Ellsworth, 1989; Haug, 1992; hooks, 2000a; Manicom, 1992).

CRT distinguishes between two types of stories: stock stories and counterstories. Stock stories, also called masternarratives or majoritarian stories, “carry layers of assumptions that persons in positions of racialized privilege bring with them to discussions of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordinations” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 28). Examples of these masternarratives are public discourses around meritocracy or objectivism. These stories are generated from a legacy of racial, gendered, classed privilege. They are stories in which this privilege seems normal. Masternarratives reinforce white, male, middle class privilege, while at the same time keeping this privilege invisible – it, therefore, is and stays the norm (McIntosh, 1992). It is important to say, that not only people in position of privilege tell masternarratives. These stories are to a point *internalised* by people of colour, that they too may unconsciously tell stories reinforcing white privilege.

Counterstories, on the other hand, “challenge social and racial injustice by listening to and learning from experiences of racism and resistance, despair and hope at the margins of society” (Yosso, 2006, p. 171). Counterstories are stories of resistance. Resistance theories emphasize students’ agency to “negotiate and struggle with structures and create meanings of their own from these conversations” (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 315). Racial and class-based isolation often prevents the hearing of diverse stories and counterstories (Delgado, 1989; Jansen, 2009), which makes *conscious interventions allowing for an engagement across difference*, such as the one planned in this study, highly important.

However, it might be too simple to only listen to and hear stories from usually silenced students or about usually silenced topics. What I aim to achieve in this project, is to disrupt some of the dominant stories students bring to class. There are three points that I believe are important when one is using critical storytelling as a pedagogical intervention in diverse classrooms.

Firstly, a basic tenet of a pedagogy of discomfort and mutual vulnerability is that students who would identify with either disadvantage or advantage are both wounded by the legacies of the past, thus both narratives need to be heard. Aveling, a vocal supporter of the use of personal narratives in anti-racism education points out the following (2001, p. 43):

“While I agree that it is important for the voices of the silenced to be heard, I would add that it is not only the voices of the silenced’ (when I lecture, for example, I am certainly not silenced and powerless) which are important to include in the curriculum.”

To create a more socially just classroom, we need to hear not only stories of people usually silenced, but also about topics usually silenced. The voice of privileged students could then shed light on uncomfortable topics, as Thumbran (2010, p. 17) argues: “The culture of silence is therefore both the marginalisation from mainstream society and with it the absence of a social presence, as well as the unspoken nature of social issues and abuses”. Tackling uncomfortable topics may be one way to use students’ perceived privilege.

Secondly, I would argue that we need to be aware of the risk of assuming that stories by a certain group of people, such as women, are homogeneous. Similarly, we should not differentiate uncritically between more or less privileged students without the danger of essentialising them. Subjectivities and narratives are never straightforward, and are by nature contradictory. The notion of privilege is particularly messy and complex, and needs recognition of the intersectionality of various forms of oppression. Manicom (1992, p. 373) warns us that:

“Feminist pedagogy literature speaks of woman’s voice’, as though each of us has a voice. But analysis of narratives show each of us is full of contradictions; each voice is partial, multiple and context-bound.”

Thirdly, and maybe most importantly, we need to also acknowledge, that *all* stories – whether those of privileged people, or people usually silenced/oppressed – are influenced by masternarratives and need to be critically evaluated, even if and when students aim to tell counterstories. As Solorzano and Yosso (2002, p. 28) note:

“Ironically, although Whites most often tell majoritarian stories, people of color can also tell them. In the same way, misogynistic stories are often told by men but can also be told by women.”

I would argue that it is this negotiation of contradictory elements in a story that makes the understanding of experience richer; as Manicom, talking about women’s narratives, explains (1992, p. 374):

“Narratives are threaded through with theory, with hegemonic discourse, and with dominant ideologies, as well as with challenges (both implicit and explicit) to these discourses. Narratives (the telling of experiences’) therefore are not only potentially ideological, they are also potentially full of contradictory moments.

The implication here for teaching is that not only do women’s experiences need to be validated and legitimized (for this is indeed important, and I do not want to minimize how central it has been for many of us to name the unnamed), but the experiences

also have to be critiqued, interrogated, and deconstructed, since the sense-making of our lives will be inscribed with dominant ideologies.”

Many of the black students’ stories for example that I have collected over the years foreground their belief in personal agency and in a teacher’s ability to make a difference in their students’ lives, as I have previously written with others (Gachago, Condy, Ivala, & Chigona, 2014). We argued that this could be seen as buying into a discourse of meritocracy without reflection on the structural inequalities people of colour still face.

Feminist writer Haug (1992, p. 17) warns us of the futility of sharing individual stories without a critical analysis of the emerging collective narrative. She argues that, “... the mere exchange of experiences does not necessarily lead to greater understanding”. In similar fashion, hooks (2000a, p. 26) suggests that while “... the ability to see and describe one’s own reality is a significant step in the long process of self-recovery ... it is only a beginning”.

Both Haug and hooks agree that what is needed beyond the sharing of personal stories is a critical analysis of women’s political reality. Haug argues that only through a collective analysis of individual stories to “... uncover the social construction, the mechanisms, the interconnections and significance of our actions and feelings” can we move beyond a “... simple duplication of the everyday with all its prejudices and lack of theoretical insight” and ultimately a collective social action. hooks (2000b, p. 27) calls for an examination of “... both the personal that is political, the politics of society as a whole, and global revolutionary politics”.

Thus, counterstorytelling in this thesis takes on a slightly new meaning: I would say *all* students need to be encouraged to critically reflect on their stories within a pedagogy of discomfort framework in order to position their stories in relation to their peers’ stories and to allow a collective of counterstories to emerge. This collective, political analysis of personal stories is not typically part of a digital storytelling process - usually defined by limited time and participants who often do not know one another and who most likely will not continue to engage with one another beyond the digital storytelling workshop space.

3.4 Critical digital storytelling

3.4.1 Digital storytelling

This study is heavily influenced by the digital storytelling model developed by the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) in Berkeley, California. (See Appendix 4 for the ‘Seven steps of digital storytelling’ and chapter 5 for a description of how I adapted the CDS storytelling model.) Originating from a history of critical theatre, the CDS digital storytelling model had as

its main objective to fight for social justice by giving marginalised groups a voice. On its website⁴, CDS explains what the sharing of stories means to it (my emphasis):

–Personal narratives can touch viewers deeply, moving them to reflect on their own experiences, modify their behavior, treat others with greater compassion, speak out about injustice, and become involved in civic and political life. Whether online, in social media or local communities, or at the institutional/policy level, the *sharing* of stories has the power to make a real difference.”

The CDS showcases many stories from marginalised groups who are often silenced through the hegemony of public discourses. At the core of their stories is an –act of self-discovery, and a means to localize and control the context of their presentation” (Lambert, 2009, p. 82).

Foregrounding the communal sharing of stories, the CDS sees digital storytelling not as an individual process, but as a collective process of developing stories in what they call the ‘story circle’ (Lambert, 2010). Their model of creating digital stories is quite specific and involves a workshop running over several days, in which participants collaboratively develop their stories. The communal sharing of stories is the main element in the process of digital storytelling (Lambert, 2010, p. v).

The next section looks at studies, which have tried to frame digital storytelling within critical theory, to facilitate an engagement with issues of structural injustice, power and privilege, and with a particular focus on studies set in HE contexts.

3.4.2 Critical digital stories of difference

There is growing interest in the use of digital storytelling to explore issues of difference among students (Benick 2008; Kobayashi 2012; Walters *et al.* 2011; Sleeter & Tettegan 2002). Of even more interest to my study are attempts to modify and expand the typical digital storytelling process to include time and resources for a more critical engagement with issues of power and privilege when engaging with the ‘Other’. In the literature, this adapted digital storytelling format is termed ‘digital counterstorytelling’ (Rolon-Dow, 2011) or ‘multimodal counterstorytelling’ (Vasudevan, 2006).

Many examples of this form of digital counterstorytelling are based in out-of-school contexts with adolescent minority children in the US or the UK. One of the first studies linking the notion of counterstorytelling and multimodality, is for example Vasudevan’s study (2006) on five African-American adolescent boys, who in an out-of-school club, developed digital

⁴ <http://www.storycenter.org/casestudies.html>

stories on their own identity. This allowed them, as she argues, the opportunity to re-author and re-position themselves against typical stock-stories, creating "... new selves that challenged what they asserted as negative assumptions from other adults in their lives" (p. 209).

In her study on the use of digital storytelling to research social problems with Latino High School students in the States, Scott Nixon (2009) reflects on the potential of digital stories to help students "... develop agentive identities as social activists who can affect change through their future participation as leaders in their communities ... the beginnings of a developing sociocritical consciousness." (p.74). By allowing her students to create the stories in their own languages, she established authentic and equitable spaces for learning, countering "the hegemonic, English-only mandates" often found in institutional discourses (*ibid.*).

Another example of critical digital storytelling, is Brushwood Rose's (2009) study on developing digital stories in a community-based workshop in Canada, where she worked with socio-economically marginalised adolescent girls. Brushwood Rose's study is interesting in terms of unveiling indirect knowledge as she analyses the tension between the written script and the images her participants selected for their stories, which were both "undermined and enriched by various ruptures, contradictions and gaps that emerge through the juxtaposition of sound and image" (2009, p. 212). She argues that it is specifically this juxtaposition which can show us our "unconscious and its ambivalences and resist the often tidy confines of our conscious telling" (Milner cited in Brushwood Brose, 2009, p. 212). She introduces the notion of an *untold story*, which tells us "something about the unconscious qualities of experience – that we participate in and are shaped by stories we may not yet be aware of – and the impossibility of telling the whole story" (p. 216). Often what is not said is of equal or more importance than what is been said. However, how to unearth these silences that constitute these untold stories remains largely unexplored.

Also highly relevant to this study is Rolon-Dow's (2011) account of using digital storytelling with high-school students of colour in the US. She concludes that "digital storytelling in combination with a CRT framework, can provide a window into understanding the ways race operates in the lives of youth and the microaggressions that students of color face in today's educational contexts" (p. 170). However, she also warns that the premise of CRT must be "explicitly communicated so that students may learn tools for racial critique and so that they may feel free to break silences and share their personal stories on the ways race matters in their personal experiences" (p. 171). Some limitations of her study are the lack of

engagement with students' digital stories to discuss issues of social justice and ... as a stepping stone for social action that promotes racial equity" (p. 171).

Another example, not directly focused on students but relevant for this study, is Alexandra's (2008) work on the development of digital stories with undocumented migrants in Ireland. She reports that after the digital storytelling process, her participants expressed a greater sense of agency and power over their lives. By providing participants a free space workshop ... [they found] a place in which participants intensely negotiated notions of representation – self-representation through storytelling, image making and sharing – and actively re/situated themselves in relation to their lived experiences" (pp. 109–111). As a critical pedagogue, she cautions against the tension between her own vision of best practice and the artistic vision of each participant. She concludes that in future she would like to explore how these digital stories mediate not only self-understanding among participants, but broader dialogues and tensions across constituencies" (p. 111).

Examples of the integration of critical digital storytelling into the formal HE curriculum is a series of studies in the humanities by Oppermann (2008), Benmayor (2008) and Coventry (2008). Oppermann for example, in the context of an American Studies course, combines digital storytelling with reflective essays to allow students to find their own voice when writing academic papers. As he explains here, ... once students were conscious of their own voice, they were also much more comfortable positioning themselves in relation to other novices in the field (e.g. their peers in the class) and to existing theories of identity construction" (p. 180). He concludes that:

–Students not only explore how identities are shaped through the categories of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or class, but they feel also empowered to create new forms of knowledge that actively challenge conditions of marginalization and conditions of oppression in dominant discourses." (p.182)

Oppermann emphasizes the importance of personal engagement with issues discussed in the course through digital storytelling to allow students epistemological access to the theoretical readings. Of particular interest for my study is his reference to Boler's (1999) notion of cognitive and emotional labour needed for students' transformative learning (p. 184):

–Following Boler, it seems to me that digital stories act as contact zones between the cognitive and the affective, indicative of the nature of expertise in American studies in that they model a way to reclaim emotions as sources of social and political resistance."

Benmayer's work exploring the use of digital stories to theorize Latina Life Stories' (Benmayer, 2008; Weis, Benmayer, O'Leary, & Eynon, 2002) is another example of using digital storytelling in HE. In her course, students create "transformational stories, that engage histories of resistance, struggle, and survival, and affirm new consciousness in the making" (Weis, Benmayer, O'Leary & Eynon, 2002, p. 158). Students are inspired by critical readings of Latina women which, she argues, trigger memories and emotions. They theorize their own stories against these readings: "... personal experience becomes theorized, situated" (p.159). She argues that the multimedia process enhances students' understanding of what it means to theorize their own identities 'from the flesh' by combining experiential, emotional learning with an intellectual analysis based on the reading of critical texts. She also emphasizes the importance of the digital storytelling process as a "social pedagogy" (2008, p. 198), an approach that relies heavily on student collaboration through sharing and disclosure of often painful memories:

"In this class students feel a desire and a responsibility to grapple with their lived experiences in significant ways, connecting their emotional and intellectual worlds and constructing an empowered and safe space to speak out about their diverse social realities. Sharing in the classroom initiates a process of bonding and cross-cultural alliance" (2008, p.199).

She concludes that not only did marginalised students gain from the process, but privileged students also experienced transformation, allowing them to understand their realities in more meaningful ways: "... the collaborative practices in digital storytelling deepen understanding across social categories of identity and difference in ways that I have not experienced in any other course over my more than 30 years of teaching" (*ibid.*, p. 200).

Coventry (2008) argues that the unfamiliar medium of multimodality afforded students opportunities to reach a deeper level of learning and reflection: "Working in multimedia brings something to the student's learning that would otherwise not be possible: speaking and explaining through relatively unfamiliar modes of communication helps enforce a deeper engagement with ideas" (p. 207).

Reading these authors it seems that expanding the personal, experiential, emotional learning process that happens when developing and sharing one's digital story, by adding an engagement with critical readings and a research essay, may lead to an improved understanding of self and Other, in other words, to theorized self-reflexivity (Benmayer, 2008; Coventry, 2008; Oppermann, 2008).

These studies raise important issues for my study: the need to consciously prepare students for a critical engagement with issues of difference through, for example, critical readings; the importance of allowing students to engage in their own languages; the need to listen to the silences in students' stories; and the imperative of analysing the juxtaposition of the various modes in digital stories in order to uncover deeply rooted beliefs and assumptions in students' narratives. They also provide good pointers in terms of the importance of allowing students to re-position themselves and to re-author their stories. They alert us to the tensions and power struggles between facilitators and students in terms of briefs, expectations, ownership of stories and the creative freedom students yearn for, but which are not always in line with assessment procedures, rubrics and expectations of the course facilitators. They also highlight shortfalls of previous studies, in particular around the use of digital stories to involve the wider community in an engagement with issues of difference and Otherness'. They offer first ideas on how to facilitate students' multimodal analysis of their own stories to uncover their deeply held beliefs and assumptions about the Other'. However, what they do not address sufficiently, is the role of emotions in digital storytelling, digital storytelling as a *sentimental* genre.

3.5 Digital storytelling as a sentimental genre

3.5.1 A very brief history of sentimentality

As mentioned in the introduction, sentimentality has different connotations. Literature usually refers to four: one related to tender emotions, one – very loaded – emphasising weakness, one that focuses on self-indulgence and one linked to false or fake emotions (Knight, 1999). Where do these negative connotations come from?

Howard (1999) in her attempt to define sentimentality within literary studies, gives the following account of sentimentality's history: In the 18th century sentiment is seen as a crucial element of modern moral identity – “set oneself apart from the coarser types” (Jefferson, 1983, p. 519). Howard (1999) links sentiments (including emotions) to the possibilities of either feeling connected or distant to others. At the beginning of the 19th century though, sentimentality loses its grounds against “the elevation of emotional sensitivity to the status of a moral touchstone” (*ibid.*, p. 70), signifying a brand of “culpable naivety” (Jefferson, 1983, p. 520), becoming an insult in the turn of the century. In the 20th century writing then redefines itself as being openly against sentimentality and becomes more intellectual and masculine. However, sentimentality persists, in particular at the fringes of the literary world, for writers with minimal print access, such as African-American and Native American novelist. In later 20th century literature, sentimentality is rooted in the paradoxes of the public/private but also of the homo/heterosexual identity. Howard

concludes that sentimentality, in its broadest sense, is the use of an established convention that evokes emotion; ‘we mark a moment when the discursive processes that construct emotion become visible’ (p. 76) and in its most narrow sense, it refers to a literary genre where conventions and tropes are central.

In similar fashion, in his history of sentimentality in film and media, Burnetts (2011, p. 21) tracks the concept of sentimentality from its origins during the Enlightenment as a positive concept of denoting pedagogy and moral feeling, to its contemporary negative connotation defined by a ‘dominance of pathos, excess, clichéd situations, stereotypes, and formulae of melodrama’. He concludes that ‘... the sentimental had certainly crystallized as a term denoting kitsch and emotional manipulation’ (*ibid.*, p. 24).

3.5.2 The sentimentality of digital stories

What does the literature say about sentimentality and digital storytelling? Digital stories’ potential for affective connection is based on the centrality of personal life narratives (Poletti, 2011). Workshop participants are encouraged to share deeply personal stories and to engage with the emotions that come up in the process. It is a space where people reflect on what is often a painful past: a space where tears flow, voices crack and words get stuck in people’s throats as they are overcome by their emotions (Lambert, 2013). Lambert calls this step of the digital storytelling process ‘owning your emotions’ (Lambert, 2013, p. 57). He maintains that by listening to and sharing the often complex, big emotions that surface in the story circle, one can start to make meaning of one’s own story and help the audience understand the journey contained within this story (*ibid.*):

‘... only by listening to those emotions, owning they exist and are part of the reason you are drawn to this particular version of the story, can you effectively tackle a process of refinement of your tone and a deeper perspective on what you are asking the story to achieve.’

Emotions are intentionally used to establish an affective connection to the audience, as participants are, for example, asked: ‘Which emotions will best help the audience understand the journey contained with your story?’ (*ibid.*). Burgess (2006, p. 210) writes about this embodied process of becoming real to the Other through these emotions:

‘For the storyteller, the digital story is a means of becoming real to others, on the basis of shared experience and affective resonances. Many of the stories are, quite literally, touching.’

Lambert (2010, p. 13) acknowledges the complexity of the emotions that surface when telling our stories, and urges storytellers to think carefully about which emotions to include and exclude in a story. Emotions are translated in the script, carried in the voice-over of the storyteller, who “peels back the protective layers and finds the voice that conveys their emotional honesty” (*ibid.*, p. 19), expressed through images and the sound track of a digital story, which is typically soft and slow, and which underscores the emotional content of the story, as Lambert (*ibid.*) points out: “We see how music in a film stirs up an emotional response very different from what the visual information inherently suggests.”

The IKEA ad about the dismissal of an old bedside table lamp is a good example of manipulating an audience’s emotional response⁵. Here, the emotional message of the movie, the evocative soundtrack, the facial expression of the actor, and the ambience of a cold, dark, rainy night manipulate the viewer into feeling pity for a *bedside table*.

Consequently, the product of a digital storytelling workshop is an individual account that “can often be confessional, moving, and express troubles as well as triumphs...” (Hartley & McWilliam, 2009, p. 4). This emotional authenticity has been one of the most powerful elements of digital stories, leading to intense emotional engagement both by the author and the audience of a digital story, as Burgess argues (2006, p. 210):

“Somewhat paradoxically from a critical perspective, it is the very qualities that mark digital stories as uncool, conservative, and ideologically suspect – ‘stock’ tropes, nostalgia, even sentimentality – that give them the power of social connectivity, while the sense of authentic self-expression that they convey lowers the barriers to empathy.”

She encourages us to listen to these stories, characterised by “their sincerity, warmth and humanity” (2006, p. 208) without condemning them for their lack of criticality in content or professionalism in design.

It seems that, for these authors, sentimentality is seen as an essential feature of digital stories. This echoes Burnetts’ (2011, p. 25) comment, that in the recent past, sentimentality as appeal to the human and the childlike has found a renewed interest or appreciation in the context of individuals “struggling against technologically overwhelming and emotionally sterile modernities of advanced industry, war and entertainment”.

⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0t_yjBnbQnQ

There are few critical voices to alert us to the potential risk of the sentimental nature of digital stories. Where it is mentioned, it is in passing, such as Lambert (2013, p. 59) himself who warns of an “exaggerated tug on emotions” in digital stories which can be read as dishonesty, but who is quick to add that if a story “seems devoid of emotion, without a hint of struggle or conflict, then we don’t believe it either”.

Hartley and McWilliam (2009, p. 14) similarly call for everyone involved in digital stories to “maintain a reflexive and critical attitude within a supportive and human purpose” (*ibid.*, p. 15), to work against the “individualistic, and naively unselfconscious accounts of personal stories” (*ibid.*, p. 14).

To explore the sentimentality of digital stories in this study I have followed Burnetts (2011) who suggests that within media studies sentimentality represents three different sets of questions: one that relates to moral character, one that relates to the emotions, and one that relates to the visual. In order to find an analytical framework to interrogate sentimentality within digital storytelling, I also drew on different disciplines and perspectives, combining:

1. A critique of personal storytelling (the content and genre of digital stories);
2. A discussion of the sentimental reactions to the stories by a real and imagined audience; and
3. A critical media literacy lens, looking at the sentimental use of multimodality in digital stories, characterised by kitsch and excess.

What these approaches, which I will explore in the remaining sections of this chapter, have in common is a belief that we are embedded in dominant discourses, masternarratives, stock stories or – as media studies would term it – social semiotic histories which impact on how we can express ourselves, even when we are trying to trouble these dominant discourses. I would like to reiterate here that I do not critique digital storytelling in general, but in a very specific context, as a post-conflict pedagogy aimed at troubling students’ engagement across difference. The next sections explore these three approaches in more detail.

3.5.3 Personal vs collective stories

Although she does not refer specifically to digital storytelling, I find Shuman’s 2005 book, *Other people’s stories: Entitlement claims and the critique of empathy*, a useful conceptual framework within which to think about the stories my students tell and, in particular, how these stories link personal storytelling, sentimentality and empathy.

In similar fashion to hooks and Haug, Shuman distinguishes between personal and collective narratives. Haug and hooks refer to a collective narrative as the narrative that emerges after

listening to a range of individual stories, pointing us to the shared collective experience and providing first points of understanding how our individual experience is impacted by shared systemic and structural inequalities. Shuman's collective narrative is closer to what CRT would term a dominant or masternarrative, a stock story. She suggests that personal narratives can both support or disrupt collective narratives, but the two can never be separated. As Shuman explains (p.55), the relationship is complex:

–Both the personal and the collective story can be legitimizing categories that provide meaning and pattern to life, but traversing the terrain between the personal and the collective can be fraught with obstacles to understanding.”

Personal and collective stories are always positioned in relation to each other. Personal stories can either trouble the collective story as counternarratives or affirm the collective story as allegories. Drawing on Butler, Shuman defines allegories as “the translation of ideas into images” (p.71). She sees empathy being reliant on (distant) story listeners' allegorizing experience to draw their own meaning from it and thus claim some mutual understanding (p.72).

Shuman further argues that it can be helpful for storytellers to realise that their trauma story is not unique, but part of a collective narrative, making it easier for them to tell the untellable or unspeakable. This lack of awareness of a collective story could potentially be life-threatening, as reported by Shuman in her research on asylum seekers, where the repeated telling of a story too similar to the collective story impacted negatively on a case worker's empathy for and support of the asylum seeker.

The story genre is another important concept in understanding empathy. Personal experience narrative genres, such as trauma stories (often experienced in my workshops), are instruments for defining the relationship between storyteller and story listener. As Shuman explains, “... genres of personal-experience narrative hold different possibilities for securing and developing the relationship between the self and the world” (p. 75).

Furthermore it is important to note that storyability' (what gets told) and tellability' (who can tell it to whom) depends on the context in which a story is told, the audience, the resources the storyteller can refer to, cultural norms and values, and the storyteller's willingness to live with existing categories for interpreting his or her experience (pp. 7–8).

3.5.4 Personal storytelling, audience response and a critique of empathy

Shuman argues that the telling of personal stories is vital for establishing empathy between storyteller and story listener. She defines empathy differently to Boler: for her, empathy

initially refers to “the act of understanding others across times, space, or any difference in experience” (p.4), or the ability to walk in each other’s shoes. She argues that empathy could allow somebody to transcend an experience through the shared story of someone else:

“Empathy puts in place the possibility that, through the luxury of storytelling, others can indirectly experience that person’s suffering for their personal or collective enlightenment without enduring those tragedies, or if they have endured tragedies, they are offered transcendence through compassion towards others.” (2005, p. 5)

Using the example of charity junk mail, however, Shuman quickly moves beyond this notion of empathy, linking it back to issues of power and privilege. She warns against the appropriation of somebody else’s trauma narrative, as in the case of charity junk mail, where “... appropriation can use one person’s tragedy to serve as another’s inspiration and preserves, rather than subverts, oppressive situations” (p.5). As she explains, “Empathy offers the possibility of understanding across space and time, but it rarely changes the circumstances of those who suffer” (*ibid.*). While a discussion of the ethics of charity goes beyond the scope of my thesis, I find her critique interesting from an empathy perspective. Empathy in junkmail situations allows storylisteners to participate in social action, but also maintains a *distance* between those who suffer and those who are privileged to contribute to the well-being of people they will never know and whose experiences they will never have. This mirrors Young’s notion of asymmetrical reciprocity (1997) or Boler’s (1999) differentiation between active and passive empathy as discussed in chapters 2 and 4, both emphasising the importance of recognising that we actually can and should never put ourselves in somebody else’s shoes, but rather should acknowledge both our similarities and differences and take on responsibility for our role in somebody else’s suffering. Shuman also introduces the notion of witnessing, which resonates with Boler’s notion of active empathy or witnessing:

“Empathy preserves a distance between those who understand and those who experience trauma: *witnessing troubles that distance*, and while it does not necessarily close the distance, it transforms the distance enough for the witness to be part of the constituency of sufferer ... empathy can produce alienation.” (p.144, my emphasis)

In particular, her understanding of sentimentality in personal storytelling is useful for my study. She looks at sentimentality from two sides: the storyteller’s telling of sentimental stories and the storylistener’s sentimental reaction to stories.

On the side of the storyteller, she states that personal experience stories have to negotiate a fine line between the trivial, when telling everyday stories, and sensationalism, when telling trauma stories. She considers both sentimental:

–The ordinary becomes precious, and as we know well, the precious is the most dangerous of representations; it is always precariously close to the trivial, just as its counterpart, the extraordinary, is precariously close to scandal. The ethnography of suffering requires a critique of empathy, an understanding of representation that represents emotion as neither trivial nor scandalous.” (p.150)

From the storylistener’s point of view, Shuman argues that while the potential to elicit empathy and social action, may be –a great, perhaps the greatest, promise of storytelling, it is at the same time a destabilizing element”. She refers to two destabilizing moments of empathy for the story listener: first, a personal story travels beyond the original story setting and is used as an allegory for a collective experience (for example, in charity junkmail) and in the process destabilizes the association between the person and the experience; and second, when entitlement claims are made that challenge sentimentalizing allegories which in turn undermine empathy – as she argues often as *alibis* for a failure of empathy (as in the example of refugee asylum seekers not being granted asylum because their personal narratives are too similar to the collective narrative). She explains that especially when these stories travel and become appropriated, there is danger of sentimentalizing and misrepresenting personal experience.

This resonates and provides a link to Zembylas (2008, p.2), who in the context of a response to trauma stories, calls this the risk of focusing either on the *universality* or the *particularity* of trauma:

–. the argument about the particularity of trauma and the impossibility of identifying with someone else’s suffering leads not only to an impasse in terms of connecting with others but also threatens to diminish the implications of trauma.”

Shuman’s understanding of empathy and witnessing, and how they connect to the telling of personal stories, that can travel beyond their original storytelling setting, is of particular interest for exploring the practice of digital storytelling. My students’ stories travel, both as oral and as digital stories, beyond the story circle and are shared outside this intimate space. Whether in the larger classroom, during the semi-public screening, on the CPUTstories YouTube channel or in other public spaces such as church meetings, these stories cross from a private into a public space, often with little additional information or context provided. What is the role of these personal stories in the private sphere of the story circle and in the

public sphere of a screening? What do these often highly personal and emotional stories achieve? How do students negotiate the sentimentality of every-day trauma stories, so close to a collective narrative that they may be perceived as inauthentic; or the sensationalism of stories that, through the shock they induce, may distract from the bigger, political picture?

3.5.5 Digital storytelling and audience response

There are few studies in the field of digital storytelling that look specifically at audience response to digital stories. Echoing Burgess's work cited above, Cueva *et al.* (2015) explore what makes digital stories about cancer engaging, concluding it was their format (limited length), non-directive and non-preachy nature, emotional and personal content, and relevance and authenticity that the audience appreciated.

I found only one study that expressed open critique of the potential of digital storytelling within a specific context, i.e. to facilitate critical citizenship, in relation to audience response. Poletti's (2011) paper Coaxing an intimate public: Life narrative in digital storytelling engages critically with the process of digital storytelling using Berlant's (2008) theory of an intimate public. Poletti (2011, p. 73) questions the "... efficacy of digital storytelling to articulate the relationships between personal experiences of structural social and political inequalities, given its narrative emphasis on closure, affect and universality". Digital storytellers tell their stories in a very specific context (a workshop) which is framed by very specific discourses (such as the CDS motto Everyone has a story to tell) which, she argues, needs to be considered and challenged. In practice, very specific stories that have to follow a certain genre to establish affective connection with the audience are coaxed from participants.

Poletti argues that the size and scope limit of the format, along with the need for a digital story to convey a message to a potentially unknown audience, promotes a specific digital story genre, characterised by:

1. an emphasis on closure: "... powerful, complex, rich stories are preferred over stories that do not make their intentions clear or fail to resolve the issues they have raised" (Lambert, cited in Poletti, 2011), often resulting in a happy ending;
2. an emphasis on narrative accessibility and universal meaning; and
3. a uniform structure and a coherence of theme.

Poletti suggests that this exaggerated desire to connect affectively with an unknowable audience encourages individuals to shape their heterogeneous experiences into stories of personal reflection on [...] dominant themes", easy to understand by an intimate public' (Berlant, 2008). Berlant (2008, p. viii) defines this intimate public in the following way:

–What makes a public sphere intimate is an expectation that the consumers of its particular stuff already share a worldview and emotional knowledge that they have derived from a broadly common historical experience.”

Poletti uses this notion of an intimate public to strengthen her claim that digital stories tell stories which the audience can identify with or already knows. She warns that this may work *against* the political aspirations often attached to specific digital storytelling projects, such as the promotion of critical citizenship (Thumim, 2009).

Another study exploring a different notion of sentimentality in the audience response to digital stories is Hill's (2010) work on a community-based digital storytelling workshop on gender-based violence. While acknowledging the potential for healing that the digital storytelling process initially afforded one of her participants, Thoko, and the importance of sharing these stories for social activism, she reports that:

–Thoko has noted that being involved with the project ~~r~~really did help with the healing process,” but she has also admitted that, somewhere along the way (as she began to share her stories), it started ~~r~~ehashing old wounds.” ... Thoko has also written that she knew that it ~~w~~as time to stop” when she began ~~g~~etting pissed off by the pity looks after I give a presentation,” which made her feel ~~w~~weak and victimized.” (pp.136-137).

This comment shows the limits of empathy and the risk of these stories being used for voyeuristic consumerism by a passive audience. Drawing from Boler's (1999) notion of testimonial reading, Hill suggests, that one way of avoiding this sentimental reaction would be to encourage viewers to take note of the emotions that surface while watching a story and reflecting on how they could be socio-culturally constructed.

Shuman and Hill's works are particularly useful to framing my third research question, where I look at capacities of digital stories to elicit certain audience responses such as pity, anger, defensiveness, empathy or witnessing.

3.5.6 Sentimentality and critical media literacy

To respond to a manipulation of emotions through mass media, the concept of critical media literacy is brought into the debate, in particular when framed by a critical pedagogy perspective, such as defined by Kellner and Share (2007b, p.41):

–Critical media literacy expands the notion of literacy to include different forms of mass communication and popular culture as well as deepens the potential of

education to critically analyze relationships between media and audiences, information and power."

Kellner and Share (2005) highlight the importance of embedding critical media literacy into teaching and learning, both by analysing media culture as a product of social production and struggle and teaching students to be critical of media representations and discourses; and by stressing the importance of learning to use media as a mode of self-expression and social activism:

"We strongly recommend a pedagogy of teaching critical media literacy through project-based media production ... for making analyses more meaningful and empowering as students gain tools for responding and taking action on the social conditions and texts they are critiquing." (Kellner & Share, 2007b, p. 9)

Drawing on Kellner and Share's categorization of teaching approaches for critical media literacy (2005, 2007a, 2007b), digital storytelling would fall under the media arts education approach, where students learn to appreciate the aesthetics of media and are given the opportunity for self-expression through these media. As critical pedagogues, they emphasize the importance of giving marginalised students a voice in connection with a critical analysis of the dominant voices. However, they warn that to give this space for self-expression is not enough: only a critical reflection on the interplay of media, power, information and the audience would hold "dramatic potential for transformative critical media literacy" (p.7).

There are many examples in the literature of the use of videos and documentaries framed by critical pedagogy to facilitate students' engagement with critical media literacy media (for a discussion, see Morgan & Ramanathan's (2005) paper). Digital storytelling is seen by some authors as an appropriate vehicle to promote this skill. Ohler (2006, 2008), for example, contends that the process of producing media as part of digital storytelling can be such a critical approach to teach students about the persuasive power of digital media, influencing what we think and how we feel. Digital storytelling studies that engage with promote critical media literacy in students are few. Brushwood Rose's study (2009) critically analyses her students' stories in terms of juxtapositions of the various modes of a digital story to uncover the stories that unconsciously dominate her students' narratives, but this is done by her as researcher, not by the students themselves. She argues that it is the juxtaposition between narration, sound and image which can show us our "unconscious and its ambivalences and resist the often tidy confines of our conscious telling" (2009, p. 212).

In a more recent paper, Brushwood Rose and Low (2014, p. 14) introduce the notion of craftedness of digital stories, which they use to highlight the dual concerns when looking at

digital storytelling process and product: "... the crafting of the story, as well as its status as a crafted object'. This craftedness' implies that digital storytelling needs both skills or technique and a sense of aesthetics, which they define as:

---. emotional or affective dimensions of representation which are cultivated through an attention to how a particular image or expression communicates experiences of beauty, harmony, dissonance, ambivalence and so on." (*ibid.*)

These concepts are particularly useful in the context of my second research question, where I use a multimodal approach to analyse two digital stories to explore the potential of digital storytelling to tell counternarratives. I look at these ambivalences in my students' stories in an attempt to explore the entanglement of authorial intent, semiotic histories impacting on their technical skills and sense of aesthetics, audience response, and how, through repeated performance of those stories, storytellers enact their subjectivities and are acted upon.

3.6 Gaps in the literature and concluding thoughts

This study is set in the wider context of post-conflict pedagogies. Authors in the field concur that there is a dearth of literature about pedagogical interventions that engage students in difficult conversations and teach empathy with and compassion for the Other'.

Pertinent to this study's research questions, my literature review has also revealed a marked gap in the literature around critical digital storytelling. While digital storytelling has been studied and engaged with as a tool for social justice education, little work has been done to explore how the potential sentimentality of the digital storytelling genre affects its ability to facilitate transformation of social engagements with the Other'. There are studies exploring the interplay between emotional and cognitive labour through digital storytelling in HE, such as Oppermann's (2008), Coventry's (2008) and Benmayor's (2008) work, which give some pointers as to how to frame digital storytelling projects within a critical theory, such as extending the digital storytelling model with an engagement with critical texts and reflective writing. In all, there is a distinct lack of critical engagement with digital storytelling, apart from lonely voices such as Poletti's (2011) paper which questions the potential for digital storytelling as a tool to promote critical citizenship. I have also found a significant dearth of literature around digital storytelling's risk of promoting sentimentality, both in the actual stories, their use of multimodality and in the audience response. I could find no studies that engage or work with the potential sentimentality of the digital storytelling genre, be it the centrality of the personal, the sentimentality expressed in the various multimodal texts of a digital story or their focus on establishing an affective connection.

In this study, I thus approach sentimentality from three angles: in the content of the stories; in the way storytellers use multimodal resources; and ultimately in the audience response to the digital stories shared in the classroom, as discussed in chapter 3. My approach in this study is thus framed by a belief that we are embedded in dominant discourses and masternarratives that influence what stories we tell, how we tell them and how we receive them.

CH 4: Theoretical framework

*“We listen to stories in order to be changed.”
Antjie Krog, Mosisi Mpolweni and Kopano Ratele*

“People become the stories they hear and the stories they tell.” Elie Wiesel

4.1 Introduction

As a feminist pedagogue, I am interested in developing and implementing feminist pedagogies. Feminist pedagogues are politically motivated. They argue that education can never be neutral, but always follows a political agenda or standpoint. My political agenda in this study is for my students to reflect upon their engagements across difference, to challenge some of the assumptions and beliefs they have about self and Other, but also challenge the way they do race, gender and class, and ultimately to create classrooms that are more socially just. As such, I see myself as a social justice educator and my teaching and learning is framed by this agenda.

To build my theoretical framework, I draw on feminist writers such as Butler, Ahmed and Young, working at the intersection of queer feminist theory, cultural and political feminist theory. In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical concepts that underpin my study, starting with Butler's early work on gender performativity highlighting the importance of subverting or troubling normative frameworks that impact on our subjectivities/identities, be they gender-, race- or class-based. Furthermore, I engage with authors of the so-called affective turn which challenges the centrality of reason and cognition in political and civic engagement, arguing that only through the interplay of emotion and cognition can issues of social justice be addressed. Here, I am particularly interested in authors who do not focus on emotions as solely individual characteristics of subjects, but who view emotions as a political project and as socio-culturally constructed (e.g. Ahmed, 2004; Berlant, 2008; Boler, 1999). Finally, I introduce authors that theorise on an engagement with this Other, such as Young's concept of asymmetrical reciprocity. With all of these authors, my particular interest is in how they engage with issues of difference, self and Other, and ultimately in how to effect social justice in education.

While the three main theorists I am drawing from (Butler, Ahmed and Young) may come from different theoretical frameworks (Butler and Young from poststructuralism, both drawing

heavily from Foucault, Ahmed drawing from social constructivism) their focus on a feminist relational ontology, concerned with relationship between self and other are helpful for this study. In particular Butler and Ahmed have been used in tandem by a range of authors (see for example (Clough, 2007; Zembylas, 2014). All three are concerned with issues of intersectionality, issues of ethics, social justice, the politics of difference, and collective responsibility and accountability - see in particular Butler's (2004a, 2009) later work on affect, grievable lives and vulnerability, Ahmed's (2004) Cultural Politics of Emotions and Young's Responsibility for Justice (2011). Furthermore, these authors emphasise the importance of troubling norms and dominant discourses in order to provoke social change.

4.2 Feminist pedagogies and my own political agenda

Feminist theory has its roots in women's liberation (hooks, 2000b). Over time, its central tenet has become a challenge to, and a critical and radical transformation of, asymmetrical and dominant power relations across the world. Chaudry (2009, p. 138) defines the feminist project as "... the impulse to speak subjectivities into existence in order to voice that which has been forbidden, repressed, or pushed to the margins by patriarchal codes of thinking, language, and representation".

However, to define feminist theory as focusing only on oppressive relationships between men and women is to reduce and distort its fundamental basis. According to Manicom (1992, p. 366), feminist epistemology has

-a political intent and visions of social change and liberation-not simply with an aim to have (some) women make it in the world of (some) men, but to learn to act in and on the world in order to transform oppressive relations of class, race and gender [...] not to change women to fit the world, but to change the world."

Feminist attempts to explore this intersectionality of race, class and gender, rather than simply addressing questions of women assuming power positions occupied by men are of particular interest to my study. hooks (2000b, p. 19) defines this as a "simplistic definition of women's liberation":

-Implicit in this simplistic definition of women's liberation is a dismissal of race and class as factors that, in conjunction with sexism, determine the extent to which an individual will be discriminated against, exploited, or oppressed."

Feminist pedagogues are concerned with how to use education as a means to bring about social change, as Manicom (1992, p. 365) explains:

–Feminist pedagogy is not a handy set of instructional techniques. Rather, feminist pedagogy is a standpoint (Briskin, 1990). The standpoint of a feminist teacher is political: to develop feminist analyses that inform and reform teachers' and students' ways of acting in and on the world. Central here is feminist movement toward social justice, and a pedagogy that fosters this movement.”

My approach to education is underpinned by a critical social justice framework. I view education as a potentially liberating and active practice, driven by students who become co-constructors of knowledge (Freire, 2005; hooks, 1994). Within this paradigm, it is assumed that education is neither non-direct nor neutral, but submits to a political agenda. Critical pedagogue Freire (2005, p. 34), whose work helped ground feminist epistemology, argues:

–There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the practice of freedom,‘ the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”

My agenda in this study is transformative, i.e. to work towards a more socially just education, employing pedagogical practices that prompt learners to reflect on and trouble how they perform self and engage across difference.

4.3 Third-wave feminism and Butler's performativity

The history of feminism is often described in waves. Although I recognise, that distinction between the authors situated within these different waves, is not always as clear-cut, as it appears in this generational view, it is helpful to trace the broad changes within feminism. While first-wave feminism in general was concerned with fighting for the social, legal and economic rights for women, such as the right to vote, second-wave feminism focused on looking at different types of oppression and domination beyond legal, economic and human rights, such as body, morality, subjectivity and identity. Second-wave feminism explored the intersectionality of gender, race and class: “... [l]ooking at the interlocking nature of gender, race, and class was the perspective that changed the direction of feminist thought” (hooks, 2000b, p. xii). hooks's discussion of a hierarchy of oppression is particularly useful for my study. While rejecting this hierarchy of oppression, which she deems unnecessary, she argues that (2000, pp. 36–37, my emphasis):

–Sexist oppression is of primary importance not because it is the basis of all other oppression, but because it is the practice of domination most people experience, whether their role be that of discriminator or discriminated against, exploiter or exploited. It is the practice of domination most people are socialized to accept before they even know that other forms of group oppression exist. This does not mean that eradicating sexist oppression would eliminate other forms of oppression. *Since all forms of oppression are linked in our society because they are supported by similar institutional and social structures, one system cannot be eradicated while the others remain intact.*”

Second-wave feminism would see conventional constructions of femininity as embodiment of male oppression, as a –social location” (Schippers & Sapp, 2012, p. 31), and as something that needs to be fought and eradicated.

Both first- and second-wave feminism have clear understandings of female and male identity. However, over time, critical voices within feminist thought questioned this universal idea of a uniform woman’, arguing that feminism did not benefit all women across the world in equal measures. In particular, Afro-American, third-world and lesbian feminists started to critique their white counterparts’ perceived colour-blind sisterhood’ discourse (Simsek, 2012b, p. 73) based on their inability to speak of the interrelatedness of sex, race and class oppression and feminism within a –women’s movement shaped to meet the class needs of upwardly mobile white women”, intent on fighting for their own economic rights (hooks, 2000b, p. 53). Butler (1999, p. 6) reflects on this:

–The political assumption that there must be a universal basis for feminism, one which must be found in an identity assumed to exist cross-culturally, often accompanies the notion that the oppression of women has some singular form discernible in the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination.”

Feminism thus started to deconstruct these stable notions of women/men. Rather than accepting fixed gender identities, third-wave feminism in particular is concerned with how terms such as gender are discursively constructed. Schippers and Sapp (2012, p. 30) describe third-wave feminism as concerned with –corporeal performance of a discursively produced and contested set of criteria for being a woman within the structural conditions of gender inequality”. Power dynamics are thus not necessarily functions of males dominating females, but based on relationalities between people, which are constantly re-negotiated and re-established, or as hooks (2000b, p. 27) states: –When we cease to focus on the simplistic stance men are the enemy’, we are compelled to examine systems of domination and our

role in their maintenance and perpetuation". In similar fashion, Schippers and Sapp (2012, p. 32) urge us to examine notions such as gender and femininity, and show us potentially subversive ways to counter hegemonic constructions of femininity:

–Third wave feminist perspective rejects the assertion that men possess power and women are subject to and/or lack power. Instead, third wave feminist perspectives conceive of power as relational, having multiple tactics and strategies, and as available to subordinate groups and not just the possession of dominant groups.”

4.3.1 Butler and gender performativity

Third-wave feminism draws heavily on queer theorist Butler's (1999; 2004b) conceptualisation of gender as performative, discursive and relational. Butler defines queer as “site of collective contestation” to be “always and only redeployed, twisted, queered” (1993, p. 223), a space first and foremost for contesting gender and sexuality, but eventually anything that is normal, legitimate and normative, such as race or class. Butler's theory of gender performativity developed over time in her three books, *Performative acts and gender constitution* (1988), *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity* (1999) and *Undoing gender* (2004b). In her work, she aims to unsettle stabilising, dichotomous gender categories (man/woman) which attempt to normalise and regulate people, by demonstrating how gender is discursively produced through repeated performance and how this repeated performativity constitutes a subject (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). Butler (2004b, p. 206) defines normativity in the following way:

–Normativity refers to the process of normalization, the way that certain norms, ideas and ideals hold sway over embodied life, provide coercive criteria for normal men and women. And in this second sense, we see that norms are what govern intelligible life, real men and real women. And that when we defy these norms, it is unclear whether we are still living, or ought to be, whether our lives are valuable, or can be made to be, whether our genders are real, or ever can be regarded as such.”

Butler's main concern is to disrupt the notion that sex (male/female) and gender (masculinity/femininity), and consequently the direction of desire (to the other gender), are causally linked, thereby allowing for a more flexible understanding of desire (1999, p. 10):

–When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one.”

One of her most famous theoretical concepts is that gender becomes a *verb*, constituting something somebody does repeatedly. This performative doing constitutes, rather than merely expresses, identity:

— gender proves to be performative — that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a *doing*, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed.” (Butler, 1999, p. 32, my emphasis)

Butler continues to explain: —. if gender is performative, then it follows that the reality of gender is itself produced as an *effect* of the performance” (2004, p. 218, my emphasis). What is important here, as she notes, is the repeated nature of discursive gender construction (1999, pp. 43–44, my emphasis):

—Gender is the *repeated* stylization of the body, a set of *repeated* acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.”

This distinction between expression and performativity of gender is crucial, as Butler explains. If gender is performed rather than expressed, no pre-existing gender identity can then be assumed by which this act can be measured. Hence, she concludes, there might not be any true or false, real or distorted acts of gender, and the postulation of a true gender identity would be revealed as a regulatory fiction” (Butler, 1999, p. 180).

Morton (2003, p. 72) is helpful in understanding what Butler’s notion of gender being discursively performed:

—What Butler means by discourse in this context is not merely language, but the power of language in the hands of dominant social institutions to construct and determine human identity. For example, at the moment of childbirth, the midwife’s assertion that it’s a girl immediately names and defines a child according to the rules and norms of a patriarchal society.

This quote shows two major functions of gender performativity: First gender establishes us as humans. As Butler (1990; p. 132) puts it: —If human existence is always gendered existence, then to stray outside the established gender is in some sense to put one’s very existence into question”. This resonates with literature on race where blackness is positioned outside norms and thus constructed as non-human’ (Nopper, n.d.).

Secondly, as well as performing gender through our acts, we perform or are assigned gender through our speech, as Bury (2005, p. 8) points out:

–Butler’s claim that gender is an effect rather than the cause of words, actions and gestures’ suggests that gender performance is not just about ways of walking but ways of talking. It is not only what I do that makes me recognizable as a woman but what I say and how I say it.”

Furthermore, while gender is always done’, it is not done by a subject on his or her own, but always in relation to somebody else, even if this somebody is imagined (Butler, 2004b). It follows that if terms such as masculinity and femininity are discursively constructed, they are also historically contextual and continue to change meaning (Butler, 2004b, p. 10):

–Terms such as masculine’ and feminine’ are notoriously changeable; there are social histories for each term; their meanings change radically depending upon geopolitical boundaries and cultural constraints on who is imagining whom, and for what purpose.”

Butler is particularly vocal in attributing dimensions such as race, class, ethnicity or sexuality to a woman to define her (Butler, 1999, p. 21), rather than allowing subjectivities to shift, transform, be in a place of constant negotiation and contestation, or to enact their –definitional incompleteness”:

–It would be wrong to assume in advance that there is a category of women’ that simply needs to be filled in with various components of race, class, age, ethnicity, and sexuality in order to become complete. The assumption of its essential incompleteness permits that category to serve as a permanently available site of contested meanings. The definitional incompleteness of the category might then serve as a normative ideal relieved of coercive force.”

We are not determined by our gender, race and class, since our subjectivities can shift depending on social relations, historical experiences, and material conditions. Jackson (2004, p. 686) concludes: –Performativity, then, produces the space of conflicting subjectivities, which contests the foundations and origins of stable identity categories.”

4.3.2 Digital subjectivities

This notion of a discursive performance of gender is interesting in the context of digital storytelling, and in particular when analysing the digital stories that are the outcome of such a process. Can Butler’s notion of performativity of gender, race, class and sexuality be transferred to digital stories, which, contrary to real-life performance, are mediated, representational, constructed narratives? In queer theory, performativity is a human affair, as Barad notes (2011). Can performativity be applied to a nonhuman object, such as a digital

story? Can the repeated performance of a digital story be seen as more than a narrative? Can it act upon the storyteller's subjectivity? Can the repeated sharing of digital stories trouble the way a storyteller does gender, race, class and sexuality?

An emerging field that studies digital subjectivities addresses the way that subjectivities are both enacted and acted upon in digital spaces. Authors addressing this are often associated with new feminist materialism and posthumanism (Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 1991, 2008); and see matter as having agency and entangled with human bodies. While a discussion of the complexities of the way they disrupt traditional notions of "spacetime-mattering" and its radical rework of identity and difference (Barad, 2011, p. 125) deserves more space than I can give here, I draw attention to a few studies that engage with the idea of digital subjectivities. These studies draw from Haraway's 'cyborgs' (1991) who, part human and part machine, are described as "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as creature of fiction" (p.149). They argue that subjects' online identities – such as enacted in blogs (Angelone, 2011), through webcams (Jimroglou, 1999) or through digital performance art (Garoian & Gaudelius, 2008) – are ways to construct clones of their real subjectivity, with material outcomes on the subject in real life. Garoian and Gaudelius (2008, p. 337) state that digital contexts allow subjects to:

... create personal narratives of identity as both a strategy of resistance and as a means through which to construct new ideas, images, and myths about ourselves living in a technological world. In doing so, the performance of the self as cyborg represents an overt political act of resistance in the digital age."

Bury (2005, p. 8) supports this by arguing that language is the link from the real body to the online identity in digital spaces: "... the body continues to signify gender intelligibility linguistically. Language in this sense is the linchpin that connects bodies to their online identities".

In my own study, language, images, sound and my participants' voices connect their bodies strongly to their digital stories. I believe my students' subjectivities and bodies are both enacted and acted upon in the process of writing, crafting and repeatedly performing their digital stories. Digital storytellers are both composer and composed (Jimroglou, 1999). As I show later in this study, by crafting and performing their digital story, storytellers have the possibility of experimenting with new subjectivities that could become real with time and repeated performance. As Frank (2010) points out, there is a possibility that we become the stories we tell.

4.3.3 Doing gender, race, class differently

If we believe that gender, class and race are performance, and that the repeated performance thereof is performative, how can we then *do* gender, class and race differently both in everyday life and in a digital story? How do we move beyond being “compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence” (Butler, 1999, p. 32)?

In a 2011 interview with bigthink⁶, Butler emphasizes the importance of subverting and resisting to gender norms:

“It’s my view that gender is culturally formed, but it’s also a domain of agency or freedom and that it is most important to resist the violence that is imposed by ideal gender norms, especially against those who are gender different, who are non-conforming in their gender presentation.”

Butler (1999, p. 185) explains that to break out of this cultural formation, to ‘re-signify’ one’s gender, means to alter this repetitive performativity: “In a sense, all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat; ‘agency’, then, is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition.” In *Undoing gender* (2004b, p. 3), she develops this thought further, emphasising the paradox of agency:

“If I have any agency, it is opened up by the fact that I am constituted by a social world I never chose. That my agency is riven with paradox does not mean it is impossible. It means only that paradox is the condition of its possibility.”

How can we then break out of this discursive construction of our gendered identity or, as Butler asks, ‘How can we speak our way out of gender’ (1999, p. 149)? She urges us to not only try to understand how gender is performed and constructed - “instituted, naturalized, and established as presuppositional” (2004, p. 216) - but also to be alert to the moments when gender is being challenged, where it becomes “malleable and transformable” (*ibid.*). As she asks, “What kind of subversive repetition might call into question the regulatory practice of identity itself?” (1999, p. 42).

In her book *Gender trouble*, Butler shows how a drag queen has the opportunity to subvert and disrupt the performance and construction of gender by providing “parodic proliferation and subversive play of gendered meanings” (1999, p. 44, my emphasis):

“This text continues, then, as an effort to think through the possibility of subverting and displacing those naturalized and reified notions of gender that support masculine

⁶ <http://bigthink.com/videos/your-behavior-creates-your-gender>

hegemony and heterosexist power, *to make gender trouble*, not through the strategies that figure a utopian beyond, but *through the mobilization, subversive confusion, and proliferation* of precisely those constitutive categories that seek to keep gender in its place by posturing as the foundational illusions of identity.”

Butler also uses lesbianism to show how women who move beyond the norms of heterosexuality start to “radically problematize both sex and gender as stable political categories of description” (1999, p. 144). In *Undoing gender*, Butler (2004b, p. 209) shows how gender identities are performed and constructed within homosexual relationships and how these – as opposed to being seen as replicated ‘original’ roles of a heterosexual relationship – allow us to understand how these original relationships are constructed and performed:

“... categories like butch and femme were not copies of a more originary heterosexuality, but they showed how the so-called originals, men and women within the heterosexual frame, are similarly constructed, performatively established.”

Rather than seeing the complete demise of heterosexuality as the only way to disrupt hegemonic discourses, she argues that one can subvert from within, as shown in the terminology used by lesbian women (Butler, 1999, p. 156):

“The terms queens, butches, femmes, girls, even the parodic reappropriation of dyke, queer, and fag redeploy and destabilize the categories of sex and the originally derogatory categories for homosexual identity.

Contrary to feminist authors who see drag and cross-dressing as degrading of women, or butch/femme identities as uncritical appropriation of sex-role stereotyping, she defends these practices: “In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency” (1999, p. 175). This reveals “that the original identity after which gender fashions itself is an imitation without an origin”: a “simulacrum”, leading to a “loss of the sense of ‘the normal’” (1999, p. 176). However, she also cautions us to be aware that not all repeated parodic performance automatically subverts the normal. This is dependent on a receptive context in which subversive confusion can be fostered.

A central critique of Butler’s work is her vagueness about these moments of disruption. Since she also focuses on extremes – such as drag queens and crossdressing – it becomes difficult to see how women in ‘normalised’ relationships, i.e. heterosexual relationships (McNay, 1999) or in traditional and homophobic societies, could follow these examples. These are important questions for my own work, set within the highly regulated, formal,

conservative space of South African teacher education. What could troubling norms mean in this space? How far could my students go? What counterstories could they perform to trouble their own and others' subjectivities?

4.4 The affective turn

While Butler's ideas on gender performativity gave me room to think about how my students could do race, class and gender differently through digital storytelling, the strong focus on discourse left me unsatisfied. In particular, what I felt was missing was an engagement with the emotion, or the affective space, that is created within a digital storytelling workshop and the complex and messy interplay of feeling and knowing. Although Butler's later work focuses on emotions such as grief (Butler, 2004a, 2009), I found authors from the humanities and social sciences who identify with what they term the 'affective turn' (which looks at what emotions in a digital storytelling process *do*) helpful for my study. In unpacking sentimentality and in particular its contestation, I draw from Boler, Ahmed and Berlant's challenge of a division of public and private sphere -associated with masculinity and femininity, respectively, and the dominance of rationality (as opposed to emotionality) in Western culture and particularly how it affects women's participation in public life.

4.4.1 Creating a space for emotions in education

My study foregrounds the entanglement of feeling and knowing, challenging the traditional view that emotions are detrimental for civic engagement, used to establish dominance of male, Western thought over for example female or black thought. In her book, *Feeling power: Emotions and education*, Boler (1999, p. xiii) comments on the intricate connection between favouring rational thought over emotion and the domination of men over women: "The denigration of emotion and women is what enables reason and masculine intellectual mastery to appear as the winner in the contest for truth". In similar fashion, Ahmed (2004, p. 195) argues that "... it is the hierarchies established by such models, which allow women and racial others to be seen as less moral, as less capable of making judgments: it is such others, of course, who are often presented as being swayed by their emotions."

This is interesting in relation to sentimentality. Knight (1999, p. 419) challenges a critique of sentimentality from within the field of philosophy, linking this critique to a gendered discourse, emphasising the dichotomy of reason and emotions. She argues, that sentimentality, linked to emotions, can only be seen as *less* within a masculine philosophical paradigm: "Sentimentality is a womanish - and at the end of the day, a sluttish - attitude: indulgent, cheap, shallow, self-absorbed, excessive. Sentimentality is depicted as destructive of the finer and more noble aspects of the self." She warns us that those who

critique sentimentality should be careful to recognise how they position themselves – could the condemnation of sentimentality be sentimental in itself?

However a discussion on what constitutes right or wrong emotions, is also pertinent in a slightly different context. Earlier this year, the #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) movement at UCT, where the academic response to Chumani Maxwele's throwing of human excrement on the statue of Sir Cecil Rhodes was condemned by some based on its irrational, emotional nature, implicitly calling for more dialogue and an intellectual academic debate. As Slasha (2015) notes:

–The call for dialogue is an insult to Blackness. It is a bucket of excrement thrown at blacks who express their lived experience within academia and all the Blacks who have suffered under the anti-Black Rhodes. It is an insulting discredit of our grammar of suffering. It is a trivialization of black suffering. What this implies is the old racist stereotype that the Black is innately hysterical and is fond of blowing small things out of proportion.”

In their statement of support for #RMF, TransformUCT (2015, n.p.), a grouping of black academics from different departments and faculties at UCT, addresses this point (my emphasis):

–The discourse around the student-led protests has included language about unreasonable and uncivilised behaviour and racial epithets have been used in reference to the students. This reason/emotion binary has a long colonial history where protest and anger at injustice are implicitly coded in gendered and racialised ways to dismiss legitimate critique. The statue, other symbols on campus, and the general response to this movement speak to the racist and violent history of Rhodes, his image, and our institution. Anger, protest and resistance are appropriate responses to this racist history. *To frame the anger of black students as inappropriate is to dismiss and deflect from the deep structural injustices that continue at this institution, which „reasoned debate“ to the extent that it has happened, has not successfully addressed.*”

Authors following the affective turn recognise that emotions such as black anger have become a central concern in the context of critical citizenship and social justice education. Contesting the common notion that citizenship is linked to rational thinking, feminist authors argue that it is exactly through affective investment that one becomes passionate about political engagement and social transformation. Boler (1999) contends that emotions can be a site of social control, but also of political resistance. In this sense, the anger and frustration leading to the incident referred to above, was the necessary step in starting this movement

and getting the attention of a wider audience. In similar fashion, Shotwell (2011) argues that working for solidarity arises from the affective stakes one has in a cause.

4.4.2 Defining affect and emotions

The affective turn represents an intensification of interest in “emotions, feelings, and affect (and their differences)” as objects of academic research (Cvetkovich, 2012a). There are many definitions of emotions and affect. Post-Deleuzian/Spinozistic scholars in particular see affect as pre-existing cognitive sensory experience, belonging to the body: “the body’s capacity to act, to engage, to resist, and to connect” (Zembylas, 2014, p. 397). Drawing from Spinoza, Watkins (2011, p. 138) defines affect for example as “... the bodily, and generally unconscious, dimension of sensate experience”, while she sees emotions as embodied and socially constructed. The shedding of tears, for example, for her is “... a biological response engendered by the social” (*ibid.*). In similar fashion Probyn (2005, p. 11) distinguishes emotions as “cultural and social expression, whereas affects are of a biological and physiological nature”. It is important to say, that while this could be critiqued as a simple mind/body split, the key rationale for a focus on affect, for authors such as Watkins (2006), is the way it allows for a treatment of force (*affectus*) and capacity (*affection*), i.e. the transitive and residual nature of affect – a capacity that emotions do not possess. Thus affect is both a product and a process, has both corporeal and cognitive dimensions. As such, Spinoza counters a dualist notion of the mind/body relation. Emotions then are cognitive, resulting from a registration of affects. Referring to Massumi, Watkins (2006, p. 273) concludes that emotions and affects are different but similar: “They are different in the sense that they belong to distinct modes of existence, but they are similar in that emotion is substantially a product of affect”.

However, other authors such as Cvetkovich (2012b, p. 4), move away from these distinctions, and see both affect and emotions as socially and historically constructed practices, but position affect more generically, including “... impulses, desires, and feelings that get historically constructed in a range of ways”. In her book *Depression – a public feeling*, she states that she favours the word feeling, as it is intentionally imprecise, retaining the ambiguity between feelings as embodied sensations and feelings as psychic or cognitive experiences” (*ibid.*) Ahmed (2004), Boler (1999) and Zembylas (2014), as well distinguish less between emotions and affect. Boler and Zembylas (2003, p. 129). for example define emotions as inscribed habits of attention and as such seemingly belonging to the body (Watkins, 2006), as seen in the following quote: “... through learning to see how and when particular emotional investments become inscribed habits of attention, one can explore various understandings of difference”. Boler (1999) in particular focuses on the disruptive, transformative nature of emotions, as discussed in the previous

section. Here emotions are not just socially determined, but have capacity/affectus (Zembylas, 2014).

Because of the relational focus of my study, I adopted a more generic way to see affect: I see it as a social and contagious energy (Clough & Halley, 2007) that connects bodies, while emotions are more specific, named and focused. While I recognise that a distinction may be helpful - such as in Watkins's (2006) case - to focus on pedagogical implications, i.e. on how pedagogy can for example contribute to a desire to learn, I follow Zembylas's (2014, p. 398) argument, that we should be wary of creating new dichotomies and should rather focus on theorizing "about the prospects of transformation and the changing entanglements of the political, the cultural, the social, and the psychic" as we can see it in the entanglement of affect and emotions.

Scholars following the affective turn are primarily concerned with seeing, being and knowing, with ontology and epistemology connected and concerned with who we are and what we feel and know. As Hemmings (2012, p. 150, my emphasis) explains:

...in order to know differently we have to feel differently. Feeling that something is amiss in how one is recognised, feeling an ill fit with social descriptions, feeling *undervalued*, feeling that same sense in considering others; all these feelings can produce a politicised impetus to change that foregrounds the relationship between ontology and epistemology precisely because of the experience of their dissonance."

What does this mean? Shotwell's work (2011) is helpful in understanding the entanglement of feeling and knowing: she argues that if feelings, implicit prejudices and bodily responses constitute our racialized, gendered, classed subjectivities, then the unlearning and transformation also has to work through feelings and bodily reactions. She (2011, p. xix) classifies affective knowing as what she calls non-presentational knowledge, i.e. the type of knowledge that is not immediately accessible to us. Her example of an emotional outbreak around white guilt in a lecture, leaving the class and the professor under an affective shock is useful in understanding the role of affect to block or unblock understanding:

—These feelings don't themselves constitute understanding. Seen in the context of a matrix of implicit understanding shot through with propositional knowledge, though, we can see how affect might be important to the epistemic situation. If the purpose of the class was as it was titled Theorizing Whiteness, it matters if having a feeling, like guilt about whiteness, attaches to panic about discussing the topic evoking this feeling. Depending on one's political perspective, the feelings, including the ways they might show up through embodied understanding and including the previously

unspeakable knowledge they might disclose, can enable or block the process of coming to a conceptual understanding.—

Ecofeminist author Curtin's work on emotions and feelings in the context of empathy and compassion is also useful to develop an understanding of how knowing and feeling are entangled. He argues that "emotions and feelings are tightly bound together in a cycle, and they are processes, not things" (Curtin, 2014, loc. 1074). While he defines emotions as immediate, bodily, social, empathic reactions to others (what previous authors mentioned above defined as affect), he sees feelings (what others term emotions) as reflective, integrating reason and feeling, "emotion modified and cultivated" (loc. 1086). As an example he describes empathy as an immediate, unconscious, biological reaction to somebody, while he sees compassion as a developed moral capability, a process that motivates action:

"Compassion is a cultivated feeling about emotion. It is a place where how we feel, how we think, and how we act come together. In other words, compassion is a cultivated practice, not an isolated, rational judgement about the world." (loc. 1101)

These authors are useful in giving me a framework to think about what happens in the digital storytelling process and to focus on these moments of pedagogic affect which I introduce in the next chapter, where thinking, feeling, and acting come together.

4.4.3 Ahmed and the cultural politics of emotions

What is of crucial importance in the more recent literature around affect and trauma is that affect and emotions can never be seen outside the complexities of power, history and politics (Ahmed, 2004; Berlant, 2008; Boler, 1999; Pedwell & Whitehead, 2012; Zembylas, 2011, 2014). Furthermore, instead of seeing affect and emotions as linked to an individual, what is of more interest is the political economy of affect and emotions: how emotions bind together communities and how affective investments in social norms can trigger or hinder social change (Ahmed, 2004).

In her seminal book, *The cultural politics of emotions*, (2004) Ahmed offers an analysis of what she calls 'affective economies'. She sees feelings not residing as in subjects or objects, but produced as effects of circulation between bodies which she terms the "sociality" of emotions (p.8). She is less interested in what emotions are than in what emotions do, particularly in relation to social injustices: "emotions shape the very surfaces of bodies ...[this] take[s] shape through repetition of actions over time, as well as through orientation towards and away from others" (p.4).

Subscribing to both a Cartesian view that emotions are linked to bodily sensations and the Aristotelian view that emotions involve judgements, appraisals and evaluation linked to cognition, Ahmed develops a theory of emotions that tries to explain the complex interplay of how we affect (the impression we make) and how we are affected (impressed) by emotions:

–Whether I perceive something as beneficial or harmful clearly depends upon how I am affected by something. This dependence opens up a gap in the determination of feeling: whether something is beneficial or harmful involves *thought and evaluation, at the same time that it is „felt“ by the body.*” (p.6, my emphasis).

Further, she states, for example, that, —. while fear may shrink the body in anticipation of injury, hope may expand the contours of bodies, as they reach towards what is possible.” (p.185)

This is of crucial importance for my study. My students engage with difficult knowledges’ (Britzman, 1998, 2000): the social and historical trauma of apartheid and how its legacies play out in today’s South Africa. During these difficult conversations, they experience a range of explosive emotions: anger, sadness, defensiveness, resentment, relief, sorrow, guilt and shame. These emotions do something to them. On a physically/bodily level they move closer or move away from peers, they freeze, they cry, they run out of the class, they embrace, they touch; and on a cognitive level, they process, analyse, critique, resist and reflect.

There are important assumptions that one needs to consider in order to understand Ahmed’s theory of affect:

1. Emotions are intentional: emotions are always about something, they involve direction or intention towards an object (p. 7). One is not just afraid, but afraid of something specific. As she states, –Emotions are both about objects, which they hence shape, and are also shaped by contact with objects.” (p.7)
2. Emotions are shaped by (past) histories of contact. A child is not only instinctively afraid of something specific; this feeling of fear is also learnt through stories passed on from generation to generation. This links to Jansen’s (2009) concept of troubled knowledge’.
3. Emotions are relational: –They involve (re)actions or relations of towardness’ or awayness’ in relation to such objects.” (p.8) Attributing a feeling to an object is an effect of an encounter, and either moves a subject closer to or away from the object.
4. Emotions move from the inside out and the outside in. In her analysis of how emotions move between bodies, Ahmed proposed that instead of seeing emotions as

originating internally and then being passed on to the outside, we should see emotions as social and cultural practices, which hold or bind the social body together. She suggests in her theory of the “sociality of emotions” that emotions create the surfaces and boundaries between bodies, delineate the I and the we, which are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others.” (p.10)

5. Emotions circulate. Ahmed argues that emotions move between bodies and move bodies. As mentioned before, emotions that are judged as “positive”, will move a subject closer to an object or another subject, and in as such the “circulation of objects of emotion involves the transformation of others into objects of feeling” (p.11).
6. Emotions accumulate over time. Ahmed suggests that over time subjects get affectively invested in social norms. This explains the difficulty for achieving social transformation. Here her link to a political project is most evident: critiquing a model of social structure that neglects emotional intensities, she traces the process of how emotions can be attributed to a nation’s emotions, which then in turn allows a strong identification with a certain group, a moving closer to others who feel similarly and a moving away from bodies that are feared: “... the nation becomes the object of love precisely by associating the proximity with others with loss, injury and theft” (p.12). The “truths” of this world are dependent on emotions, on how they move subjects, and stick them together (p.170). Even feminist critique remains invested in what it critiques, but investments can move as we move (p.172).
7. Emotions are performative. They are expressed through the body, but are mediated through speech acts. They both generate their objects, and repeat past associations (p.194). Ahmed’s view of emotions as effects – rather than origins – fits well with Butler’s ideas on performativity and the effects of normalising discourse on a gendered identity. In some ways, Ahmed’s work provides the missing link to understand the difficulties of breaking the emotional investment in social norms and thus, for example, the defensiveness that I encounter in my digital storytelling work when students engage with issues of race and privilege. As she concludes (p.196), “This argument certainly makes feeling crucial to the struggle against injustice, but in a way that does not take feeling as the ground for action, but as an effect of the repetition of some actions rather than others.”

The following quote (p.171, my emphasis) summarises Ahmed’s definition of emotions:

“Emotions are what move us, and how we are moved involves interpretations of sensations and feelings not only in the sense that we interpret what we feel, but also in that *what we feel might be dependent on past interpretations that are not necessarily made by us, but that come before us*. Focusing on emotions as mediated

rather than immediate reminds us that *knowledge cannot be separated from the bodily world of feeling and sensation*; knowledge is bound up with what makes us sweat, shudder, tremble, all those feelings that are crucially felt on the bodily surface, the skin surface where we touch and are touched by the world.”

An analysis of guilt and shame highlights the way that these emotions can be seen to be relational and performative, the way they are learnt, and what they do. Shotwell (2011, p. 75) argues that while guilt and shame are interlinked, guilt is backward-looking, making us defensive and paralyzed, without an opportunity to connect. She describes shame, on the contrary as “an active, transitive practice”, (p.79) relational and one that connects people: “Shame turns on an inter- and intro-subjective hinge, which is to say that I see myself in relation to others” (*ibid.*). Once participants in difficult dialogues can move from guilt to shame, they can take responsibility for systemic injustices and, in a further step, take action. This echoes Young’s more recent work (2011, p. xv) on social justice, where she calls for a detachment of guilt and responsibility. In similar fashion to Shotwell, she describes guilt as backward-looking and individualised:

–The function of guilt is to locate fault, to single out for either moral or legal blame. It is usually not appropriate to ascribe guilt to a group as such, unless we have some reason to conceive of the group as a collective agent (as in the case of guilt ascribed to corporations, for example).”

In the context of Germans’ engagement with their past, instead of feeling guilty for crimes previous generations have committed, she calls for them to take up responsibility (*ibid.*):

–Responsibility, by contrast, is a forward-looking concept. To ascribe responsibility to a person is to say that they have a job to do. We can hold either individuals or groups responsible, and responsibility for social ills is typically shared among many agents. People can be responsible without being guilty.” This is of crucial importance for my study where, as I show, students often get stuck in white guilt, but where some manage to transform this guilt into shame which in turn allows them to open up and recognise their responsibility and complicity in past injustices.

How would one move from guilt to shame? Who feels guilt? Who feels shame? Probyn’s (2005) work on shame, is an interesting starting point to think about this. Drawing from Tomkins’ work on shame and other affects, she also emphasises the performativity of shame, “shame’s productive role” (p.ix). However, what is particularly useful in her work, is the idea how interest and shame are connected. Tomkins argues that shame can only operate once interest or enjoyment has been activated. This interest constitutes the connection

between people and ideas, as Probyn states. It is the affective investment, we have in others. We feel shame when this investment is questioned or our interest is interrupted. Shame is transformative: it adds, rather than takes away. It carries the potential for growth. Shame is also contagious, “catching” (p.20), an affect that spreads, echoing Ahmed’s notion of affective economies.

4.5 Engagement with the „Other“ through the lens of „asymmetrical reciprocity“

I intend to explore the potential of digital storytelling to trouble final year pre-service teacher education students’ performance of self and engagement across difference, in order to challenge some of their beliefs and assumptions about self and the Other. To conceptualise this engagement, I am adopting Young’s concept of asymmetrical reciprocity (1997), together with Sevenhuijsen’s critique of Young’s limited focus on dialogue, foregrounding the role of listening with all senses when engaging with the Other.

To begin, I would like to define what I mean by other or Other. Looking at my students’ engagements during the course of the study, there were two others that emerged. The other – drawing on Levinas (1987) – is simply what I am not. For Levinas, the other is the other human being who calls for our ethical responsibility. However, there is also another notion of the other, the Other with whom I am connected or rather disconnected through distance and power differentials. The Other is either more privileged or less privileged than I am. I relate to this Other across a distance, while the other I feel close to is, through shared experiences: one with whom I share the same language, similar schooling and, most likely, the same skin colour and religion. The Other may sit in the same classroom as me, but this geographical vicinity does not translate into emotional closeness. Our engagement is characterised by discomfort and distance: I do not share the same language, and cannot relate to his or her experience.

It is important to note, however, that neither the other nor the Other will ever be fully understandable to me, as I show in discussing Young’s work. Young’s notion of asymmetrical reciprocity unpacks the engagement with the other or the Other. In her 1997 essay, Asymmetrical Reciprocity: on moral respect, wonder, and enlarged thought, she develops a framework for a communicative ethics, i.e. a framework for a democracy based on the assumptions that communication and difference are mutually constitutive and that communication is potentially transformative if difference is acknowledged and taken seriously rather than levelled out (Galea, 2006). In doing so, she questions Benhabib’s (1991) concept of symmetrical reciprocity. Benhabib sees moral respect as a symmetrical

relationship between self and other, leading to the conclusion that self and other are reversible.

Young contests the commonsensical notion that people can put themselves into somebody else's shoes to understand the Other'. She argues that it is ~~neither~~ [ontologically] possible nor morally desirable for persons engaged in moral interaction to adopt one another's standpoint" (p. 340). She suggests an alternative concept, asymmetrical reciprocity', by drawing on the work of Levinas, Irigaray, Arendt, and Derrida. The notion of asymmetrical reciprocity assumes that in an encounter of difference, there cannot be symmetrical reciprocity, based on different personal experiences and histories and the fact that we are socially differently positioned in life: ~~Each~~ participant in a communication situation is distinguished by particular history and social position that makes their relations asymmetrical" (1997, p. 341). This social position can be defined by sex, race, age or culture.

Her asymmetrical reciprocity thus has two dimensions:

1. A temporal dimension, by which she refers to the kind of experiences that we had made in life, that make us unique and which cannot allow us to know the other or understand the other's standpoint in life (what I would call the other'); and
2. Our social position in life, which is linked to issues of power and oppression and does not allow a symmetric reciprocity with the other (what I would call the Other').

Within this context, understanding in a dialogue is possible. She argues that moral respect and egalitarian reciprocity can be expressed implicitly in ordinary discussions where people aim to reach understanding. She claims that such an engagement is best tested through an actual dialogue in which multiple needs, interests and perspectives are represented (p.342). She explains how participants in this dialogue can sometimes ~~understand~~ each other across difference without reversing perspectives or identifying with each other" (p. 341) open listening to the Other', suspending judgement, preconceived ideas and assumptions. Galea (2006, p. 85) sums this up succinctly: ~~Listening, acknowledging and understanding the other are quite different from putting oneself in the position of another; imagining what one would feel and/or think in another's place, and attributing these thoughts and feelings to the other.~~"

This asymmetrical reciprocity does not only apply to the distant other' (what I would call the Other' with a capital O'), the Other' with whom I relate to through asymmetrical power relations based on difference in race, gender and class, but also to the other', who shares my gender, skin colour, a similar social strata and to whom I feel close but still brings

–different life histories, emotional habits and life plans to a relationship, which makes their positions irreversible” (Young, 1997, p. 347).

When engaging with the other’ or the Other’ in a way that reflects my openness to acknowledging our differences, there is opportunity for creative exchanges, transformation and, ultimately, enlarged thought, which would lead to moral decision-making.

To reach a state of being-with’ rather than being-in’ one another’s spaces (and echoing Lugones’s work on world travelling discussed in the previous chapter), Young suggests three requisites: questioning, active listening and wonder. Questioning refers to the necessity of meeting and communicating in a space of openness and dialogue rather than allowing our preconceived ideas to frame other: –we can take others’ perspectives into account by asking questions rather than by imagining ourselves in their position” (La Caze, 2008, p. 119). Active listening is closely linked to the notion of moral humility, which –starts from the assumption that one cannot see things from the other’s perspective and [must] wait to learn by listening to the other person” (Young, 1997, p. 49). This means listening from a position of not-knowing, of curiosity to learn about the other, as opposed to projecting our own experiences and fantasies onto the other. Young also proposes that one needs a sense of wonder about the other in this relationship of asymmetrical reciprocity’. Using Irigaray’s value of wonder’ in ethical relations, Young shows how a desire for symmetrical relationships denies the other’s differences, silences and displaces the other, and limits our own continued ability to be surprised by the other. However, a sense of wonder that is linked to respect, enables us not to exoticize’ the other:

---. [a] respectful stance of wonder toward other people is one of openness across, awaiting new insight about their needs, interests, perceptions, or values. Wonder also means to see one’s own position, assumptions, perspective as strange, because it has been put in relation to others” (p. 358, my emphasis).

I adopt the definition of wonder proposed by Caze (2008), who understands it as –openness and nonjudgement” (p.122). Here, wonder means that we are open to learning about the other person’s perspective, suspending our judgement in order to listen. We are not looking for our common experience, for given paradigms, but for something new:

–Communication is sometimes a creative process in which the other person offers a new expression, and I understand it not because I am looking for how it fits with given paradigms but because I am open and suspend my assumptions in order to listen.” (Young, 1997, p. 353)

In her essay, Young aims to adopt a communicative ethics as a framework for a moral theory that allows participants to acquire – borrowing from Hannah Arendt – an enlarged thought. Paraphrasing Arendt, she defines this as what “enjoins us to view each person as one to whom I owe the moral respect to consider their standpoint” (p. 341). Enlarged thought allows us to both relativize our own assumptions and views in relation to others, and to learn from others – how the world and the collective relations they have forged look to them” (p.360).

This learning is unavailable to any of us if we can only draw from our own perspective. Only through dialogue can we construct an account of the “social relations that surround us and within which we act” and “ultimately reach moral conclusions that not only take into account our own standpoints, but the standpoints of all affected, both the privileged and oppressed” (*ibid.*).

Young’s concept of asymmetrical reciprocity allows a very helpful first lens through which to analyse the narratives and dialogical engagements of my students. However, as my study is also focused on the emotions students encounter in these engagements, Young might well be limiting through its overreliance on communication and discourse (similar to Butler). Sevenhuijsen (2002) critiques Young’s limited focus on language and argues that, for empathy, it is not enough to get to know somebody else’s perspective, but also an embodied understanding of his or her pain and suffering, using all one’s senses. She explains that:

“This model relies too heavily on discursive skills. It favours voice and listening over the use of other senses and sensibilities. We need instead a close cooperation between all our senses and communicative skills if we want to establish if there is a need for care in a specific situation.”

4.6 Concluding thoughts

In this chapter, I have discussed the various theoretical concepts and authors that I am drawing from in my study. Setting my study in a feminist theoretical framework foregrounds my own understanding of myself as a critical feminist social justice educator, validating my perspective of teaching as a social justice intervention. Third-wave feminism, with its focus on the intersectionality of oppressive categories such as race, gender and class, and its refusal to essentialise women into specific, given characteristics is particularly helpful to ground my study.

Butler’s notion of performativity and the possibility of subversion of the norm is of particular interest to my study, which looks at how the (repeated) performance of digital stories can disrupt (or not disrupt) hegemonic dominant narratives and in the process allow – or don’t

allow – digital storytellers to transform their own sense of self and Other’. My students’ narratives intend to counter some of their peers’ assumptions and beliefs, while breaking silences around difficult topics such as homosexuality and race. Do they achieve a re-signification’ of their subjectivities through the telling of their stories? Butler’s theory of performativity helps me explore the tensions my students experienced when performing their digital stories within a specific space to a specific audience, normalised by specific linguistic/semiotic norms and expectations, as well as how the repeated sharing of their digital stories reaffirmed or disrupted their narrative identity, not only in terms of gender, but also in terms of race and class.

Ahmed’s theory of emotions allows me to understand how emotions are negotiated, and passed from body to body. It illuminates what emotions do in the process of storytelling and story listening, and gives me a vocabulary to ask important questions: What emotions are being passed on; and which ones stick and which don’t? Does this apply to all students in the same way, or do certain students respond differently to certain stories than others? How are affective communities established in the process? Furthermore, it is interesting to look at the points of pedagogic affect (Watkins, 2011) to see where these affective engagements are disrupted. Which bodies become blockage points in normalised engagements? Which bodies interrupt smooth conversations? And what happens to other bodies? How do they react?

Combining Butler’s notion of performativity with Ahmed’s emotional investment in these idealised norms has assisted me to create a framework to understand the affective engagement my students perform in sharing and listening to their digital stories. I find Ahmed’s theoretical messiness’ much closer to what I experience in the classroom than the sometimes artificial analytical distinction between emotional and cognitive labour made by Boler and Zembylas (2003). Ahmed’s work reminds me not to want too much and not to be too focused on change; and to accept that change is messy, takes a long time and might not always be possible; and that it is enough to listen to these students’ stories, attentively with my ears and heart.

Finally, Young is helpful in sustaining my belief that it is neither possible nor desirable to walk in somebody else’s shoes. While her focus, like Butler’s, is on language, i.e. on a discursive engagement with the Other’, and she has been critiqued for this, in my case, where the digital stories continue to live and represent the storyteller beyond the digital storytelling workshop, as texts and artefacts which are repeatedly shown, it may actually be a useful one.

The next part of this study – part 2 – introduces my research methodology, embedded in the field of narrative inquiry, and detail on the three approaches to narrative analysis used for this study.

PART 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CH 5: Narrative inquiry

“Stories are data with soul.” Brene Brown

*“The history of narrative begins with the history of (hu)mankind; there does not exist, and has never existed, a people without narratives.”
Roland Barthes*

5.1 Introduction

Feminist research methodologies are concerned with unpacking, reflecting on and disrupting power differentials within research processes: with decentring male, white, Western hegemonic discourses and knowledges.

To make sense of my data – predominantly stories students told within the digital storytelling process – I have decided to draw research methodologies from the field of narrative inquiry. In this chapter, I will first introduce and define narrative inquiry and position my study in narrative inquiry associated with poststructuralism, postmodernism, deconstructionist and feminist movements, focusing in particular on narrative inquiry of emotions. Furthermore, I address the centrality of audience response in this field. I then provide a description of the context of this study and, particularly, the digital storytelling workshop that is the focus of this work. A discussion of trustworthiness within narrative inquiry and research ethics conclude this chapter. I have not included a section on my own positionality here, as I cover this in detail in the preface.

5.2 Defining narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry has gained an increased following, especially in the field of education and teacher education, due to the comfort that the telling and listening of stories provide and the possibility to make meaning of human experience (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Clandinin *et al.*, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006). Narrative inquiry is a wide field which two main foci: humanist approaches, and approaches linked to poststructuralism, postmodernism, deconstructionist and feminist movements (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008). For this

study I have chosen methodologies that emerge from within the second approach. Here storytellers are seen as multiple, disunified subjectivities involved in the production of stories, rather than a singular, agentic storyteller. These methodologies or ways of analysing data foreground the discursive constructedness of our subjectivities, our interconnectedness and relationality but also explore stories as social practices, focusing on what stories do or what happens when stories are told. These approaches are interested in audience response: how sharing of and listening to stories affects us, what happens between the bodies that tell and listen to stories. I look at both the act of storytelling – the process of sharing and developing digital stories – and the actual digital story itself.

The term narrative and how to distinguish it from a story is highly contested, with definitions varying widely (Kohler Riessman, 2008; Riessman, 1993). For example, Kramp (2004, p. 106) uses the term story to apply to situations where people are “speaking in a familiar, personal, or conversational way”, while narratives are associated with “a particular genre with formal characteristics” (*ibid.*). So while stories are examples of narratives, not all narratives are stories. Interviews, for example, are narratives, but not necessarily stories.

Others, such as Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p. 2), differentiate between the phenomenon story and the inquiry into this phenomenon, being the narrative:

“Thus, we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience.”

I adopted for this study the definition for narratives proposed by Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) and taken up in many studies (such as Bell, 2002; Salmon & Kohler Riessman, 2008). This definition limits narratives to events that are perceived as important, selected, organized, connected and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience. This resonates with Labov and Waletzky’s (1997) traditional socio-linguistic elements of fully formed narratives. These authors argue that narratives always contain distinctive elements such as orientation (to time, place, characters, situation), complication (crisis/turning point), evaluation (narrator comments on meaning and communicates emotions), resolution (outcome of the plot) and coda (ending of story and bringing action back to present). These narratives are therefore constructed temporally to make meaning of apparently random events. They are best seen as a “process, always in transition” (Clandinin *et al.*, 2007, p. 23). Narratives are always told to an audience (even if the audience is imagined or is represented in the storyteller him/herself). This relationality is an important characteristic of narratives, as is the cultural context in which narratives are being told in which meanings and

conventions are shared (Salmon & Kohler Riessman, 2008). Clandinin and Connelly (2009) refer to those as the social conditions and the geographical place in which a story is located, with both having a profound impact on the narrated experience. Narratives are also told from a “moral stance” (Salmon & Kohler Riessman, 2008, p. 78), expressing some sort of evaluative orientation.

To analyse the stories collected in this study I created my own analytical framework, by engaging three different analytical approaches to answer each of my research questions: Bamberg’s ‘small stories’ positioning analysis’ to explore how students positioned themselves vis-à-vis their ‘Others’ in the small stories constructed during the workshop (research question 1); Baldry and Thibault’s *Multimodal Toolkit* to investigate the digital stories themselves and how the different multimodal texts of a digital story worked towards or against a storyteller’s intent to – in my case – tell a counterstory, a story that troubles the norm (research question 2); and Frank’s dialogical narrative analysis (DNA), which focuses on the capacities of certain narratives, in my case to establish an affective connection between storyteller and his or her audience. This approach focuses on what stories do in this process and how stories are co-constructed between storyteller and the audience (research question 3).

While these are different approaches to narrative inquiry, which I discuss in more detail in chapter 6, they share common theoretical commitments. The most important are seeing storytelling as: a social practice, co-constructed within a specific socio-cultural and historical context; carrying notions of power and privilege; having capacities / being performative; and having the ultimate aim of troubling norms and hegemonic discourses.

5.3 Storytelling in Africa

Africa has a long tradition of oral storytelling. Much of the scholarship in Africa has framed oral storytelling as folklore, “disembodied, ahistorical, linguistic and literary objects” (Stein, 2008, p. 34). More recently, authors such as Finnegan (1992), have noted a shift in interest towards situated and contextualised practices of storytelling. With this shift, storytelling is seen as a socio-cultural practice, with inherent power relations between storyteller and listener, foregrounding individual agency, voices, emotions and creativity (Stein, 2008). Storytelling is seen a meaning-making practice, emphasising the co-construction of stories between storyteller and audience. What is important to note, is that storytelling in African contexts, is shaped by political and social struggles and that cultural resources are dynamic and always shifting (Barber, 1997). As Scheub (1996, p. 28) notes: “It is to the storyteller that the society entrusts this activity of making the real seem historic, or making experience resonate with the rich, reassuring sounds of tradition”. Research (Gunner, 2004, 2006;

James, 1999) on popular culture in South Africa shows its hybridity, drawing from older cultural genres but also transatlantic influences, re-appropriating different genres for contemporary, communicative purposes (Stein, 2008). Songs are performative; they both reflect and constitute social relationships in the communities. In relation to digital storytelling, it is important to note its multimodality, as Stein (2008, p. 37) reflects: “oral performances are multimodal, multi-semiotic, communicational ensembles in which language is only one mode in which meaning is being made.”

5.4 Narrative inquiry of emotions and moments of pedagogic affect

My research focuses on the extent to which digital storytelling as pedagogical practice can transform students' engagement across difference. Digital storytelling relies on affective engagement: on the emotions that are engaged and the energy that moves between storyteller and the audience. As I have argued in chapter 3, the conditions for achieving such an affective engagement with an audience – the focus on closure, accessibility, and universality of themes within digital storytelling (Poletti, 2011) – may undermine an engagement that recognises, reflects upon and troubles norms and established power dynamics in the classroom (being an engagement with the Other). How does one explore this affective engagement that connects and disconnects bodies (Ahmed, 2004)? Kleres (2010) argues that while contradictions, silences, hesitations and emotionally marked aspects of interviews and other data collection methods are of particular interest to narrative researchers, these are also harder to define, record and transcribe than symbolic language or images. This constitutes one of the most problematic areas in narrative research (Kleres, 2010; Squire, 2008b) and may well be one of the reasons that narrative analysis seldom focuses on emotions, despite the fact that emotionality is an inextricable part of the narrative, as Kleres (2010, p. 188) notes:

“The very nature of emotional experience can be conceptualized as essentially narrative in nature (rather than mediated by narratives) and vice versa: narratives essentially are emotionally structured.”

The aim of my research is to understand what emotions do in a digital storytelling process. I focus on how students describe the emotions experienced and their affective engagement with each. I also pay particular attention to what Watkins (2015) calls moments of pedagogic affect that I observed in the workshop and recorded on videos taken of the group conversations. These are moments characterised by explosive emotions, which are usually not allowed or desired in the classroom context, but which I see as an expression and embodiment of my participants' affective investment in certain beliefs and values (Watkins, 2011). These moments allow us to investigate and understand how the strength of these

affective investments in social norms can trigger or hinder social change (Ahmed, 2004). Reflecting on these moments is also a starting point for critical emotional reflexivity, which recognises the entanglement of thinking, feeling and action, and provides an entry point into a conversation around how emotions are politically and socially constructed and what they may reveal about our own normalised assumptions and beliefs.

5.5 The importance of the audience and audience response

Resting on the belief that rather than a unified, solid subjectivity, subjectivities are always in flux and performed according to the context in which they are embedded, I have chosen a methodological approach that recognises that the role of the audience is crucial in the construction and performance of a narrative. As Salmon explains (2008, p. 80):

-All narratives are, in a fundamental sense, co-constructed. The audience, whether physically present or not, exerts a crucial influence on what can and cannot be said, how things should be expressed, what can be taken for granted, what needs explaining, and so on. We now recognize that the personal account, in research interviews, which has traditionally been seen as the expression of a single subjectivity, is in fact always a co-construction.”

In my digital storytelling project, the notion of audience is complex and multi-layered. The audience does not only consist of the researcher. It includes fellow students in the workshop; parents, family members, and former teachers invited to the final day of screening; an audience as imagined by a storyteller when he/she develops the digital story; and the anonymous audience - what Berlant (2008) calls an intimate public - that may access the digital story once published or presented in workshops, conference presentations or research publications.

Storytelling thus becomes a relational activity, in which a story is co-created between the storyteller and a physical, virtual and imagined audience (Kohler Riessman, 2008, p. 113 calls it the ghostly audience). This has important implications for how I analysed my data by, for example, choosing performative/dialogical analysis as suggested by Kohler Riessman (2008).

5.6 Context of this study

This study is set within the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences at a large university of technology in the Western Cape. The digital storytelling project was introduced in order to allow students to reflect on their diverse backgrounds and to develop a heightened

understanding of their own and their peers' social positioning vis-à-vis personal, institutional and systemic structures. It was set up in response to Department of Education policy to prepare future teachers for diverse classrooms (Department of Education, 2001b; Desai et al., 2004). It was hoped that the nature of a digital storytelling project focusing on new media technology and innovative practices would help decrease students' usual resistance to engage with difficult topics, such as race, class, gender and sexuality in today's South Africa (Gachago, *et al.*, 2014; Gachago, *et al.*, 2013).

In their final year, students develop portfolios, being the last assignment of their Professional Studies course. What was originally a paper-based portfolio was transformed into a digital storytelling project in 2010 (see Appendix 2 for course outline). With this transformation, the nature of the course changed radically. The paper-based portfolio was traditionally an individual reflection on the four years of studies, developed by students in their own time with the help of a tutor. The digital storytelling project (in future referred to as the project) is a complex eight-week journey, in which students attend weekly workshops and are guided through the process of creating a digital story by a team of facilitators including lecturers and student facilitators.

The project has been redesigned based on past experiences and research. Chigona *et al.* (2012b) provides a reflection on the 2010 project, Gachago *et al.* (2013) covers the 2011 project, Gachago *et al.* (2014) addresses the 2012 project, and Gachago *et al.* (2014) reflects on the 2013 project (being the year this study was done).

The demographic composition of the class is diverse in terms of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion and language; and students come to this project with varying levels of digital literacy skills and access to technology.

My main role in this project is to train selected volunteers from the class to take over the role of student peer facilitators. These students are trained in an intense five-day workshop before the project starts. Each of the students then supports a group of peers and guides them through the process. Students from the previous years are also involved as peer facilitators, which increases continuity and support.

Students self-select to be part of this peer facilitator team. Criteria for selection are evidence of digital literacy skills, interest in digital media production, and experience in counselling or mentoring. Not all students satisfy all criteria, but the criteria help in alerting students to what will be expected from them. During the selection process, we also emphasize that only students who are doing well in class should consider applying for a position, as the involvement in the digital story project may impact on the time they can spend on other

assignments. At the end of their fourth year, students are generally under considerable pressure to finish final assignments and projects, and the added pressure of supporting their colleagues in finishing their digital stories may prove difficult for students who are struggling.

5.7 The digital storytelling workshop and its participants

Nine students responded to our call for peer facilitators and joined the 2013 peer facilitators' group. Eight of these nine students agreed to fully take part in my study. One student allowed me to use the data gathered during the workshops, but did not agree to be interviewed and did not release her digital story to be part of the study. This group was representative of the class demographics in terms of gender and age, but not in terms of racial background. Coloured Muslim students and students whose home language is Afrikaans are underrepresented (see Table 2).

Table 2: Study participants

Student name	Gender	Race	Year of birth	Home language	Religion
<i>Full research participants</i>					
Noni	Female	Black ⁷	1988	isiXhosa	Christian
Vuyelwa*	Female	Black	1984	isiXhosa	Christian
Beatrice*	Female	White	1967	English	Christian
Lauren	Female	White	1991	English	Christian
Nazma*	Female	Coloured	1991	English	Muslim
Michael*	Male	White	1987	English	Christian
Siyabonga*	Male	Black	1985	isiXhosa	Christian
George*	Male	Black	1980	isiXhosa	Christian
<i>Partial research participant</i>					
Rachel*	Female	White	1991	English	Christian

*Names anonymised.

Participants were drawn from the pool of student facilitators who agreed to take part in this research.

⁷ The South African Department of Education racial categorization distinguishes between African, Coloured, Indian and White students. This is highly contested, but still widely used (Department of Education 1997). However, I prefer the term Black instead of African, as this is the one that my students commonly use. In South Africa the term 'Coloured' does not have the same connotations as it has in the US or in the UK. The term 'Coloured' in South Africa in general refers to any person of 'mixed-race'. In and around Cape Town, where this study is set, Coloured stands for 'Cape Coloured' and is used for descendants of the many slaves that were brought in from the Dutch East Indies.

Experience-based narrative inquiry focuses on the collection of few, in-depth narratives. Eliciting narratives is time-consuming and is generally favoured by a growing relationship between participants and the researchers, as Thorp (2005, p.160) explains:

–I have found that stories are not simply low-hanging fruit to be plucked in the course of an interview – it is not just a matter of asking for stories or listening to stories, it is learning to be with stories. Stories unfold in relationship over time.”

In similar fashion, Kohler Riessman (2008) and Clandinin *et al.* (2007) agree that narrative inquiry takes time, and that a sustained engagement with participants is highly important to build up the relationship necessary between researcher and storytellers in this approach. Over the course of the study, starting with the five-day workshop and deepening over the course of the project through weekly debriefing and planning meetings, I aimed at building a strong relationship with my participants (Clandinin *et al.*, 2007). I continued to engage with Lauren and Noni, the two students whose stories I analysed in more depth, beyond the course of the project throughout the analysis of data and write-up of this study. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) promote collaborative research between researcher and study participants, arguing that a sense of equality, trust and connectedness is of particular importance in the process of narrative inquiry. To increase this sense of equality and to empower these student facilitators, I not only transferred technical skills to them, but enhanced their leadership skills through encouraging them to take the lead in the project, facilitate some of the workshops, and by asking for their input and thoughts on how to run this project in weekly debriefing sessions.

5.8 Description of intervention: towards a critical digital storytelling workshop

The participants of this study attended a five-day, digital storytelling workshop in August 2013, in which they were guided in the development of their digital stories (in future, referred to as the workshop’, as opposed to the larger project’). The brief for the digital story (see Appendix 2 for course outline) encouraged students to tell a counterstory about one critical incident they encountered in their teaching practice and which related to an issue of social justice in education. For this study, I have adapted the term counterstorytelling’ to encourage both the sharing of stories of privileged and less privileged students to challenge hegemonic discourses within a pedagogy of discomfort framework in order to position their story in relation to their peers’ stories and to allow a collective of counterstories to emerge.

As a product, students’ digital stories are short (3–5 mins.) digital movies, based on a written script of 350–500 words, slightly longer than the usual CDS digital storytelling scripts. They

include digital images, which are either created by the students themselves or sourced from the Internet, and background sound that the students either recorded themselves or sourced from their own music collection or the Internet. (For examples of students' digital stories produced over the years, see <http://www.youtube.com/user/cputstories>).

Since part of this study's objective is for students to critically engage with their emotions, a number of activities for structured reflection, discussions and group work were investigated, adapted, developed and introduced. Following other authors (Benmayor, 2008; Coventry, 2008; Oppermann, 2008) who have expanded the typical three-day standard workshop process developed by the Center for Digital Storytelling (see Appendix 3 for a detailed description of the seven steps of digital storytelling), I have added various elements that I have collected through experiential learning and literature review to my digital storytelling workshop. These elements are informed by critical theory, queer, cultural and political feminist thought, and have the following five functions:

1. To open up emotional and cognitive spaces for students to explore their own assumptions and beliefs about themselves and Others;
2. To create moments of discomfort to move both students and facilitators out of their comfort zones (in particular through the River of Life, story circle, race dialogue and screening of digital stories);
3. To allow sharing of students' diverse backgrounds to situate their own stories in a wider socio-cultural and historical background using various literacies, i.e. visual, textual and digital;
4. To create a uncomfortable safe space for open dialogue on difficult topics; and
5. To allow space for continuous critical reflection on the process, in particular on the political dimension of the emotions encountered in the process.

How did I go about creating a space in which students were intentionally discomforted? I added various elements to the workshop which would both increase the feeling of discomfort for students and open up spaces for reflection on this discomfort (see Table 3 below and Appendix 4 for a detailed description of the elements I added). In 2013, students' brief for the digital stories was to reflect on a social issue in education that they felt passionate about and encountered at school, during teaching practice or in their communities. This forced students to link a bigger social issue to their lived experience, connecting the personal to the political. I also emphasised the importance of telling counterstories (Element 3) to counter dominant discourses or break the silence on topics usually marginalised in class. The theatre of the oppressed (Element 1), an improvisation drama activity framed by critical pedagogy, helped students brainstorm these social issues in education, with a particular focus on how power

dynamics play out in the classroom. As a next step, students engaged in the River of Life (Element 2), a highly evocative participatory learning and action (PLA) technique, in which they reflected on and shared critical incidents in their life related to the social issue in education they decided to focus on in randomly selected groups. This emphasised the personal aspect of the project, forcing students to link the social issue to a personal, emotional experience, rather than keeping it on an abstract, general level (Element 4). I also created regular spaces for dialogue (Element 7) on critical texts (Element 6) around difficult knowledges, such as race and privilege in today's South Africa. The introduction of these elements was based on my intention of creating an uncomfortable safe space, a term borrowed from Freeth (2012), who facilitates difficult dialogues in the South African setting.

Such spaces are safe enough for participants to open up, but also uncomfortable enough to shake them out of their comfort zones and to trouble some of their beliefs and assumptions about the Other.

Table 3: Adapted DST workshop model

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Introductions	Checking in/ dialogue (Element 7)	Checking in / dialogue (Element 7)	Checking in / dialogue (Element 7)	Checking in / dialogue (Element 7)
Seven steps of DST; sample stories	Brainstorming around critical reflection	Critical media literacy/ reading images: input (Element 3)	Digital editing (Photostory) tutorial	Ethical practice of DST
Overview over PhD research	Writing prompt	Creative commons input/ Image preparation tutorial	Individual digital story production/recording of stories (begin rough story edits)	Complete rough story edits
Rules of engagement	Story circle: Group script sharing and feedback, with facilitator guidance	Storyboarding input		Explore transitions, motion effects, music and titles
Intro to PLA techniques	Digital file organization	Individual script work and image preparation (storyboarding, scanning and organizing of images)		Complete final story edits
Social issue in education: Theatre of the oppressed (Element 1)	Writing		Story screening	
River of Life (Element 2)	Counterstorytelling input (Element 3) Owning your emotions vs. sentimentality input/ discussion (Element 4)			
The power of vulnerability (TedTalk)	Writing with critical friend		Background music	Vision exercise (Element 2)
Reflection: Free writing (Element 5)	Reflection: Free writing (Element 5)	Reflection: Free writing (Element 5)	Reflection: Free writing (Element 5)	Focus group/ final reflection
At home: Engagement with critical texts (Element 6)				

Legend: Elements in bold are the ones I added to the traditional CDS 3-day digital storytelling workshop format (Elements 1-7). See Appendix 4 for a detailed description of these elements.

5.9 Trustworthiness

Narrative inquiry is highly subjective and interpretative. Not only do storytellers tell subjective stories, but the selection and interpretation of these stories is also subjective. One important factor in narrative inquiry is to discuss a researcher's positionality in depth, and how that affects his or her interpretation of narratives. I have tried to do so by telling my own research story in the preface. Narrative researchers state that each narrative will be analysed differently depending on who the person is that interprets it. Kohler Riessman (2008) notes that the listener's identities and preconceptions come into play in narrative inquiry and need to be carefully spelled out and considered, this being even more so the case in narrative interviews across the divides of geographical, religious, class, race and age difference. She states that in the process of transcribing and providing narrative for analysis, "... investigators are implicated at every step along the way in constituting the narratives we then analyse" (Kohler Riessman, 2008).

Consequently, traditional dimensions of trustworthiness as used in qualitative research may not work for narrative inquiry. Rather than reliability, validity and generalizability, narrative inquiry establishes new dimensions for good narratives along criteria such as verisimilitude, apparency or resonance, responsibility and transferability (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). As the write-up of narrative inquiry is also seen as a narrative, these dimensions for good narratives also apply to the analysis of narratives (the write-up and discussion of findings within narrative inquiry).

I will deal with each of these in turn:

- Kramp (2004, p. 108) suggests that verisimilitude' – the appearance or likelihood that something is or could be true or real – is a more appropriate criterion for narrative knowing that verification or proof of truth.
- Resonance' or plausibility calls on readers to find resonance between the narratives represented and their own practices (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007), and for their judgement on whether an interpretation rings true (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).
- Frank (2010, pp. 110–111) calls for openness' of interpretation of narratives, allowing the reader to come to their own conclusions, to enhance dialogue between the storyteller, the researcher and the reader. This he calls "responsible interpretation of data":

–A responsible relation to stories is a moral imperative, one aspect of which is never to aspire to control stories through their interpretations Narrative analysis seeks to enhance dialogue. Narrative analysis aspires to have some effect on whether and how long people listen to each other’s stories and how open they are to those stories. Interpretation is responsible when it opens, not closes: when it creates links to more stories, anticipates effects, and asks why some stories affect judgments rather than others.”

- This study is highly contextualised, since it focuses on one classroom in one institution. This may limit transferability of findings into other contexts. However, the student population is diverse and represents an interesting snapshot of South African society today: students’ engagements in this classroom mirror the engagements in many other diverse classrooms not only in the Western Cape, but also in the rest of South Africa. Furthermore, the practical contributions of the study, such as the critical digital storytelling workshop model, should be applicable to other educational settings in South Africa, as well as in any other post-conflict society.
- To enhance trustworthiness of the data, I triangulated findings from the analysis of the stories constructed in the process of creating digital stories, but also in the narrative interviews and group conversations. Furthermore, I sent my analysis to my study participants, in particular the two students selected for a more in-depth analysis, at various stages, to receive their feedback; and have met with them repeatedly during the process of data analysis and write-up, to ensure that my interpretation of the data is resonating with them.

5.10 Research ethics

This study is part of a larger research project – institutionally and nationally funded – investigating the construction of teacher identity through digital storytelling. Ethical approval was sought and was granted for this larger research project from 2010–2015 through the Ethics Commission of the School of Education and Social Sciences at CPUT. However, for my own study, ethics approval was also sought from UCT, with permission to conduct the research being granted by the CPUT School of Education and Social Sciences.

Participants were asked for their consent to be part of this study during the recruitment of peer facilitators (see Appendices 5 and 6 for consent form and release form for digital story). For this study to happen, I needed the cooperation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the

groups or individuals to be recruited. As this is an ongoing, multi-year collaborative research project in which the gatekeeper (the course convener) is heavily involved, it was in her interest to continue with this study.

A range of ethical considerations are, however, particular to this study:

1. Because of the narrative focus of the research, and the use of digital stories as part of the data collection methods, granting complete confidentiality to students proved difficult, if not impossible. This is a common dilemma in narrative research, since to guarantee confidentiality may reduce the data's richness (Squire, 2008a). It also meant informing participants about the risks of taking part in this study beforehand. In my case, I have changed all participants' names to provide confidentiality with the exception of Noni and Lauren, the two students I chose as my main study participants, as I am analysing their digital stories multimodally and their images are an integral part of the data. However, I gained their written permission to do so. This involved negotiating the terms of publishing their images, such as not showing or blurring images of friends and family in the write-up of the thesis.
2. Because of the close relationships that develop in narrative research between participants and researchers, ethical considerations go far beyond what traditional qualitative research entails. Narrative researchers need to be aware of the vulnerability of those who volunteer to tell their stories, and need to consider how these participants would read their findings, and whether they would concur or disagree with them (Clandinin *et al.*, 2007). As the one writing up these stories and taking decisions about which stories to focus on, I had to be aware of my position of power. As a feminist researcher, I aim to empower my participants by representing them in a way that makes sense to them. Chaudry's (2009, p. 140) work on a decolonialising ethnographic approach has given me useful advice on how to deal with these issues. She suggests that the researcher should ~~strive~~ "for a dialogic fabric in the vignettes" incorporating direct quotes and lengthy stories, as well as make efforts not to ~~flatten~~ "the voices of my research participants", but to portray them as complex characters, with specific experiences, embedded in specific contexts rather than ~~frozen~~ "in time and space". Furthermore, of particular importance to my work, she advises the researcher to ~~write~~ "reflexively" about her own shifting subjectivity during and after the research process, reporting on her own intellectual and emotional reactions and her own learning (as I have done in the preface). Here the aim is to not position the researcher's voice as a neutral narrator but as integral part of the write-up. Simsek's (2012a, p. 37) words resonate strongly with me in this

context: –As a researcher and DST facilitator, I had to make hard decisions about that process, and sometimes needed to be critical of my own researcher position. In other words, in addition to experimenting with the facilitation of DST workshops in Turkey, I had to question my own position as a feminist mother, a researcher, a DST facilitator and a woman in the context of the workshops as well as in my personal life”. A continuous engagement with participants and discussions of the findings of the data became an important element of the research process, as mentioned above.

3. Because of the discomfort that is implied when one adopts a pedagogy of discomfort in teaching and learning, it was important for me to set up appropriate support structures for my participants. I did so by engaging in conversations around discomfort in the workshop and classroom at various stages, as well as through continuous follow-up and engagement with students to see whether they were coping, and offering additional support where necessary. However, I am also a strong believer in trusting the process, i.e. that, in most cases, group members can hold and stay in one another’s’ pain.
4. While I aim for participatory research methodologies as a researcher working within a feminist epistemology, I am a facilitator in this project and thus in a position of power and control (Ellsworth, 1989). As much as I frame this project as collaborative through reducing power distances between teacher and students, and relying heavily on peer facilitation, it is still part of the formal curriculum. It has a certain time-frame and is assessed.
5. I also adopted the guidelines for an ethical practice of digital storytelling⁸ as developed at the Center for Digital Storytelling. These highlight the centrality of the well-being of workshop participants, providing them with the space to make informed choices and granting ownership over their stories. They also contain a sensitivity to local relevance and adaptation of stories and workshop processes, and see ethics as an ongoing dialogue between participants, facilitators and other involved parties. These guidelines were part of the release form for the digital story that students signed (see Appendix 6).

I discuss ethical implications resulting from this study around digital storytelling in HE as a post-conflict pedagogy in more detail in chapter 10.

⁸ <http://storycenter.org/ethical-practice/>

5.11 Concluding thoughts

In this chapter, I introduced narrative inquiry as research methodology and the various schools of thought within this field. My research is framed by authors working at the intersection of critical race theory, queer, cultural and political feminist theory. This positions my methodology in narrative inquiry linked to poststructuralism, postmodernism, deconstructionism and the feminist movement. Here, stories and storytellers are never fixed, but fluid and contextually shaped, with storytelling becoming a relational practice of co-construction. Feminist researchers believe in a truth that is subjective, complex and messy (Ahmed, 2004). Who we are, as well as how, where and when we grew up, influence the way we make sense of our world and the affective economies that we will inhabit. By repeatedly performing our stories to others, we not only make meaning of self and Other, but we are also affected as our subjectivities are discursively produced. We constitute ourselves and are constituted in this world through our engagement and relationships with the other. Without this other, we wouldn't be. As we tell our stories, we constitute ourselves and are constituted in this world.

I described the context of my study set within pre-service teacher education in a large university of technology in the Western Cape and the very specific model of digital storytelling I developed for this study, which I called critical digital storytelling. I have used three different approaches to narrative analysis: small stories positioning analysis, dialogical narrative analysis and multimodal analysis. These three approaches share a common concern with seeing storytelling as social practices, embedded in social contexts, impacted on by storytellers' histories, with certain capacities to act upon/affect storytellers and their audience, and, perhaps most importantly, with a clear objective to trouble norms. A discussion of trustworthiness in narrative inquiry and research ethics concludes this chapter.

CH 6: Steps of narrative work

“Narrative analysis assumes that a good story itself is theoretical. When people tell their stories, they employ analytical techniques to interpret their worlds. Stories themselves are analytic.” Carolyn Ellis

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe the steps of narrative work that I engaged with in this study. In her 1993 classic in narrative inquiry, *Narrative analysis*, Kohler Riessman identifies three steps to doing narrative work:

1. Facilitating the telling of narratives;
2. Transcribing / representing narratives; and
3. Approaching narratives analytically.

While she has added more detail to these steps in her more recent work (Kohler Riessman, 2008), the basic elements of narrative inquiry have remained the same. In the sections that follow, I explore the features of narrative enquiry as they pertain to my research methodology.

6.2 Step 1: The facilitation of telling narratives

In narrative inquiry, a number of data collection methods or ‘field texts’ are used (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). In the past, narrative inquiry has predominantly focused on written texts, such as field notes, journal records, interview transcripts, observations, stories, letters, autobiographical writing and other documents (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). More recently, a new turn in narrative research can be found, which attends to gesture, the unspoken and the image, as Hyvärinen, Hyden, Saarenheimo and Tamboukou observe (2010, p. 2):

–The increasing diversity of narrative texts, combined with an openness to embrace methodology from other fields of inquiry, means that a narratology derived from the study of verbal resources alone can no longer be fully adequate to the task of interrogating storytelling in its broadest sense.”

As a first step in narrative inquiry, a researcher needs to develop a strategy for facilitating the telling of stories. The narratives I analysed in this study were drawn from a variety of sources:

1. The ‘small’ – or everyday – stories, which students constructed within the check-in and debriefing sessions of the workshop (see Table 3 in chapter 5).

2. The artefacts along the semiotic chain through which students' stories developed into a digital story, starting with the drawing and sharing of their River of Life, the stories told and recorded in the story circle, the various drafts of their written scripts and, finally, the end product: the digital story itself.
3. Narrative interviews which I conducted with individual students after the workshop. These interviews were aimed at eliciting students' stories around the workshop, including their experiences, learnings and critiques. Kohler Riessman (2008) argues that there is narrative impulse in human beings: that we love telling stories. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) suggest that traditional interview methods may tend to suppress respondents' stories by focusing on pre-determined questions and interview guidelines. By contrast, narrative interviews follow a storyteller's lead in terms of the stories he or she may want to tell – even if they digress from the subject of the research – to reach the objective of the study: making sense of a storyteller's experience. In that way the story becomes a means to an end (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p. 30). In similar fashion, Kohler Riessman (2008, p.24) maintains that conducting a narrative interview means giving up control and letting the narrator lead (following participants down their trails"). In narrative inquiry, this storytelling often happens in the form of a narrative interview. It also means less interference and longer periods of speech by the participants, where the interviewer's role is focused merely on developing the narrative. My interviews were loosely structured and consisted of a selected number of open-ended questions to start a conversation, following Bold's (2012, p. 100) suggestion that semi-structured interviews can lead to narrative-like responses. I also kept Kohler Riessman's (2008) advice in mind: that an interviewer's emotional attentiveness and engagement and the degree of reciprocity in these narrative interviews are highly important to elicit narratives. Interviews often ended as lengthy conversations consisting of mutual storytelling and sharing of experiences, developing into a dialogue, rather than interviews focusing predominantly on participants' responses. As part of a participant check, I interviewed Noni and Lauren, for a second time after sharing the first draft of the findings with them. Later I thus distinguish between interview 1 (right after workshop in September/October 2013) and interview 2 (app. one year after the workshop in October 2014).
4. I also used my own observations and reflective notes captured in different ways: hand-written notebooks, the software programme Scrivener (a writing tool), digital journals, and my own written stories.

6.3 Step 2: Transcription and representation of narratives

Students' engagements during the workshop were recorded both as audio and video files, and then transcribed. The narrative interviews were recorded as audio only. The person who helped me transcribe the interviews and group conversations was herself part of the digital storytelling workshop and helped record the various sessions. Although Kohler Riessman (2008) argues that interpretation of data starts with the interviewing and transcription process: "... investigators are implicated at every step along the way in constituting the narratives we then analyse", and hence should be done by the researcher him/herself, I did the transcription in various iterations, using the research assistant for a first round of transcriptions based on the large amount of data that had to be covered.

In a first round of review, I checked the transcriptions to correct mistakes and to recall the conversations in the interviews and group conversations. In a second round of refined transcription, I went through all the recordings at least twice again (audio and, where available, the video recordings), both to ensure quality of transcriptions and to listen to emotional markers in the students' voices, for example, to identify moments of pedagogic affect (Watkins, 2011) or discomfort.

While transcribing, I included interactions between the storyteller, the researcher and other students. This accords with my belief that the act of storytelling is a performance for an audience and that, as such, the performative or interactional context becomes important.

The next step in narrative inquiry is how to present this data in the form of narratives. This is linked to the aim of research and, in particular, to the choice of data analysis, with representation of data being important. While one would aim to create polished stories that keep the narrative intact and remove any interference of the interviewer for small-story positioning analysis, the mode of representation for dialogical or performative analysis is different, focusing on the interaction between the storyteller, other participants in the conversation and the interviewer.

Since I use a combination of three different analytical foci (small-story positioning analysis, multimodal discourse analysis and dialogical narrative analysis), I represent narratives in three different ways, each one matching one analytical approach.

6.4 Step 3: Approaching narrative analytically

My first research question explores how students construct difference and their engagement across difference in everyday conversations; the second emphasises the digital story as

multimodal text and asks questions about the story an image may tell through how components are arranged, use of colour and technologies relevant to its genre and how this was influenced by a storyteller's semiotic history. The third question focuses on the audience process: how a multimodal text is perceived and received along the semiotic chain as the story is developed (Kohler Riessman, 2008, p. 144). Kohler Riessman (2008) reminds us that multimodal texts contain layered narrative elements: there are different stories contained in the process of producing the multimodal text, in the multimodal text itself, in the audience response and the researcher's own sense-making over time as she writes up her study.

6.4.1 Analytical approach 1: Small stories / Positioning analysis

6.4.1.1 Introduction

My first research question looked at who my study participants are and, in particular, who they are in relation to their Others'. This included how students construct a sense of self and Other', how they establish group belonging, and their everyday engagement across difference. I did this by looking at the stories they told as a by-product of the digital storytelling process. These stories were not told as part of the development of their digital story, but in dialogical spaces' during the course of the week.

I focus here on what Bamberg terms the small stories'. In previous work (Gachago, Condy, *et al.*, 2014; Gachago, Cronje, *et al.*, 2014; Gachago *et al.*, 2013), we analysed students' narratives thematically, focusing only on the content of their stories. I had often felt frustrated by the fact that I was bound by the narratives participants told in focus group discussions or in their digital stories. I had to take students' stories at face value, lacking the tools to critique or contextualise their stories. In recent years, narrative inquiry's interest in the underlying structures of narratives has increased. Bamberg (2006) or Georgakopoulou (2006a), for example, argue that there has been too much emphasis on the content within narrative inquiry, and not enough on the form and structure of the narrative. They claim that, in general, narratives are used more or less as unmediated and transparent representations to establish how storytellers make sense of themselves in light of past events (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). By focusing on the small stories' constructed in everyday, mundane situations, they offer an alternative to what they deem ~~idealizing~~ and essentialising accounts that have tended to see narratives as authentic and uncontaminated accounts of self" (Georgakopoulou, 2006b, p. 128). Examples of such research are Deppermann's (2007) analysis of how German teenagers construct a sense of self and belonging through the construction of in- and out-groups in everyday conversations. Another way of constructing these small stories is as a by-product of narrative interviews or focus groups: Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) studied American learners' identity

performance by exploring what they told or chose not to tell and how they told it, while Barkhuizen (2009) explored English Second Language teacher identity construction as a by-product of life history interviews.

These stories are small both metaphorically and in the literal sense of being brief. They tend to “focus on the micro-, fleeting aspects of lived experience” (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008, p. 378 and p. 380):

–Small stories can be about very recent („this morning“, „last night“) or still unfolding events, thus immediately reworking slices of experience and arising out of a need to share what has just happened or seemingly uninteresting tidbits. They can be about small incidents that may (or may not) have actually happened, mentioned to back up or elaborate on an argumentative point occurring in an ongoing conversation. Small stories can even be about – colloquially speaking – „nothing“; and as such indirectly reflect something about the interactional engagement between the interactants, while for outsiders, the interaction is literally „about nothing“.

By focusing on these small stories, Bamberg and Georgakopoulou explore how identities are constructed in interaction, which is why some authors call this approach ‘narratives-in-interaction’ (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Bamberg, 2006). Barkhuizen (2009, p. 283) explains that “small stories are discursively constructed accounts of identity making”. This form of research explores how identities (both individual and group) are constructed and performed through a close sociolinguistic reading of the collected narratives, bringing together a focus on content, form and context of narratives as they happen (Barkhuizen, 2009). Georgakopoulou (2006b, p. 127) explains that this approach, “... requires a decisive shift from ‘what does narrative tell us about constructions of self?’ to ‘how do we do self (and other) in narrative genres in a variety of sites of engagement?’” Thus the narrative is no longer just a means to an end, but the focus of analysis and the end in itself. Emphasizing the performative does not necessarily mean that identities are inauthentic but rather, as Kohler Riessman (2008) points out, “... that identities are situated and accomplished with an audience in mind”.

Georgakopoulou (2006b) lists three paradigm shifts, which methodologically and analytically both ground this approach to narrative analysis and fit well within my own theoretical framework:

1. A focus on practise-based theories that link ways of speaking with construction of social life;

2. A view of identity-in-interaction as under construction, constantly changing and interrelated with other social actions; and
3. A focus on micro-sites or non-hegemonic social practices as crucial sites of subjectivity.

6.4.1.2 Units of analysis

I identified 21 small' stories from the group conversations that took place during the workshop and lasted approximately five hours (see Appendix 9). Within these dialogical spaces', students reflected on the process of the digital storytelling workshop but also on readings that I handed out at the end of every workshop day. For these conversations, students sat in a circle. While these conversations were loosely facilitated – i.e. I initiated the check-in and feedback sessions asking guiding questions – they often took on a life of their own. Students led heated discussions and, as the facilitator, I could then step back to observe.

Within these conversations, students resorted to telling stories to make their points clear or to convey their experiences to their peers. These are stories from both the distant and recent past (Georgakopoulou, 2006b), from students' lives at the institution but also from outside the university, from their social and professional lives. It is these stories that I focused on for this research question. I classified as narratives any stories that students told that focused on experiences within or outside the workshop process, perceived as important, selected, organized, connected and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997). For this part of my findings, I focused in particular on stories of students' everyday engagement with and across difference in their daily lives.

6.4.1.3 Data representation

After identifying the stories, I cleaned' them to allow for better readability and flow. Kohler Riessman (2008) suggests polishing stories up and representing them in poetic form, rather than following socio-linguistic transcription conventions such as promoted by Bamberg or Georgakopoulou, who put more emphasis on intonation, silences etc. Not being trained in socio-linguistic studies, I am not following Bamberg's fine-grained linguistic analysis of stories, but one that leans more towards Barkhuizen's (2009) approach of small-story analysis. While not using the tools of linguistic analysis, he follows a line-by-line analysis, which allows close attention to the text. Kohler Riessman (2008, p. 136) notes that for performative analysis of narratives, "... detail about the local conversational context is essential to conversation". She adds that meaning in performative analysis does not necessarily lie in the stories, but in the dialogue between storyteller and story listener (2008, p. 106): "... social reality is constructed through interaction ... in mundane talk between speakers ... gaze, gesture and other nonverbal aspects—I believe that narratives are not

only constructed through text: as Bamberg develops in his more recent work (2012, p. 120), there is need for a more multimodal analysis of these stories, a focus on both vocal and visible bodily expressions, such as facial expressions, bodily movement and positioning that can open up new spaces of small-story analysis. I thus also added comments about body movements and gestures (in particular, those that indicated whom the story was directed towards, and both verbal and non-verbal replies by fellow students), to foreground the dialogical nature of these stories. I have extracted parts of the stories to exemplify my findings, referenced by story and line number. As workshop facilitator and researcher, I am part of this dialogue too: as Kohler Riessman (2008) points out, within performative analysis “the investigator adopts an active voice” (p. 137), as does the reader of this report: “the research report becomes a story’, with readers the audience, shaping meaning by their interpretations” (*ibid.*). I thus invite you, the reader of these chapters, to interpret and find your own meaning in the stories.

6.4.1.4 Data analysis through the concept of positioning

An important framing concept for the analysis of small stories, is positioning. As Bamberg (2006, p. 6) explains:

“In and through talk, speakers establish (i) what the talk is about (aboutness/content), and simultaneously (ii) the particular social interaction in the form of particular social relationships. And in the business of relating the world that is created by use of verbal means to the here and now of the interactive situation, speakers position themselves vis-a-vis the world out there and the social world here and now. It is in this attempt of relating aboutness/ content to the social interactants, or making the aboutness/content of their talk relevant to the interaction here and now, through which a position, from where these two worlds are drawn together, becomes visible.”

There are therefore three levels of positioning (Barkhuizen, 2009):

1. Level 1 asks questions on the content of the story and the characters, and how these characters relate to each other.
2. Level 2 asks questions on performative/interactional aspects of the story, on how the storyteller positions him or herself towards his or her audience
3. Level 3 looks at how the story is positioned vis-à-vis masternarratives or hegemonic discourses (the context of the story).

These three levels helped me make sense of the themes that emerged through my students' narratives, how through the telling of these stories students constructed group belongings and identities in everyday conversations, and how their narratives were positioned relative to hegemonic discourses.

6.4.2 Analytical approach 2: A multimodal toolkit to analyse digital stories

6.4.2.1 Introduction

As the second step in my data analysis, I analysed two of the digital stories developed during the workshop. These two stories were selected for their author's intent to break the silence around difficult knowledges (Britzman, 2000) in the classroom: sexuality and race. Both stories were told to trouble and counter hegemonic discourses and norms. I used multimodal analysis (Hull & Nelson, 2005) to gain a deeper understanding of how students' conscious and unconscious decisions in terms of use of images, narration, sound and movement impacted on the meaning of their multimodal texts. In doing this, I hoped to uncover in more depth how, in the process of developing our digital stories, we both act and are being acted upon by norms. These norms include, in this case, not only the hegemonic discourses and norms we are embedded in and the norms set by the very narrow genre of digital storytelling but also our own semiotic histories (Butler, 1999, 2004b; Newfield, 2011; Poletti, 2011). By doing this, I responded to Hull and Nelson's (2005, p. 229) appeal "to locate and define the deeper aesthetic power of multimodal texts".

Multimodality is rooted in social semiotics but interfaces with discourse analysis, systemic functional linguistics, and socially oriented work in critical discourse analysis (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Kress, 2010). Social semiotics draws from Halliday's (1978) work on the role of language in making meaning, moving from the focus on language to a broader study of "signs and their meanings in all material realisations" (Stein, 2008, p. 2), such as the visual, gestural and spatial, on top of the verbal mode (Rohleder & Thesen, 2012).

Social semiotics then focuses on how human beings make meaning, as Stein explains (2008, p. 2):

Social semiotic theories place human beings at the centre of meaning-making: as designers and interpreters of meaning, they make active choices, according to their interests, from the semiotic resources available to them. Semiotic resources of representation are not fixed: they are fluid, constantly changing as human beings' representational needs change.

While social semiotics sees individuals as agentic selves, with strong interests and the ability to make choices in their meaning making, they make these choices within their own social

contexts, practices and histories, using the resources that are available to them, as Stein continues (*ibid.*, my emphasis):

–Thus, from a social semiotic perspective, communication as sign production, reception and transformation, can be understood as a product of how people work with, use and transform the semiotic resources available to them *in specific moments of history, culture and power.*”

In similar fashion, Baldry and Thibault (2006, p. 4) define multimodal texts as “meaning-making events whose functions are defined by their use in particular social contexts”. Images or multimodal texts are used and interpreted in different ways in different contexts and by different audiences; and we are taught to use and read images in a certain way. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p. 266) created a “grammar of visual design” to help us read these visuals, although they are quick to state that these conventions are constantly changing, and define their grammar as “a flexible set of resources that people use in ever new and ever different acts of visual sign-making”.

What is of particular importance for my study, is that multimodality implies that the combination of different modes will result in different meanings. As Baldry and Thibault (2006, p. xv) argue, “The point is that specific choices and combination of choices – e.g. movement, colour and so on – realise or express meanings (e.g. actions, evaluations) in multimodal texts.” They apply what they call the resource-integration principle to multimodal texts (Baldry & Thibault, 2006, p. 18), defining it in the following way: “Resources are not simply juxtaposed as separate modes of meaning making but are combined and integrated to form a complex whole which cannot be reduced to, or explained in terms of the mere sum of its inseparable parts.”

As an example, the background sound of digital stories can alter the meaning of a digital story to either convey happy or sad emotions. This makes it important to analyse the various modes/modalities incorporated in a digital story – such as the narrative, narration, images and sound, as well as transitions and animations – for their either complementary or contradictory meaning, and then combine this analysis to make up the bigger picture (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001). Consequently, while it is important for analytical purposes to analyse the different modes of a multimodal text separately, Baldry and Thibault emphasize that (2006, p. 18), “The separation of different resources into different modalities is an analytical abstraction. Different resources are analytically, but not constitutively, separable in actual texts.”

Multimodal analysis, then, can be defined as a transcription process, which “seek[s] to reveal the multimodal basis of a text’s meaning in a systematic rather than an ad hoc way” (Baldry & Thibault, 2006, p. 21). I am interested in how students’ narratives of difference are expressed in a multimodal form, how this expression impacts on the meaning of the text on the viewer and ultimately on the storyteller, and how the narrow genre of digital stories may or may not impact on this expression. For my study, this means creating an analytical framework that allows me to understand how visuals, text, narration and sound work together in a digital story to elicit certain emotional responses from the audience.

Jewitt and Oyama (2001, p.155) note that social semiotic multimodal analysis also allows the bringing out of hidden meaning – the kind of conscious and unconscious beliefs and assumptions we make about ourselves and others – in multimodal texts. This allows us to visualise and reflect on the kind of dominant discourses that none of us can escape:

“... images play a role which goes far beyond the mere illustration of what is communicated in language, and images can contradict and work against spoken or written messages. If image analysis can bring this out, it can help improve and change practices.”

Part of this analysis, then, explores how these multimodal texts either work with or against dominant discourses, and towards or against their authorial intent of representation in a story. My second research question thus explores how storytellers’ conscious and unconscious decisions and choices in the use of the different semiotic resources available to them impacted on the ultimate meaning of the digital story and the multimodal text, in particular, in the story’s abilities to trouble norms and hegemonic discourses. I was also interested in how the repeated performance of this text acted upon the subjectivity of the storyteller. Here I follow Butler’s argument that subjectivities are both enacted and acted upon through repeated performance of discursive practices (in this case, through the repeated screening of digital stories). While I acknowledge that a digital story as a mediated, co-constructed narrative differs from real engagement in everyday practice, there is an emerging field of studies that shows how engagements in a digital world can impact on the real self. To answer this research question, I developed a multimodal analysis toolkit (Baldry & Thibault, 2006), which allowed me to analyse the narrative, representational, interactive and compositional meaning of the digital story.

6.4.2.2 Developing a Multimodal Toolkit

Multimodal analysis is challenging. How does one describe a multimodal performance, in which image, motion, sound, narration and text work together in written words? Such analysis involves hours and hours of watching and rewatching the multimodal text. This, in

my case, was the digital story, with and without sound, with my role being to analyse each mode separately and then as a whole, to – as Stein explains (2008, p. 52) – “see how the different modes were in sequential and simultaneous dialogue and juxtaposition, and how they were producing meaning across the whole text”.

To analyse the two digital stories selected, I made use of Baldry and Thibault’s (2006) notion of a multimodal toolkit. Their book, *Multimodal transcription and text analysis*, is a rich source of methods of analysing complex multimodal texts through developing flexible, multi-layered and multipurpose toolkits. Hull and Nelson (2005, p. 234) emphasize that when choosing and analysing a multimodal text it is important to identify which modes will be the focus of the analysis: “In an ideal world, one would take into account all of the modes – spoken words, images, music, written text, and movement and transitions – but such complexity quickly overwhelms.” I have chosen to focus primarily on images and narrative, and camera position, although I refer to voice and soundtrack as well.

In addition to Baldry and Thibault’s work, I have adopted Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) differentiation of images into representational, interactive and compositional meaning, which they developed based on Michael Halliday’s semiotic work (1978) and Jewitt and Oyama’s (2001) further work on visual meaning.

Representational meaning

The representational meaning of images refers to both the narrative representation, what’s happening in the image or multimodal text, what are the participants depicted doing, “the unfolding of actions, events, or processes of change” (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p. 141) and the conceptual patterns, referring to the meaning behind the image, as “being something, or meaning something, or belonging to some category, or having certain characteristics or components” (*ibid.*). Here I looked at symbolism and metaphors, as well as how certain images supported (or did not support) the meaning of the text.

Interactional meaning

The interactional meaning of images looks at how images create relationships with the viewer and the world inside the pictures. There are three key elements in this dimension: contact, distance and point of view (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p. 145). See more on these elements in Appendix 10.

Compositional meaning

Compositional meaning refers to any way of conveying a certain emotion through image quality, placement, use of colour or angle, and level of eye contact (for instance): these influence or manipulate the value that a recipient would ascribe to that communication. This relates to the layout, placement and relative salience of an image, text and other multimodal

elements of a text, which in total allow us to recognize this text as a specific genre: ---. the composition of the whole, the way in which the representational and interactive elements are made to relate to each other, [relates to] the way they are integrated into a meaningful whole” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 176). Kress and Leeuwen (2006, p. 177) suggest three resources of compositional meaning: information value, salience and framing (in Appendix 10, see more on the resources I used).

6.4.2.3 Multimodal toolkit for digital stories

While Kress and Van Leeuwen’s work focuses mainly on still images, I am analysing digital stories. Digital stories sit at an interesting crossroad between static images and movies. While they generally consist of still images, the panning and zooming functions of digital movie editing programmes allow these to become moving images. Digital stories also include narrated text and a soundtrack, both modes that impact strongly on the emotional effect of a story. As a result, I have added a few elements to my multimodal toolkit that are usually used to analyse movies, such as camera position, narration and sound track (Baldry & Thibault, 2006).

Baldry and Thibault suggest the following categorisation for camera position: panning (sideways camera movement) and zooming (backwards and forwards movement). Panning creates the illusion of a panoramic view, while zooming in, for example, focuses attention on a specific element of an image.

Soundtrack includes both speech/narration, music and other sounds to provide a multimodal text without any importance of one mode over the other. Speech or narration can be described by accent, modulation, tempo or pitch (Baldry & Thibault, 2006). Background music is in its basic categorisation either instrumental, or has male or female voices. Silence is another important element of this mode. While the music often acts as background to the narrated voice, sometimes the music takes over and becomes focal.

6.4.2.4 Authorial intent/interest and performativity of digital storytelling

Making meaning from multimodal text and understanding the narratives told through multimodality, is interesting as it covers more than just the content of data. The aesthetic qualities that a multimodal text conveys matter as well. Brushwood Rose and Low (2014, p. 30) reflect on this when they say, that “understanding the meanings contained in a photograph requires an attention to the aesthetic qualities of the image and the choices participants make in the crafting of that image, not just the content depicted.” Thus, when analysing visual or multimodal texts, one must move beyond analysing the visual to emphasise the creative and aesthetic dimensions.

What differentiates social semiotics from structural linguistics and semiotics is its belief that signs are not arbitrary, but motivated by interests, affecting what is shown or performed. What is represented of an object is defined by what is of interest to the sign-maker. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p. 7) argue strongly that (my emphasis):

—We see representation as a process in which the makers of signs, whether child or adult, seek to make a representation of some object or entity, whether physical or semiotic, and in which their interest in the object, at the point of making the representation, is a complex one, arising out of the cultural, social and psychological history of the sign-maker, and focused by the specific context in which the sign-maker produces the sign. *That „interest“ is the source of the selection of what is seen as the criterial aspect of the object, and this criterial aspect is then regarded as adequately representative of the object in a given context.* In other words, it is never the whole object' but only ever its criterial aspects which are represented.”

Stein (2004, p. 24) explains interest further, by stating that the term interested' refers to the fact that signs are never neutral but infused with the sign-maker's interests, being the tension between what the sign-maker wanted or needed to say, and what it was possible to say.

I understand this interest as both conscious and unconscious. While we have agency and can act, for instance, by choosing a certain topic, we are also acted upon by our histories, our context, hegemonic discourses and the genre of the multimodal text we are producing. Stein (*ibid.*) continues to expand on this concept:

—The individual is a social agent with specific interests who is acting as a member of various groups with group interests: thus the individual's interests cannot be divorced from the histories of the social groups of which he or she is part. Individual interests may be divergent, resistant or convergent with group interests.”

Within the context of multimodal narratives, such as digital storytelling projects, this means foregrounding the storyteller's voice and experience both in the process of crafting their digital story, and in the crafted product. I have reflected before on the craftedness' of digital stories, which imply that digital storytelling needs both skills or technique and a sense of aesthetics - the affective dimensions conveyed through a particular image (Brushwood Rose & Low, 2014). Digital storytelling is both a process and a product. When analysing a digital story, one analyses both, the process and the product.

I see the interpretation of the narratives told through the different modes of a digital story, and the orchestrated story told as a working together of all modes or as a collaborative effort combining a negotiation of meaning by the researcher, the storytelling and his/her audience.

While most visual analysis does not include a participant's own verbal interpretation and explanation of the image and why he or she chose it (Lynn & Lea, 2005), I interviewed my participants at the end of the project to include a commentary of their own interpretations of images and reasons for choosing these images (Jocson, 2015). In doing this, I heeded Nelson, Hull and Roche-Smith's (2008, p. 437) appeal ~~to~~ make apparent the necessity and potentials of combining detailed analysis of new media texts themselves with careful ethnographic investigations of the intentions, interactions, and environments that foster these texts and promote their circulation in particular ways." In similar fashion, Brushwood Rose and Low (2014, p. 38) argue that:

~~–~~Considering the choices participants make in creating these multimedia narratives – why did Ming employ a picture of hands rather than a face? – as well as asking them about the experience of crafting such narratives can reveal a great deal about the personal as well as socio-political dynamics of representation."

I have included these reflections in my analysis to explore, in more depth, possible tensions between authorial intent, i.e. the meaning the storyteller had intended to transfer through the choice of image, and the realization of this intent (Nelson *et al.*, 2008). While Digital Storytelling is focused on the personal, it is still a construction, offering storytellers the possibility to (re)craft identities. For examples of such use of commentary/reflection to locate and interpret meaning of images in digital storytelling research, see i.e. Nelson, Hull and Roche-Smith (2008), Brushwood Rose and Low (2014), Alexandra (2008), Hull and Katz (2006), and Jocson (2015) (from whom I borrowed the term commentary).

I argue that there are various reasons why this authorial intent is difficult to achieve in digital storytelling. These reasons include a lack of critical media literacy in students when selecting images, low confidence in creating their own images, and the tendency for easily accessible images to be steeped in masternarratives.

6.4.3 Analytical approach 3: Dialogical Narrative Analysis

A third way of looking beyond the mere content of a story is to explore the audience response to stories. Research question 3 looks at the development of these stories and, in particular, at these stories' capacity to facilitate an affective engagement with the Other'.

Newfield's (2011, p. 33) notion of "chains of semiosis" is helpful to describe how learners are involved in meaning making through the creation of a chain of signs, consisting of an "ever-shifting variety of texts and artefacts". Kress (2003, p. 45) describes this chain of semiosis as a process, in which "the sign leads to an interpretant, which itself becomes an object/referent for a new sign in communication, which is the basis for the forming of yet another interpretant". Thus one story informs and acts as an interpreter to the next, in an indefinite cycle of understanding and learning.

In order to do so, I employed dialogical narrative analysis (DNA), an approach developed by Frank (1995, 2010, 2012) to better understand illness stories told to him in various support groups. DNA is concerned with the "types of work that stories do and how they do it" (Frank, 2010, p. 120). DNA highlights the dialogical nature of stories: not only are there multiple voices in one story – constructed in dialogue between a storyteller and a story listener – but there are also multiple voices in a story. Finally, there is a dialogue or connection that a story researcher creates with readers of his or her research. Frank stresses the importance of representing storytellers as real people, leading readers to care about these storytellers. He sees the role of an analyst as that of facilitator: somebody putting "stories in dialogue with one another and then inviting his readers to enter this dialogue" (2010, p. 117).

Frank describes his approach into narrative inquiry as "socio-narratology". It is based on distinctive "operative premises" (2010, p.13) about the nature and functioning of stories:

1. Stories are seen as actors: Rather than being interested in stories as "portal" into the mind of the storyteller – like, for instance, Clandinin and Connelly (1990, 2006) – Frank's interest is in understanding what stories do. Storytellers draw on narrative resources or templates to tell their stories. These resources depend on a storyteller's context. Stories don't belong to storytellers, but storytellers "are understood as being enabled to be who they are because of stories" (Frank, 2010, p. 14).
2. Stories connect people: Stories can create social movements, can coordinate actions of groups. Storytelling is an inherently social process, a dialogue between the storyteller and the story listener, but also a dialogue between the multiple voices that either support or contradict each other in somebody's story. Frank suggests that there is a symbiotic relationship between story and storyteller. A story needs a storyteller to be told; but stories already exist and are waiting to be told, with a storyteller thus drawing from a finite pool of narrative resources to tell his or her story.
3. Stories have certain capacities, such as the capacities to deal with trouble, display and test somebody's character, represent a point of view, create suspense, allow one

own's interpretation, display an inherent morality, resonate with one own's story, create a symbiosis between people and stories, perform, enact truths or – most importantly for my study – facilitate imagination and emotional engagement.

4. There is a continuum of stories or genres of storytelling, which are all interdependent and which “teach people how to make sense of stories in other forms, how to perform and how to respond” (p.16).
5. Analysis of stories depends on dialogue because voice is never singular: “... every voice contains multiple other voices” (p.16).
6. DNA is the analysis of the relationship between story, story listener and storyteller, focusing on “... how each allows the other to be (...), how stories breathe as they animate, assemble, entertain, and enlighten, and also deceive and divide people” (p.16).
7. We can learn from storytellers who, as Frank stresses, “... learn to work with stories that are not theirs but there as realities. Master storytellers know that stories breathe” (p.17).

How did I choose the stories that I analysed? Frank argues that DNA chooses stories based on what he calls ‘phronesis’ (2012, p. 43): the practical wisdom gained through analytical experience. Frank listened to hundreds of stories before coming up with his typology of sickness stories. I too have listened to many stories over the five years of this digital storytelling project. I thus agree with him, when he says that it is “the analyst’s cultivated capacity to hear, from the total collection of stories, those that call out as needing to be written about” (*ibid.*). It is thus a conscious or unconscious decision by the analyst to hear and select the stories that need to be shared. However, Frank also acknowledges that one sometimes “... feels chosen by a story” (2012, p. 43), and that there is consequently an inherent bias in DNA: “Narrative analysis gives increased audibility to some stories, recasts how other stories are understood, and necessarily neglects many stories” (*ibid.*, 50). What is important is that the stories I choose and the storytellers, “can remain unique while being representative in that uniqueness” (2010, p. 116).

Each year, there are specific stories that stand out and that students refer to more often than to others. Certain stories feel more authentic and personal, eliciting more emotional engagement than others. The two stories I chose for this study are those of Noni and Lauren: two women who told stories about difficult topics – sexuality and race – and whose intent was to trouble norms. I chose them because of their topics, but also because of the widely differing responses to their stories and the relationship, we formed during the study. Both of these students were particularly interested in this study and in its objective of facilitating an engagement across difference. By analysing their stories in detail, my

objective was to understand how certain narratives are better at connecting people and eliciting an affective engagement than others.

Crucial questions that DNA asks are:

Which multiple voices can be found in one voice? How do these voices merge with/contest each other? Why is somebody telling a story? How does the storyteller hold his or her own in the act of storytelling? What is at stake? How do stories create group identities and boundaries?

To answer these questions, Frank (2012, pp. 44–46) suggests the following five analytical foci:

1. Resources: What narrative resources can the storyteller draw from? What resources shape how the story is being told and comprehended? How are resources distributed?
2. Circulation: To whom is the story told, who can understand the story and who can't?
3. Affiliation: Whom does the story render external or Other to that group?
4. Identity: What identity is performed or constructed; and what are the possibilities to change or remain the same? What identity is claimed, rejected, experimented with?
5. What is at stake: Who is holding his or her own? Who is made more vulnerable by the story?

It is pertinent to my research question that DNA is sensitive to both the story and the reaction to the story. Studying the mirroring between what is told in the story – the story's content – and what happens as a result of telling that story – its effects ... the mutual dependence of content and effects can never be forgotten" (Frank, 2010, pp. 71–72).

An example of how researchers have applied socio-narratology to their own research is, for example, Phoenix & Griffins's (2012) study on how a digital story about mature athletes affected 11 British students. They highlight the importance of listening not only to storytellers, but also to story listeners in terms of what stories do to them (Phoenix & Griffin, 2012, p. 2): "The absence of those who listen to and respond – or not – to the stories that they hear is an important omission when making claims for what stories can do." Following these 11 students throughout three focus group conversations, they show how students changed, or didn't change, their perceptions of ageing. In particular, they explored how this counterstory (of mature athletes) affected their affiliation with masternarratives easily accessible in their own context.

I went about analysing my students' stories by following their chains of semiosis – or of meaning-making (Kress, 2003; Newfield, 2011). My multiple listenings to the video recordings and reading through the transcriptions helped me to explore what students said, including their body language, emotional markers and the reactions of their peers and facilitators. I paid close attention to moments of pedagogic affect – moments of emotional outbursts – to investigate more closely how affective investments in social norms impact on students' affective engagement. My own reflections are part of this analysis to make my voice an integral part of the write-up (Chaudry, 2009).

6.5 Summary of methodological framework

While I have used three rather different analytical approaches, all three fit into my theoretical framework, which sees storytelling as:

1. Social practice, constructed in discursive interaction;
2. Impacted on by storytellers' histories/contexts, hegemonic discourses and culturally-sanctioned scripts/genres;
3. Always carrying notions of power and privilege;
4. A process through which storytellers act and are being acted upon; and
5. A means, ultimately, of troubling hegemonic discourses and norms.

To summarise my methodological framework, I have created Table 4, which gives an overview of the research question, my theoretical framework, the different aspects of sentimentality in digital storytelling, and the analytical approach used for analysing the data.

Table 4: Analytical framework

	Title of Research Question	Analytical focus / site of analysis	Theoretical Conceptual framework	Aspect of sentimentality in digital storytelling	Analytical Approach
RQ1	How do students construct/perform notions of self, <u>Other</u> and difference in everyday conversations? What stories do they tell? How do they position themselves vis-à-vis each other? How do they position themselves vis-à-vis dominant discourses?	Process (dialogue): group	Critical race theory (counterstorytelling) (Solorzano, Yosso); colour-blindness; world-travelling (Lugones)	Sentimental reactions when engaging with trauma narratives (Zembylas)	Small stories/ positioning analysis (Bamberg)
RQ2	What is the potential of a digital storytelling process to construct counterstories that trouble dominant discourses? What subject positions are available and/or are (co)constructed by students in their digital stories? To what extent does the digital story as multimodal text (re)produce or trouble students' subjectivities? And, in particular, how do students' semiotic histories and access to semiotic resources impact on the meaning of a multimodal text?	Product (digital story): story	Performativity (Butler)	Digital storytelling genre (Poletti); lack of critical media literacy; difficulties of telling counterstories; power of hegemonic discourses/norms and social semiotic histories	Multimodal toolkit (Baldry & Thibault)
RQ3	How does the telling of these digital stories impact on an audience's affective engagement with the <u>Other</u> , particularly in terms of an audience's empathy? What are the capacities of personal stories within a digital storytelling process to trouble students' engagement with the <u>Other</u> ?	Process (storytelling): storyteller/ audience	Affective turn; cultural politics of emotions (Ahmed); asymmetrical reciprocity (Young)	Digital storytelling genre (Poletti); precariousness of personal narratives: personal vs collective stories (Shuman); sentimentality when engaging with trauma narratives (Zembylas)	Dialogical narrative analysis (Frank)

6.6 Concluding thoughts

This chapter described the steps of narrative research that I have taken: how to facilitate narratives, how to represent narratives, and how to analyse and report narratives. I have used three different approaches to narrative analysis: small-story positioning analysis, multimodal analysis and dialogical narrative analysis. These three approaches share a common concern with seeing storytelling as a social practice and have a clear objective of troubling norms and masternarratives. However, each of these approaches follows different ways of facilitating, representing and analysing data. Bamberg's small stories' positioning analysis explores how students position themselves vis-à-vis their Others' and by doing so construct their subjectivities, in the small stories constructed as by-products of the workshop (research question 1). Baldry and Thibault's approach provided me with the means of developing a multimodal toolkit to investigate the digital stories themselves and how the different multimodal texts of a digital story work towards or against a storyteller's authorial intent to tell a counterstory or one that troubles the norm (research question 2). Frank's dialogical narrative analysis (DNA), focusing on the capacities of narratives, helped me to explore the affective connection established between the storyteller and her audience by looking at what stories do in this process and how stories are co-constructed between storyteller and the audience (research question 3). The next part, consisting of three chapters, will discuss findings in relation to the three research questions guiding this study.

PART 3: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

CH 7: Students' construction of a narrative identity of and across difference

*"I am not free while any woman is unfree,
even when her shackles are very different from my own.
And I am not free as long as one person of Color remains chained.
Nor is any one of you."
Audre Lorde*

7.1 Introduction

My study investigates the extent to which the sentimentality of a digital storytelling process as post-conflict pedagogy allowed students to engage with each other differently. To understand what different engagement meant, I first needed to understand how students engage in everyday conversations with and across difference. As a first step, I thus explored students' everyday engagement across difference by analysing the small stories (Bamberg, 2006) students told during the digital storytelling workshop to answer research question 1:

How do students construct/perform notions of self, Other and difference in everyday conversations? What stories do they tell? How do they position themselves vis-à-vis each other? How do they position themselves vis-à-vis dominant discourses?

The 21 small stories selected for this chapter, ranging in length from eight to 42 lines long, can be found in full in Appendix 9. Considering my non-linguistic background, I have followed Barkhuizen's (2009) approach to small-story analysis, which mirrors Kohler Riessman's poetic approach for performative analysis (2008).

7.2 Positioning analysis level 1: The content of the small stories

Level 1 analysis of small stories pays "close attention to the ways in which the constructed/represented world of characters and event sequences is drawn up" (Bamberg, 2006, p. 145). It looks at content and characters and identifies themes told in these stories.

7.2.1 "Black people on this side, coloured people here, whites there"

Because South Africa, and Cape Town in particular, remains a deeply divided society, it is not surprising that the stories that the nine participants of my study performed were stories of social segregation.

What stories of difference do they tell? Who are the actors in their stories and how do they relate to each other? It seems that, for these students, difference is primarily identified as racially based. The way students sat during the course of the workshop illuminates this social segregation by racial background. In the picture below (figure 2), the three white female participants sit together on one side of the circle, with the black students on the other side of the circle, with the one coloured participant (female) and myself as white female facilitator seemingly serving as buffer zones between the two groups. The empty chair next to me is reserved for the course convenor, also white and female. Interestingly, the only white male student sits comfortably between the two black males, a first pointer to the importance of considering the intersectionality of, for example, race, gender and class.

Students maintained this seating arrangement throughout the workshop, until during one of the last sessions, I asked students to reflect on their seating arrangements and to change the way they were seated. This resulted in lots of nervous laughter and a slightly uncomfortable shuffling of positions.



Figure 2: Typical seating arrangements during the digital storytelling workshop

How is this social segregation based on race performed in students' stories? The following story told by Noni (story 19), is an example of the ease and familiarity with which students use deeply essentialising racial denominators, such as black, coloured and white when describing their classroom seating arrangements (mirroring the workshop set-up):

Story 19 (Noni)

8 In our class you would find, I don't know how it happens,
9 but you would find black people on this side, coloured people here, white people there.

This normative segregation based on race inscribed and enacted in students' bodies is not confined to campus, but is carried over into students' social lives. Beatrice, for example, reflects on her social engagements in her home and community, represented by whom she invites to her home (story 8, line 13–19). Her story shows the intersectionality of race and age, as Beatrice as a mature student, recognises the differences in social engagements between her daughter and herself:

Story 8 part 1 (Beatrice)

13 The article speaks about blacks and whites still gathering only in their groups
14 and not really visiting each other.
15 We claim to be friends with each other
16 and yet we don't visit each other at home. (*looking at Vuyelwa and Noni*)
17 I actually reflected on that for quite a long time and I asked myself:
18 When last did I ever entertain my black friends at home?
19 My daughter has plenty and she goes to a lot of them socially but I don't. (*looking at me*)

In similar fashion, Noni relates a story about an American friend of hers, who – from an outsider perspective – expressed his surprise about the lack of integration among his South African friends (story 1, lines 8–11):

Story 1 (Noni)

8 Whenever he was with the black friend, (*looking down*)
9 the white friends would be like: emmm we see you later.
10 And then whenever he was with the white friends,
11 the black friend was like: listen Justin, I will call you later. (*looking towards white students*)

7.2.2 The comfort of shared experiences

What are the reasons for this social segregation, both in public and in private spaces? Black students in particular refer to the comfort and the safety they experience when connecting with people with a shared language, but most importantly from a similar background and experiences. For example, in story 4, Vuyelwa relates a story of Michael challenging her

about sitting with her black friends, her group (line 14). She tries to explain her reasons for associating herself with her black peers (that group, line 20) to Michael, who, inhabiting white male privilege, from her perspective struggles to understand the experiences of vulnerability of a person of colour, and the need for safety and connection. Her story also addresses the assumptions we have about the Other (in her case, a fear of being misunderstood, as indicated in lines 22–24):

Story 4 (Vuyelwa)

1 To speak in front of a large group is difficult.
2 not being an English speaker,
3 most of the time you feel like,
4 I don't know, how I can explain this?
5 Sometimes you wanna say something,
6 but you don't know how to say it from our side.

12 Even Michael asked me one time:
13 Vuyelwa, I can see that you are a nice person and all the stuff.
14 But why can't you sit next to us because you can speak?
16 And I said to him:
17 No, sometimes in life you want to sit with the group of people that you know.
18 Michael, I can smile with you and talk with you, make jokes with you.
19 But even though I can do that,
20 I feel much safer when I am with that group.
21 And I can speak freely when I am in their group.
22 Maybe if I speak to you guys mostly,
23 you gonna say ah ah ...
24 I never went through that or I don't have the same feeling like that person.
25 But speaking to those groups of people that I have spoken to,
26 they went through the same thing as me and I feel more connected with them.

How do white students explain their lack of engagement across difference? Reflecting on her predominantly white social engagements, Lauren's story adds another layer to this conversation. While carefully positioning herself as colour-blind, by describing her friendship with "one black friend" (line 11–12), Lauren's story (story 9) poignantly constructs the unconscious and mostly unquestioned norms regulating our engagements with/across difference and the fear of breaking out of these norms (lines 20–22):

Story 9 (Lauren)

8 I was saying to Rachel in the car this morning, (*turning towards Rachel*)
9 one of my really good friends is black, she lives in Joburg.
10 She comes to stay with me in the holidays you know.
11 I don't see that she's black you know, we have been friends for so long.
12 She's just like any of my other friends.
13 But then Rachel said to me how many other black friends do you have?
14 And I sort of thought she is kind of my only black friend.
15 So it's not that I have like a wall up and I am thinking
16 I don't wanna be friends with black people ...
18 But I just think automatically our brains are in tune with white people:
19 let's go sit with them, white people, let's invite them over.

20 And we are almost scared to break that cultural barrier of inviting another race into our home,
21 of entertaining and letting them in,
22 because we feel subconsciously this difference.

Noni's story (story 19) supports Lauren and reaffirms the indirect, unconscious or – as Lauren puts it – subconscious knowledge that determines which bodies we attach ourselves to:

Story 19 (Noni)

6 For instance in our class, like you were saying: (*addressing Lauren*)
7 Your mind is just conditioned to go to a certain group of people.

This unconscious experience of difference has socio-material effects, impacting on students' engagement across difference.

7.2.3 Preconceived ideas about the „Other“

Social segregation over multiple generations has fed stereotypes and assumptions, which draw out stereotypes, prejudices and aggressions (Jansen, 2004). As a result of this, much oppressive behaviour is unconscious. While it is easy to recognise blatant racism, it is much harder to recognise how, in everyday interactions, dominance may be reinforced just because of one belonging to a dominant group by birth (Pease, 2010). As Shotwell (2011, p. 76) argues, “Individual and institutional racism often moves and manifests without emerging into conceptual consciousness; it takes the form of practices, avoidances, unspoken affective responses.” For example, Noni relates a story about how, while trying to help Michael to become elected as member of the Student Representative Council (SRC), she encountered strong resistance among her black peers, based on the fact that they couldn't vote for a white person (story 5, lines 11–12):

Story 5 (Noni)

1 I think we all have preconceived assumptions, (*looking down*)
2 ideas about who everybody else is.
3 We don't give ourselves the chance to get to know each other. (*Vuyelwa: Yeah*)
4 For instance – whatever we say stays here right (*everybody laughing*)
5 I remember, when you [addressing Michael] wanted to be in the SRC. (*Michael: you asked...*)
6 I remember you had to sign a petition.
7 He had to gather a whole lot of signatures.
8 And I took his thing,
9 and I was like going to every black students to sign.
10 Some of them were like:
11 No, Michael is white (*Noni posing as arrogant, black students, Noni and Vuyelwa laughing*).
12 I am not gonna sign, you know.

While in many of the students' stories, there is acceptance of or resignation about this kind of conditioning – a feeling that this is the norm and can't or shouldn't be questioned – in some stories students start to critique and trouble these norms. For example, in story 14, Vuyelwa expresses her anger at a movie screened by one of her teachers, which gave a stereotypical account of poor, disadvantaged black schools and well-resourced privileged white schools. While she acknowledges the large class sizes and lack of resources encountered during her schooling in the Eastern Cape, she takes offence at the negative portrayal of her schooling experience and troubles this narrative. For her, going through that school system made her proud and resilient (lines 16–18):

Story 17 (Vuyelwa)

- 11 We grew up in that space but we are proud of it because today we are here.
- 12 That makes us who we are today.
- 13 And he showed the other side of a privileged school whereby they got everything.
- 14 Like in the classroom, there are twenty something learners,
- 15 whereby we were 50–60 or 60 something.
- 16 But we managed to learn even though we were in that class,
- 17 at that space even though our teachers didn't teach us that well.
- 18 But in our mindset, we believed that we can make it even though we were in that class.

7.2.4 “Things here are different ... if you are black you must feel that you're black”

There are also accounts of open racism in students' stories, often geographically linked to Cape Town, which is framed as a racist city compared to Johannesburg, for example. In similar fashion to Lauren before, Siyabonga sets his story up by first introducing his best friend in Johannesburg, who is Afrikaans and white, and in describing his work experiences in Johannesburg, which he constructs as uneventful. However, he then continues to relate an openly racist incident at the Waterfront (story 6). While, like Lauren, he distances himself from racial thinking and segregation (lines 16–18), he portrays Cape Town as a city where if ~~you~~ you are black you must feel that you're black” (line 15). Having framed his Cape Town experiences through this racist lens, he relates a scene encountered in a store at the Waterfront (lines 19–27). Although he does not describe this person as white, I would argue the whiteness of the attacker is implicit in his account, positioned against the black employee violated with the ~~K~~-word' (line 24). Consequently, I would infer that his statement, ~~That~~ is how Capetonians behave,” could be read as, ~~That~~ is how *white* Capetonians behave” (line 26):

Story 6 (Siyabonga)

- 13 But when I came to Cape Town,
- 14 I was like: ok, things here are different.
- 15 you are black you must feel that you're black. (*Vuyelwa laughing*)

16 I worked in a mall in Joburg,
 17 and rich white people they used to come into the store,
 18 but they never made me feel small, neh?
 19 This other day I was at the Waterfront,
 20 and there was this guy.
 21 I think the CEO of a big company. (*smiling while he is telling his story*)
 22 He came to the store
 23 and he had like an argument with the cashier.
 24 And he used the K-word!
 25 I was like: ok, maybe this is true.
 26 That is how Capetonians behave (*Vuyelwa laughing*)
 27 but not all people are like that. (*Vuyelwa nodding*)

Noni has another story of racism to tell, also at a mall, relating how a white driver insulted her black friend (story 13):

Story 13 (Noni)

1 One of these days, I was with a friend of mine. (*looking at Nazma and Lauren*)
 2 This other lady who works at campus at library at night,
 3 we were going to a Saint Peter's mall in Observatory.
 4 I don't know, what she did, but she was driving,
 5 and then this white man came up on the window and said:
 6 Ohhh you people can't think, what's wrong with you? Why did you do that what not what not'

Positioning analysis level 1, the content of the stories thus showed that the stories students told around their engagement across difference, were really stories of non-engagement, accounts of racially segregated classrooms and lives based on the comfort of shared experiences and shared languages, fuelling stereotypical assumptions and beliefs about the Other which are rarely disrupted. These assumptions and beliefs result microaggressions. In the worst case, this lack of social engagement leads to open racism, including in Cape Town, which is portrayed as an openly racist context.

7.3 Positioning analysis level 2: students' positioning of self and „Other“

How does a storyteller position him or herself towards his or her audience, and how do my students position themselves in relation to each other? Level 2 positioning analysis of small stories focuses on the performative or dialogical aspect of the story (Kohler Riessman, 2008). Slight differences appear in students' stories, disrupting the single story of a white and a black experience, and highlighting the impacts of an intersectionality of class, gender, age and race on how students are perceived and positioned vis-à-vis each other.

7.3.1 “It's not your fault but it's the people of your colour's fault”

Referring to white privilege, McIntosh coined the widely used metaphor, the invisible weightless knapsack' (1992, p. 30). As a white woman, she explains:

–have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious.”

This unconscious, unrecognised white privilege is a dominant theme that defines students' relationships through their stories. For example, Story 15 of Noni's shows her frustration with her white peers' lack of awareness and recognition of their privilege, a privilege that has been passed on from generation to generation, and that still impacts their socio-economic status and consequently their opportunities in life. In her story, she refers to a student who is not part of our workshop, and hence was not in this specific space (line 5). However, when one looks at body movement, gestures and direction of speech in the video recordings, one can see that Noni addresses her frustration and anger at the white students in the group. She emphasizes the word “you” over and over in her story (lines 8–9), shifting pronouns from the impersonal third person (“someone”, line 1), to the second person “you” (Kohler Riessman, 2008, p. 128). She is not speaking to a generalized other, but addressing Lauren and Beatrice very concretely. However, in her last line (line 11), she repositions herself into a more reconciliatory space, acknowledging that in this country, everyone, including herself, is shying away from the highly uncomfortable spaces of guilt, privilege, responsibility and reconciliation.

Story 15 (Noni)

- 1 I didn't say, someone must be responsible.
(firm voice, looking down, hands in between knees)
- 2 I said it's someone's fault if this country is like this.
- 3 I think in our first year or second year
- 4 we were talking about race issues and stuff *(looking at me and Lauren)*
- 5 and someone in my class said: But whose fault is it? I never did that to you!
- 6 Yes, you never did that to me bt ...
- 7 Not even your parents but maybe your grandparents did that.
- 8 That's why YOU were privileged because YOUR grandparents were privileged.
- 9 And that's why YOUR kids are gonna be privileged because YOU are privileged.
- 10 It's not your fault but it's the people of your colour's fault. *(looking at Lauren, Beatrice)*
- 11 We are running away that it's someone's fault. *(Looking down, shaking her head)*

In story 10, Vuyelwa tries to explain this unconscious privilege by reminding her peers how her accent is mocked in class, highlighting the unequal power relations in a classroom where part of the student population is placed in the disadvantaged situation of having to communicate in a second or third language. The hegemony of English as a means for communication applies not only in class situations, as in Vuyelwa's story 4 (lines 1–6), which I discussed above, but also in social situations:

Story 10 (Vuyelwa)

3 If I want to be friends like with Beatrice, most of the time
4 I have to try to act the way she's acting and speak the way she's speaking,
5 because most of the times she's gonna say:
6 Whooooo Vuyelwa, some of your words are sooo...
7 you can't pronounce some of the words like this.
8 When I was at the college, there was one word that I used.
9 I said: I must go and make my affidavit and everyone was laughing at me (*all laughing*)
10 you can't say that affidavit and I say like what?
11 What am I supposed to say: affidavit? (*all laughing*)
12 and I would say: nooo you want me to adapt to your way of speaking.
13 This is my kind of way of speaking. I am a Xhosa, so I am proud of it.
14 So if I pronounce this word like this – that is my own kind of a way.
15 So if you guys believe that I am saying it wrongly, you can't judge me.

While the above story portrays the atmosphere of fun and banter, characterising large parts of these conversations, there are also more sombre, thoughtful moments. Vuyelwa's next story (story 18) is such an example, changing the atmosphere in the workshop. In this story, she tells us about her grandmother working for a white person (she does not reveal whether she is referring to a white woman or a man) to further explain the complexities of privilege. Here she moves beyond unconscious privilege to a darker side, as she remembers the work relation between her grandmother and her white boss, "the person who owns me" (line 11), which she describes as oppressive and inhuman. She first relates how her grandmother's ability of bringing "white man's food" home, was perceived as a privilege in her community, attributed to the better quality of "white food" (lines 3–9). However, the story soon turns when she starts questioning this "privilege" and contrasts it with the way her grandmother was treated by "the white people" (line 15), which in her eyes is nothing less than cruel (lines 10–17):

Story 18 (Vuyelwa)

1 When I grew up with my grandmother,
2 she used to work for a white person. (*directed at me, hands folded in front of chest*)
3 What fascinated me was, every time she comes back from work,
4 she would come back with a bag in her hand.
5 Having like something like breakfast and lunch and supper. (*hands opening up*)
6 We felt privileged that we had to eat the white man's food.
7 The type of food that wasn't there, we don't normally have it.
8 We felt like: Ok. I am better ... in my house, we eat better than other person,
9 because my grandmother brings this and that.
10 But while she was sitting down, she will say:
11 Yohhhh I work my butt off, because this week the person who owns me said,
12 I must wash all the windows and then next week I must do it again,
13 and the following week I must do it again.
14 That felt to me like ok, they are doing this to my grandmotherwho are they?
15 The white people.
16 So I felt like: Ok these people, how come they do not see that she's an old lady,
17 whereby she works hard to get just a little sum of money?

In response to a story told by Rachel, a white working-class student, portraying her struggle at recognising her own privilege within the context of white poverty (which I discuss in more detail later in this chapter), Vuyelwa tries to make her white peers understand that a white person's experience of disadvantage can never be equated to a black person's experience of oppression (story 18, lines 23–29). Not only did these white people mistreat her grandmother, she explains, but they also took her mother and her grandmother away from their own family, leaving her without the support and care she yearned for (lines 30–36):

Story 18 (Vuyelwa)

21 But we shared that food – we felt like ok they are privileged like ok ...
22 Like they had nice food and all those stuff.
23 So I think I am being privileged is a big word, it is a big word.
31 because my mother was looking after her,
32 and then at night she got tired at home and she won't have time to spend with me.
33 Most of my time that she was supposed to be spent with me, she spent it with them.
34 But when she, when she got home, she couldn't do my homework,
35 she couldn't, she couldn't cook for us or maybe if she did,
36 she look tired while she was doing it.
36 So I think being privileged is a very big word. (*Noni: yes, mmm ...*)

It is important to note that not all black students feel as strongly about systemic inequalities and attribute privilege so distinctively based on racial backgrounds. George, who is usually very quiet and withdrawn in these conversations, when put on the spot by the course convenor, constructs his own sense of privilege in the following story. In his eyes, privilege is relative, and just by having shoes and food on the table, he felt more privileged when growing up than many of his peers (story 15, line 7 and lines 11–12):

Story 15 (George)

3 The way you were brought up.
4 Seeing other people who were more suffering than you
5 and seeing that I get these clothes,
6 it doesn't matter if they are like labels and stuff ...
7 I am wearing these shoes
8 This person doesn't have shoes,
9 she goes to school on a bare foot,
10 I think that is privilege to me.
11 Eat three times a day and maybe that person eat once a day,
12 I think that is also privilege.

7.3.2 “I would never, ever treat anyone differently because of their race”: reverse racism and white resistance

In his work on students at the University of Pretoria, Jansen (2009, p. 135) concludes that indirect knowledge leads to students identifying strongly with their racial background and actively constructing entities in opposition to each other: ---. social patterns of students'

social lives were segregated by race and ethnicity even though they shared the same university campus.”

Through the telling of these stories of social segregation, my students positioned themselves into two distinct groups. In their stories, they mostly relate experiences of racism in general, so do not directly accuse their white peers of being racist. However, when I analysed these conversations multimodally, including body posture and direction of speech, it was clear that both white and black students either directly addressed or looked at me as their facilitator, a seemingly neutral and safe place, or at someone from the opposite racial group. Very rarely did they address somebody from their own racial background. So while their stories might not be directly about their peers in the workshop, by addressing them and drawing them into their stories, they implicitly include them in their attack or defence. The three white female students in particular – Rachel, Lauren and Beatrice – become the target of black students’ stories.

How did the white students react to these – in the best case – pleas for an increased awareness of their own privilege, or – in the worst case – direct attacks for racist behaviour? In these highly sensitive and emotional spaces that students usually do not navigate, and without the cognitive distance to reflect on them critically, they are triggered: they react viscerally from a position of pain, hurt and defensiveness.

In particular, Rachel’s, and to some extent, Lauren’s responses to these stories of unconscious privilege and blatant racism exemplify this defensiveness. Tatum (1997, p. 9) reminds us that, “[f]or many Whites, this new awareness of the benefits of a racist system elicits considerable pain, often accompanied by feelings of anger and guilt. These uncomfortable emotions can hinder further discussion.” Both Rachel and Lauren tried to position themselves as different from other whites, portraying themselves as supportive, open, colour-blind and unbiased.

Lauren, for example, responded to Siyabonga’s story of the racist incident in the mall with her own story of reverse racism when working as a waitress (story 7). In her story, she constructs herself as different to other whites, as friendly (line 8), unbiased and colour-blind towards her customers (line 14). In her last line, she reassigns blame and responsibility for the current climate of mistrust and racism in South Africa to the generic of “people” (line 15):

Story 7 (Lauren)

- 1 I think it’s a stereotype. (*mood changes, becomes more sober, urgent*)
- 2 Which is so unfair, you know?
- 3 I mean, I was serving a table the other night.
- 4 And that was a table of four black people.

5 And they immediately had this attitude towards me,
 6 like she is gonna think less of us. (*Siyabonga: Yes*)
 7 So they treated me...they spoke to me so badly. (*Siyabonga: Yes, Noni squirms in her chair*)
 8 And I was trying to be so friendly, you know. (*Siyabonga: Yeah*)
 9 I treated them like any other customer.
 10 It really didn't make any difference to me.
 11 But immediately because they had that stereotype of what I am gonna think of them,
 (*Siyabonga: Yes*)
 12 they spoke to me completely differently. (*Siyabonga: hmmm*)
 13 And it really actually upset me.
 14 Because I would NEVER, EVER treat anyone differently because of their race.
 15 People have ruined that. It has ruined the society.

During the workshop, Rachel was usually quiet but supportive of what students said. However, while acknowledging Noni's passionate calls for engagement with race and privilege in this country, she often tried to move the conversation on, by asking her black peers, for example, what to do next, how to make the situation we are in better:

Story 16 (Rachel)

1 And how are we still gonna solve this?
 2 Because is there something that you want? (*directed at Noni*)
 3 It's not our fault and it is not our fault where we were born.
 4 We couldn't determine that.
 5 But is there something we could do to move forward and that will make it better?

However, later on in the conversation, she suddenly loses her composure and lashes at me, showing her anger and frustration at being misunderstood, unfairly treated, positioned within a space of privilege based on race which she can't relate to. She accepts her privilege, but links it to her upbringing in a caring, loving house, and not to her race (story 16, lines 7–12):

Story 16 (Rachel)

1 And it's just that since Monday,
 2 we have been throwing the word privilege around
 3 and you made it seem like white people's privilege.
 4 You are reading my story and you said:
 5 Ohhhh you are not bringing through that you are a white privileged person
 6 and I said to you: Well not all white people [are privileged]
 7 My privilege was having love and praise and supportive parents.
 8 I am not privileged because I am white and not only white people are loved.
 9 So I wasn't privileged because I had a lot of money in my life
 10 That's not privilege.
 11 I was talking about it in my story.
 12 I was privileged because I had food, I had love,
 13 George was saying: I have clothes to wear every day.
 14 So I think we have to define the term privilege that we are talking about here.

She calls on George for support, relating to his story (story 15), also shown above, about his experience of privilege as relative (line 13). In response, Vuyelwa relates her story about her grandmother discussed above (story 18).

This guilt and anger displayed by Rachel and Lauren are what Zembylas (2013b, p. 511) would identify as sentimentality, and their victim stories as form of self-victimization, which he defines as:

---. emotional resistance of those students who feel they are victims themselves (e.g., students who are marginalized at various degrees) and entails feelings of indignation, self-pity, and resentment for paying attention to others' suffering."

While they might feel empathy for the stories of trauma the black students tell, rather than allowing themselves to stay in their pain, white students counter these stories with stories of their own pain. What is at stake here – and what Zembylas (2008b) warns us about in such engagements across difference, where strong power differentials are involved – is students trying to compete with each other with their stories of pain and oppression, maybe competing for a loving gaze (Lugones, 1987), rather than acknowledging their mutual vulnerabilities (Jansen, 2009; Keet *et al.*, 2009).

Tatum (1997, p. 7) reminds us that, "Prejudice is an integral part of our socialization, and it is not our fault." Noni tries to make her white peers understand, that she is not "pointing fingers", not trying to find "who is responsible", but simply asking for a recognition and awareness of white privilege and the systemic inequalities that still haunt South Africa. But white students such as Rachel or Lauren are unable or unwilling to grant her this understanding that while we (as a white woman in South Africa, I include myself here) cannot be blamed for the oppressive acts of our grandfathers, we are still implicit in benefiting from this privilege and need to account for it. It becomes personal: students feel attacked and react accordingly.

Not all white students react in the same defensive way. Throughout the workshop, Beatrice is positioned differently from other white peers, portrayed as more approachable by black students. In the next story, for example, Vuyelwa compares Rachel and Beatrice in terms of how approachable they are:

Story 21 (Vuyelwa)

- 1 No is not that like I didn't talk to you guys or something, (*looking at Lauren and Rachel*)
- 2 but our group used to say: ok, you can speak for example, with Beatrice.
- 3 Anytime we wanted something we go to Beatrice.
- 4 Beatrice can you help me with this and that and that,
- 5 but we couldn't go to the others and say

6 We saw you as withdrawn, we can't speak to that one,
7 we can't ask for something from this one.

Of the four white students, it is also only Beatrice who does not victimise herself, but reflects on and, in some ways, talks about her shame about and accepts responsibility for leading a segregated life. In the following story, which I partly related above (story 8), she reflects on her own social engagements and her friendships with people from other races playing themselves out outside her home. While in story 8 part 1, discussed above, she positions herself as a people-loving person and as having black friends (line 18), frequently engaging with people from different races, at school and through her community engagement and at church, people at her house from a different race are either friends of her daughter's (story 8 part 1, lines 18-19) or people working for her (story 8 part 2, line 23). In this story, she positions herself as somebody willing to question herself about the reasons for this non-engagement with people from a different race in private spaces and as willing to change. She admits to having to step out of her comfort zone (line 26), feeling confident that she can do something about it (line 34), pointing to the productive nature of shame, as suggested by Probyn (2005):

Story 8 part 2 (Beatrice)

21 So for me it's now to decide whether I could include my friends from a different race.
22 Not that I exclude them, it's just that [pause] I just never think about just opening your home.
23 I employ black people and they are in my home.
24 But I don't ever think of visiting with them. (*looking at me*)
25 And it means then that I need to know that I need to step out of my little circle,
26 my little comfort zone, and I need to reach out
27 and invite my friends home and have a good visit.
28 I don't know if I am just preoccupied coz I like my solitude.
29 But it's definitely something that I need to work on,
30 that I can work on because I am not against having black friends.
31 It's just that I never thought to just open my space,
32 I don't open my space to a lot of people in my home. (*looking at Vuyelwa and Noni*)
33 I am in my home because that's my place of safety and that's where I like to be.
34 But I definitely can do something about it.

Lugones (1987) talks about the need for travel to the other's world, in order to learn to connect, to love the other, as she calls it. Lugones here offers an explanation for the relative ease with which Beatrice can open herself up and travel to somebody else's world. She suggests that this world travelling might be more difficult for those who are most at ease and comfortable in their lives. She links ease and comfort to: 1. being a fluent speaker in a world, knowing all the words and moves, and being confident; 2. being normatively happy, agreeing with all norms; 3. being humanly bonded and being with those one loves; and 4. having a shared daily history. This ease and comfort are attributed to those who are positioned within normative standards. In our case, these norms would refer to white, male,

middle-class, heterosexual, young students. There are many stories by black students in which they refer to these norms. Siyabonga, for example, in story 11, reflects back on a conversation with his nephew back home, highlighting the all-encompassing normativity of whiteness:

Story 11 (Siyabonga)

1 I remember when we were kids, if you just had had a hair cut,
2 then people would say: you look nice, you look like you know umlungu,
3 which means you look like a white person.
4 Yeahh so there is still that thing on our minds that a white person is better.
5 I was home in January and then my nephew is 13.
6 He said: Yo, you know what,
7 he called me buti, you know what, buti,
8 I want to go to school like you and I want to be rich like a white person,
9 Like what is it with white people? Why do you want to be like white people?

Returning to Beatrice, one could argue, that her being a mature student and thus positioned slightly on the margins of the normative space of this classroom might make it easier for her to accept responsibility, to open herself up for the other stories and the other world, a prerequisite for the crossing of boundaries. She refers on several occasions to the feeling of fear and isolation that she felt at the beginning of her studies based on her position as a mature learner:

Story 3 (Beatrice)

1 When I came to the University for the very first time,
2 that first week was hell.
11 because I felt intimidated by all these young people.
12 And I felt like overwhelmed: their first thought might be, what is that parent doing here?
13 I didn't reach out to anybody.
14 Not voluntarily, because I was protecting myself and it amazed me.
15 I am a people-loving person, but I lived a very sheltered life,
16 and didn't expose myself to many experiences, because I wanted to be safe.

It is also interesting, that Michael, the only white male student, seemingly less emotionally involved in these conversations, is not present during the race dialogue where many of these stories were told.

7.3.3 “It is hard to go to you guys and speak”

In this segregated space of a South African classroom, students do also tell stories of boundary crossing, relating how some students dare to cross colour lines. Interestingly, it is often a black or coloured student who takes the first step, such as in Vuyelwa's story 20, where she narrates an incident that happened right at the beginning of their studies. In one of their first days at university, a coloured student approaches her while she is sitting with a

group of black students and starts a conversation. Her words reveal the sheer surprise (line 18) and strong discomfort that emerged in this boundary crossing (line 25):

Story 20 (Vuyelwa)

14 In the long run I looked at him and he was so brave.
15 Like being coloured and coming to us and talking to us.
16 Like he never knew us, but he spoke and we saw that he was afraid.
17 It took courage to speak to us and he asked us questions.
18 And when he left, we said: Ok what was that for? (*laughing*)
19 And we were wondering: Ok he is a nice guy and
20 But during the course of the year he changed.
21 He started going to his group and but he was speaking to me all the time:
22 Ohhh Vuyelwa, because I am a nice person (*Noni: Noooo.*) (*Everybody laughing*).
23 He makes jokes of me most of the time.
24 And I asked him one day: Do you remember the first time we met?
25 And he said: Yohhh, that was so hard for me, to go to you guys and speak.

In her story, I could also sense the feeling of sadness that this boundary crossing was temporary and that, with time, the coloured student had gravitated back to his coloured friends.

Beatrice also has a story to tell about boundary crossings. In her story, it is a mature black female student who approaches her, also at the beginning of her studies and, through the means of storytelling, established a connection that endures until today:

Story 3 (Beatrice)

3 The first person who actually reached out to me was a black lady.
4 She was very thin at the time (*everybody laughs*).
5 She told me that she had dropped out so many times before,
6 but this time she was going to stick it out.
7 I remember telling her, that I am so proud of you.
8 And not even knowing her very well, she said to me: So tell me your story.
9 And I just told her my story and then she told me her story.
10 And I have such a deep appreciation for her for making the first move,
11 because I felt intimidated by all these young people.

In both these examples, the boundary-crossing student does so from a position of vulnerability, expressed as fear in Vuyelwa's story 20 (line 15), or by referring to personal failures in Beatrice's story 3 (line 5). Noni's support of Michael in his election campaign for the SRC could be seen as boundary crossing, as could be Michael's challenge of Vuyelwa on where she sits in class (story 4). In the following exchange, Vuyelwa points to another boundary crossing by acknowledging Rachel's support in an assignment in class.

Story 21 (Vuyelwa)

- 19 Yaaa you did help us with technology.
20 We had another perspective of you guys, ok.
21 She is a helpful person, we can go to her and speak to her.

However, contrary to the examples in stories 20 and 3, Michael and Rachel are boundary crossers from a position of power: Michael occupying the slightly patronizing space of questioning Vuyelwa about her reasons for not sitting with them (i.e. the white students) and forcing her to explain herself, and Rachel's support of students perceived as in need of help. It seems that for boundary crossing to really trouble established engagement with and across difference, there is a need to start from a position of vulnerability.

7.4 Positioning analysis level 3

7.4.1 "We are not trying to be the rainbow"

How do students position their stories in relation to the bigger story of South Africa? Are their stories placed within hegemonic discourses or counterstories that try to work against masternarratives? Does this space allow students to tell stories that are usually not heard (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002)?

Bamberg (2006, p. 145) argues, that after having worked through the interactional context of levels 1 and 2, ~~we~~ are better situated to make assumptions about the ideological positions (or master narratives) within which narrators are positioning a sense of self". He explains that (2012, p. 106): ~~Narrative practice perspective on identity construction view the speaking subject as a bodily agent (i.e., as bodily present in situ and in vivo and interactively involved)". Analysing how speaking subjects position themselves vis-à-vis dominant ideologies and narratives thus allows us also to understand how they construct agency. Bamberg defines this as agency dilemma' (*ibid.*), whereby speakers either position themselves within a ~~person-to-world~~" direction of fit, or construe a ~~world-to-person~~" direction of fit. This is a continuum on which speakers either define themselves, on one extreme, as agentive self-constructers and on the other extreme, as victims with low-agency.~~

In order to make sense of how my students positioned themselves vis-à-vis masternarratives, I make use of Soudien's (2001, p. 314) levels of discourse: the official, the formal and the informal. The official is dominated by government in power, the formal by the institution and the informal by the world of social relationships of young people as they engage with one another (Walker, 2005a).

The stories the students tell on an official discourse level, are predominantly positioned against a discourse of the rainbow nation. Both black and white students show an awareness of the disjuncture between the public, the formal discourse of South Africa as a colour-blind, non-racial rainbow nation, in which people of different colours live happily ever after, and the harsh reality on the ground, which limits engagement across difference and perpetuates historic inequalities (Walker, 2005a, 2005b). Noni's report of a conversation she had with her American friend about South Africans' unwillingness to "be the rainbow", is met with support by both white and black students (story 1). Through their stories, they portray themselves as disillusioned, highly critical of the current government (again, both white and black students express strong opinions about this) and at a loss about how to improve the current situation:

Story 1 (Noni)

- 12 So he is like: as much as we claim to be rainbow nation, (*looking towards Michael*)
13 we are not doing anything about it. (*Beatrice nodding*)
14 We are not trying to be the rainbow. (*shaking head, gesture of resignation, giving up*)

Students do not really reflect on a formal discourse level, apart from Vuyelwa's anger expressed at the lecturer who showed the movie about differently positioned schools and depicting black rural schools as hopeless and doomed (story 17).

However, there are differences in stories around race that the students tell on an informal level, within their narratives-in-interaction. Black students construct stories that go against racial masternarratives. An example of such a counternarrative is Vuyelwa's story questioning the notion of privilege based on the unfair treatment of her black grandmother by her white boss (story 18). Siyabonga's questions after relating the story of his nephew's aspirations to become "rich like a white man" (story 11, line 9) ("Like what is it with white people? Why do you want to be like white people?") are also examples of questioning hegemonic standards centred around whiteness. Vuyelwa's anger, Siyabonga's contempt, Noni's relentless reminder of our non-engagement with the inequalities in today's South Africa and even George's silences – which I would argue could be seen as resistance to dominant discourses – are indicators of an agentive self that students construct for themselves, discursively positioning themselves within a person-to-world fit.

White informal stories at first show less urgency to counter racial masternarratives. Rachel openly resists any attempt at assigning white responsibility or complicity in structural inequalities, both in and outside the classroom. Other students, who are not as vocal in negating their responsibility, portray themselves as different, unaware or unaffected by colour, in some ways appropriating for themselves the rainbow nation discourse, which they

critique so heavily on an official level. Bonilla-Silva (2006) explains that colour-blind racism otherises softly, but it otherises nonetheless. I would argue that Michael's and Lauren's attitude of swishing colour off the table – Lauren claiming that it makes no difference to how she treats her customers (story 7) or Michael making assumptions when challenging his black peers – may also perpetuate systemic inequalities. Can colourblindness be considered as racism? While seemingly accepting their privileged status, Lauren and Michael are both still very clear about who the real culprits are, “the people” who have “ruined society” (story 7, line 15).

White students' positions to the world seemed to be one of world-to-person, of being positioned in an oppressive space that was not of their making, and where they were as much victims as the oppressed person. Only Beatrice's stories surfaced a feeling of shame at the lack of social integration in her life, a first sign to disrupting her own story, and allowing herself to be challenged and made vulnerable in the process.

7.5 Discussion of findings

Georgakopoulou (2006b, p. 4) argues that “small stories' interactional features were both constituted by and constituting [participants] sites of engagement as culturally shaped (and in this case, genderized and constraining) liminal spaces.”

In the stories students performed during the five days of the digital storytelling workshop, all-too-familiar themes came up: racial segregation, white privilege, internal oppression, hegemonic standards, intergenerational knowledge and trauma, preconceived ideas and assumptions, and open and subtle racism. As students told their stories, they seemingly reinforced their positioning within their groups. They constructed their identity in opposition to each other, white against black, privilege against oppression. The one coloured Muslim student was silent in these conversations. Familiar roles were taken, with black students speaking out and pointing out injustices, while white students defensively tried to move on, refusing to take on complicity or responsibility for past injustices, and expecting their black peers to come up with solutions.

This site of engagement emerged as racially shaped and constraining. The first group association that students consistently pointed out was the one of race. Over and over, they used words such as white, black and coloured with an ease and a comfort that points to the normative nature of this association. Both public spaces, such as their classrooms, and private spaces, such as their homes, were perceived as distinctively segregated along racial lines.

Race blocks an engagement across difference. While there are moments of racial boundary-crossing – some attempts at trying to explain to one another one’s own experience and position in life – defence mechanism and self-victimisation hinder deeper engagement with mutual pain. Mostly, students distance themselves from any racism, reassigning responsibility and complicity to generic others’.

Can Lauren or Rachel’s reactions be read as sentimental’, in the way Zembylas defines sentimentality? Definitely, but it might also be too easy to blame only white students. As a pedagogy of discomfort reminds us, we are all products of hegemony. Rachel feels as labelled and as misunderstood as her black peers. Both student groups distance themselves from being racist, bringing examples of diverse friendships or allocating responsibility to others. They are often reconciliatory in their approaches, finishing accusatory stories with inclusive remarks. While they acknowledge racism, they don’t see how they are implicated. Describing this non-acknowledged privilege by white students, Tronto (1993) defines privileged irresponsibility’ as the ways the dominant group fails to acknowledge their exercise of power, thus maintaining their taken-for-granted positions of privilege (Zembylas *et al.*, 2014). Rachel’s and Lauren’s responses to their black students’ stories of oppression can be labelled in this way. What is missing in these spaces is a recognition that responsibility for today’s fraught engagements across difference has to be shared, that we are all interconnected. Vuyelwa’s story shows this interconnectedness beautifully: because her grandmother and mother had to work for white people, she felt deprived of the care she should have gotten herself. This is a great example of how personal and structural responsibility are entangled (Young 2011). While her mother did not look after Lauren or Rachel, it is likely that Lauren and Rachel were looked after by a mother similar to Vuyelwa’s. We are all entangled and it is only through this entanglement that we can understand our shared responsibility for personal and structural injustices, as Young reminds us (2011, p. 105):

–The social connection model of responsibility says that individuals bear responsibility for structural injustice because they contribute by their actions to the processes that produce unjust outcomes. Our responsibility derives from belonging together with others in a system of interdependent processes of cooperation and competition through which we seek benefits and aim to realize projects. Within these processes, each of us expects justice toward ourselves, and others can legitimately make claims of justice on us.”

What is interesting to note is that by – seemingly relentlessly – pointing out injustices, and by – often in vain – trying to relate and translate their experience to their white privileged peers,

black students take on a role of consciousness-raising, of helping their white peers understand their plight. Lugones refers to this necessity of world travelling for people of colour, whereas Du Bois (1903) calls this black double consciousness: the necessity of seeing oneself through the eyes of Other. Drayton (2014) in her article, 18 things white people should know/do before discussing racism, poignantly notes: “Black people are not obligated to answer the Well, what do we do about it? question”. In this workshop, it feels as if white students expect their black peers to try to make them understand the effects of racism and come up with a solution to this problem. However, when taking on Young’s (2011, p. xvii) understanding of shared responsibility, this is not enough. On the contrary, it should be people in positions of power and privilege who take over the bulk of responsibility: —. purely simply because of their privileged lives, they have greater responsibility than others.”

Jansen (2009, p. 88) argues that one of the main problems with indirect knowledge, is that ~~the~~ problem with these stories is not that they happen, but that they are largely uninterrupted by counternarratives”. Some of these students tell counternarratives, but they tell these stories into a space in which students position themselves as largely unwilling or unable to listen and respond to these counternarratives empathically, with an open heart. Stories of difference are performed and re-affirmed, with little space to navigate and shift positions.

However, when shifting the lens from race to other indicators such as gender and class, interesting ruptures happened. In particular in Rachel’s story, told from a white working class background or in George’s story, told from a slightly more privileged background than his black peers, suddenly dominant discourses around race are challenged in interesting ways. An intersectionality of race and class is surfaced, potentially allowing for connections between students that a limited view on race blocked. Beatrice’s stories also point to a different intersectionality, in her case of race and age: while her daughter seemingly has plenty black friends and brings them home, she doesn’t. However, her perceived larger openness towards taking responsibility for a lack of social engagement across difference than her white peers, might be simply a matter of maturity. This shows the dilemmas and the messiness that comes with engaging across difference, the interconnectedness of the personal and the political, and the intersectionality of class, gender, age, sexuality and race.

7.6 Concluding thoughts

This chapter analysed the small stories students told during the digital storytelling workshop to understand better how they construct difference in everyday stories. What this chapter has shown is that within these spaces, there is little room for a recognition of students’

mutual vulnerability while recognising systemic inequalities. Each story of pain is countered by another story of pain born out of feelings of unfairness and misunderstanding, cementing relationships defined by a history of inequality and silenced pain and hurt. These are uncomfortable conversations, unearthing a range of emotions not often seen in a classroom. There is passion and laughter, but also anger, frustration, sadness, regret and shame.

What would have to happen for a shift in these positions? Can we imagine that these students could ever care enough about, develop enough *interest* for the Other to enact an engagement across difference characterized by openness, authenticity and mutuality, where everyone is “seen, heard and understood” (Tatum, 2007, p. 84) – with loving eyes (Lugones, 1987)? What happens to both white and black students when they are placed in positions of discomfort and vulnerability? Can they listen to one another with open hearts? This is what I explore in the next two chapters.

CH 8: Troubling from within: the entanglement of authorial intent and semiotic histories

“Look into my eyes and hear what I am not saying, for my eyes speak louder than my voice ever will.” Unknown

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I looked at how students construct narrative identities through the small stories told in conversations throughout the workshop. A positioning analysis of these small stories showed that students construct group belonging primarily based on racial backgrounds and position themselves in (reluctant) opposition to each other. Their stories paint a picture of isolation, lack of engagement, discomfort and mistrust, but also a desire to cross boundaries if they only knew how. In this chapter, I analyse two of the digital stories produced in the workshop to respond to my second research question:

What is the potential of a digital storytelling process to construct counterstories that trouble dominant discourses? What subject positions are available and/or are (co)constructed by students in their digital stories? To what extent can the digital story as multimodal text (re)produce or trouble students' subjectivities? And in particular, how do students' semiotic histories and access to semiotic resources impact on the meaning of a multimodal text?

Every year, there are a handful of stories that stand out from others. Lauren and Noni's were such stories. In their stories, they declared their intention to create counternarratives, to trouble their peers' perception of race and sexuality.

While in the next chapter I look in more depth at audience response to these stories, in this chapter I focus on students' authorial intent to tell counterstories, and ask whether or to what extent they actually managed to *do* gender, race, and sexuality differently in their digital stories. Did they manage to trouble norms from within?

8.2 A multimodal analysis of Lauren and Noni's stories

In the following sections, I discuss Lauren and Noni's stories according to Kress and Van der Leeuwen's (2006) categorisation of meanings of multimodal texts, i.e. the representational, interactional and compositional meaning of visuals. My intent here is to challenge the limits of representation in digital storytelling by contrasting my own reading of these multimodal texts, conscious of my own semiotic history, the way I was taught to read signs, with

students' reflections on their use of semiotic resources (in particular their authorial intent behind their choice of visuals). See Appendix 10 for a multimodal transcript of these digital stories. The two digital stories are available on Vimeo: see <https://vimeo.com/130008974> for Lauren's story and <https://vimeo.com/130008975> for Noni's story. The images are found in Appendix 11. Students' written scripts in Appendix.

8.2.1 Representational meaning

Both Lauren and Noni's stories tackle uncomfortable issues in South Africa: homosexuality and race. Both students are passionate about their chosen subjects and have a strong social justice agenda for the telling of their stories. However, the stories follow different narrative genres. While Lauren's story, 'Stereotypes' is a literal, linear account of her coming to terms with her sexuality and a critique of the labelling of people based on physical appearance, Noni's story, 'You might get uncomfortable ... but will you please listen to me?' is a conceptual narrative, an allegoric, stylized poem about white and black race relationships in South Africa.

Lauren's story follows Labov and Waletzky's (1997) traditional, socio-linguistic features of personal narratives⁹. She sets the context by displaying a series of stereotypical images of professions and gender norms, contrasted with her own image and the word *lesbian* written in bold, red font (images 1–9). The complicating moment centres around her falling in love and deciding to come out to her parents, and the consequent lack of support she experienced both at school and in her family (images 10–17). Evaluation can be seen in her reflection on the larger systemic issues of male domination and gender-based violence in South Africa, in particular towards women and culminating in corrective rape (images 18–23). Her resolution/transformation/learning is condensed in the words, "I have learned that no matter what, it is so important to be honest about who you are" (images 24–28), learning to accept who she is and crafting a life of her own. In her coda, she addresses the viewer directly, urging him or her to look at her and accept her for who she is, followed by a quote by one of her favourite LGBTI activists, the American poet Beatrice Gibson (images 29–34): "I want to know what the kite called itself when it got away." (See Table 5 or Appendix 11 for a larger display of the images.)

⁹ I acknowledge that according to his account this would not be a context where these categories should be applied.

Table 5: Lauren's narrative pattern

Orientation	Complication	Evaluation	Resolution	Coda
				

Noni's story is written in poetic form. It has a certain rhythm and poetic elements, such as repetition of words and phrases, i.e. her addressing an imaginary you' or repeatedly using the phrase, "This got me thinking." Although Noni's story does not have a traditional plot, it also follows a narrative pattern. Her orientation (images 2–3) starts with a reflection on the digital storytelling workshop she and her peers have been participating in and the kind of conversations they have had. Her complication focuses on black and white students' lack of engagement on issues of race and privilege in this country (images 4–8, images 10–11, image 14 and image 15). Her evaluation can be seen in her backtracking and reassuring her peers that she doesn't intend to assign responsibility or guilt, but that she would like to see more spaces for people to engage in uncomfortable topics, such as ongoing systemic inequalities in schooling, work contexts and life in general (image 9). Her resolution is a passionate plea to start dialoguing (images 12–13, image 16), culminating in a coda where she extends a hand to an imaginary Other' to follow her into this uncomfortable safe space' (images 17–18). Her narrative phases are not as neatly aligned as Lauren's, but mixed and interspersed (See Table 6).


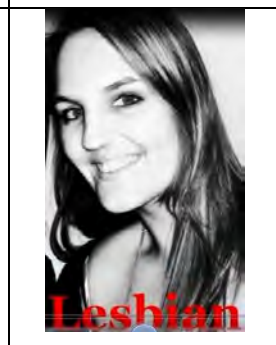

Table 6: Noni's narrative pattern

Orientation	Complication	Eval.	Complica- tion	Resolution/complication	Coda
					

Lauren and Noni's use of images, voice and soundtrack also follow different approaches. Lauren draws first on stock images to reinforce the notion of /labelling people based on their profession and physical attributes. However, she also intersperses her story with images of herself and her girlfriend in order to subvert the dominant discourse around homosexuality. While her narration relates a story of feeling different, isolated, uncomfortable and unsupported, her pictures tell a different story, an untold story' (Brushwood Rose, 2009). Images of a beautiful, white, feminine, privileged young woman happily in love, engaging with an equally beautiful, white, privileged girlfriend – carefree, smiling and showing signs of affection, both in private and in public – trouble the common discourse around homosexuality in this country, which is associated with violence, rape and non-acceptance. She reflects on this in her interview,

where she explains why she chose these pictures (see Table 7 below), highlighting her intent to show happy, normal, ‘girly’ pictures of herself and her girlfriend. This is reinforced by the style of her narration, characterised by a clear and confident private school accent and the soft, lyrical song she chose as her soundtrack and which she recorded herself (entitled ‘See me for me’).

Table 7: Stereotypes in Lauren's movie

Stereotypical image of nurse	Stereotypical image of teacher	Image of Lauren	Image of Lauren and girlfriend
Image 2, 0.02 sec	Image 4, 0.06 sec	Image 9, 0.32 sec	Image 16, 1.36 sec
			
Narrated text			
No narration	No narration	No narration	Eventually, I became so tired of living with a secret. I had fallen in love with a girl and I so badly wanted my family to understand me.
Reflection in interview			
Lauren: These pictures I am changing. Daniela: Why? Lauren: Cause I don't know ... they're just look too happy ... not happy but they don't fit in well with the story that comes like I really wanna get across the idea of stereotyping, but I want more like – I don't know – those look too impersonal. I think I wanna take the photos myself of what like the stereotypical man is in South Africa – Yeah so don't have one of those, so I don't just have like ...cause these pictures for me, you can't connect to it, cause they're just from the Internet and they are so very commercial and my story is different so I think I want pictures that I've taken myself that are personal.	I think [I chose this image] because I look happy in it and like a very girly photo so it shows that immediate stereotyping of ... so it fits in with the nature of the pictures that I am flashing but so ... this is me and look who I am.	I think it just shows like the normality, like we were both so happy but no one else could be happy for us, like it was unnatural, you know.	

However, Lauren – consciously or unconsciously – also draws on stereotypes and hegemonic discourses (see Table 7). While most of the pictures of white people (including her own) are of seemingly happy, carefree people in privileged outdoor spaces, such as Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden and at a typical farm in the winelands, there is a sequence in her story (evaluation phase), where she uses black people's images sourced on the Internet. These pictures are images of vulnerability, poverty, abuse, sadness, despair and violence. By using images depicting black people, she could be seen as distancing herself from this abuse, setting herself aside from the experience she attaches to black people living outside heteropatriarchal norms in South Africa. In her interview, she reflects

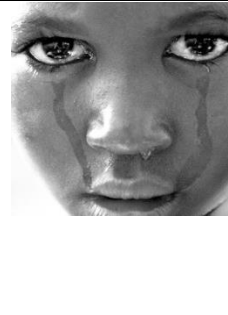


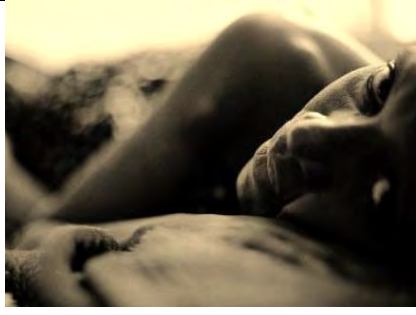
on how the first picture that came up when she typed corrective rape into a Google image search, was a black child, a reminder of how difficult it is to escape dominant discourses in the media. In her story – as in the media –, rape and abuse of homosexuals in South Africa is predominantly associated with blackness (Graziano, 2004). Visser (2007, n.p.) notes, that while white South Africans are increasingly integrated into mainstream, heterosexual society, another world exists for blacks:

–South Africans, with even the most casual glance at its media highlighting physical and emotional assaults on black homosexuals on a very frequent basis (...). Indeed, there remains a major schism between South African homosexuals’ – much praised constitutional rights (...) and the lived reality, particularly for black homosexual cohorts.”

In Lauren’s pictures, the oppressor – the rapist – is black as well. However, in her careful choice of pictures and in the beauty that these pictures of women display, one can also feel the empathy she feels with these girls and women. In reflection during the interview, she talks about this feeling-with these women, connecting to her own isolation, guilt and shame for feelings that go against the norm:

–What can you do? You are sitting there all alone and you don’t feel like you can speak up because you feel guilty and I know the guilty feeling that you feel and they can convince you that it’s ok ... like what they are doing to you is ok because what you are doing is so wrong ... going against God and their tradition, legends, and the pain for pretending to be what she isn’t.”

Table 8: Lauren’s associations of abuse with blackness


Crying child	Abused woman	Imprisoned male perpetrator	Abused woman
Image 19, 2.23 sec	Image 21, 2.40 sec	Image 22, 2.49 sec	Image 23, 2.59 sec
			
Narrated text			
...society itself is not nearly as progressive. On the contrary homosexuality is seen as sinful and	There are an estimated 500 000 cases of corrective rape every year.	This shameful record of male domination and violence has helped to build a brutal and oppressive culture,	in which women are forced to conform to gender stereotypes or suffer the consequences.

unnatural.			
Reflection in interview			
I typed in corrective rape into the Internet and I got this article about these four girls who ... the one's partner had been killed and they've both been raped because they were gay and that was one of the girls who told her story on this blog thing and it was like a head ... because it was like her eyes just makes it so real and then I just wrote silenced on her lips because that's just ... she you know ... she couldn't say who she was: she had to keep it in.	She was alone in that like very cold... in that empty looking room and that was like how I would imagine someone had been raped will feel ... What can you do? You are sitting there all alone and you don't feel like you can speak up because you feel guilty and I know the guilty feeling that you feel and they can convince you that it's ok ... like what they are doing to you is ok because what you are doing is so wrong am going against God and their tradition, legends So that cold isolated room where she's just alone, that kind of portrays that for me.	It's just more focused on the man's hands and his eyes because he is in control and that's how they feel when they go and take that away from a woman because of who they are They have that sense of control and then his eyes show like, that anger and brutality of what he has done and he knows what he is doing and he still does it ... like the photo just portrays that anger and it's quite scary to look at that.	... she is holding on to something so that it's like, it's ok, you know, because she is pretending to be what she isn't ... she has to keep inside who she wants to be because of again the culture, the religion ... just that isolation I think it comes across and that her eyes are looking like they need a sense of hope

Noni similarly relies on a combination of images found on the Internet and her own pictures. Her images are often illustrations, metaphors; with mixed or complex messages whose meanings are not always easy for me to access and do not always support her narrative.

The start of her story is characterised by images with emotional pull, evocative and engaging. Her second image is the only image of herself: she sits in the group and looks down, beaten, sad, as if about to cry. Here her pictures correspond with the narrated text, women hiding behind scarves and flowers representing the non-engagement of black and white students, and the resulting lack of knowledge about the Other' (see Table 9).

Table 9: Noni's start of movie





Image of group dialogue	Image of finger star	Image of woman hidden behind scarf	Image of woman hiding behind flowers
Image 2, 0.04 sec	Image 3, 0.10 sec	Image 4, 0.22 sec	Image 5, 0.35 sec
			

<i>Narrated text</i>			
We have been together for a week now.	A week full of uncomfortable, awkward moments where I had to share personal stuff about my life with you and be and feel with you although we have never talked before. In these moments, I realized how little I knew about you, although I have been with you for four years.	In these moments I became aware of how for four years we have been avoiding interacting with each other on a personal level. We only spoke to each other when we needed to, like for group work.
<i>Reflection in interview</i>			
I think in our faces it shows that we discussing something serious and the hands. This for me represents a safe space ... I don't know, this is what came to my mind when I thought of safe spaces ... We are coming together as different people in this uncomfortable space.	Oh yes, as much as I've been with these people, I know nothing about them. So that covered face means: Yes, I see ... well, you could see the structure of the body and everything, I've seen him for this long and yet I know nothing about you ... so the covered face for me shows the littleness of ...	That's us avoiding, you know, talking and meeting, sort of like, shying away from Ok, I can see, this is us running away from the fact that this country is broken ... this country is, this is a picture of this country, and the state that's it is in right now ... one part of it is good then the rest of it is ... (sighing)

In her movie, there is a series of images from life in the township that she has taken herself: scenes of children and women, literally on her doorstep, depicting the inhuman, brutal conditions that people experience in these areas, but also the innocence of children playing in the street and the care these children display for each other (see Table 10). She first showed these pictures during the race dialogue as semiotic resources to emphasise a life maybe not often enough seen in her classroom and to counter what she perceived as an inability or unwillingness of her peers to recognise ongoing systemic inequalities in today's South Africa. While some pictures are slightly blurred and not always perfectly composed, the message is clear. Her words support this message: they are driven, urging us to not look away, even if it is uncomfortable. Her voice, a former Model C¹⁰ accent, is pleading, while the soundtrack she chose, a slow Elton John song, re-recorded by a friend of hers, contributes to the emotional message of the movie.

¹⁰ During apartheid, schools were racially segregated. Model C are former white schools, which continue to be better resourced than other government funded schools, often through increased schools fees negotiated by the parent representative body. Learners who attended these schools are said to have a distinctive – white - accent. See for example Bangeni and Kapp (2007).

Table 10: Noni's township images





Child in front of bucket toilets	Woman inside shack	Child in front of shack	Children on the road
Image 8, 1.32 sec	Image 9, 1.45 sec	Image 10, 1.56 sec	Image 12, 2.22 sec
			
Narrated text			
It got me thinking about how we are turning a deaf ear on the fact that you and I in this country do not have the same opportunities.	Do not get me wrong. I am not focusing on who is more privileged and who is less privileged or whose fault it is. I am not accusing you	This got me thinking about how we can laugh and joke together, but are not making real friends, meaningful relationships	We are running away from admitting that we have unfinished business with each other: we have stuff to admit to each other; we have stuff that we need to talk about to each other.
Reflection in interview			
I'm showing this country to people who still don't know that there are still places like this in this country. They think everyone has equal opportunities and we don't.	DANIELA: Did you take these pictures? NONI: I literally went to people and was, like, —Can't take pictures please?" DANIELA: Do you know people who live here? NONI: This is, this road here ... everything on this side, it's, that's where I live, this side of the street, it's houses and stuff to that side, and from that side it's shacks ... I think for about two, three streets and then it's houses again. DANIELA: So it's close. It's very close to where you live. Is that in Langa ¹¹ ? NONI: Yes.	Yeah, it's the same point, like we don't have the same opportunities and I'm saying we are running away, so it sort of shows us turning our backs away from this now. He also looks out for his brother And you guys don't have that, right? But that's the thing, we don't know what the other people know or don't know.	

In her attempt to counteract stereotypes, Noni uses images that trouble dominant discourses, such as associating poverty with whiteness, by using the image of a white beggar in her story, or attaching sadness and vulnerability and the feeling of inferiority to both white and black people (see images 13 and 14 in Table 11). These juxtapositions counter what I expect, forcing me to stop and reflect on the meaning of her pictures. The reading of these series of visuals is not simple and straightforward and her explanations in the interview often surprise me. In image 13, for example, what I interpret as tears, are for her scars. The picture that baffled me most is an image of a dog at the end of her story (image 15). The dog is crying and looking up towards the viewer, while her narration focuses on the power differentials based on the hegemonic use of English as a primary language in South Africa. In her interview, she explains that she chose the dog as an example of a

¹¹ Langa is a township in Cape Town.

vulnerable creature, forced to change, to learn his boss's language in order to communicate with him. What was so clear to her was lost to me, a poignant example of how our own semiotic histories shape our reading of images.





Table 11: Noni's troubling use of images and narration

White beggar	Scarred white boy	Sad black woman	Crying dog
Image 11, 2.11 sec	Image 13, 2.37 sec	Image 14, 2.42 sec	Image 15, 2.56 sec
			
<i>Narrated text</i>			
You may say, —⑩, I have friends that look like you,” ... but really? How often have you invited me into your home and come and dine with you?	When are we going to create spaces where we can talk about the truth, where I can be honest and admit that I feel inferior to you and you can admit that you sometimes feel superior to me...? When are we going to admit that South Africa has a standard that everyone has to meet, and that standard is your standard?	Look at how I needed to learn to speak English so I can speak with you, while you cannot even speak a few sentences of my language. We need to start creating these uncomfortable spaces wherever we go
<i>Reflection in interview</i>			
... reach out to the person on the road and all, reach out to people in general ... we claim to be a rainbow nation ... surely shouldn't we be looking everywhere, shouldn't we be looking at everyone and trying to be and trying to be with them?	DANIELA: She's crying... NONI: Those are scars ...she's ... I don't know what. DANIELA: She's a scarred person, so that was the important thing for you...she looks very sad... NONI: It's being honest and admitting that sometimes I feel inferior. DANIELA: But this is a white person or not? NONI: It depends on how you look at it, or maybe I should swap the pictures around? DANIELA: Or not, interesting because it gets people thinking, you know NONI: Yeah, I guess white people sometimes feel inferior to black people when it comes to probably positions they hold I don't know.		NONI: what am I saying there, it shows I ... sometimes I can't say this word: vulnerability ... of a person who has to change for you, for the other person DANIELA: And the dog, why dog? NONI: Don't we all love dogs? it just had this amazing, this dog ... it just said that part best for me. DANIELA: That he has to understand and learn to understand ... NONI: ... instead of the boss having to understand him. The boss, his keeper.

Both Lauren and Noni's stories follow the digital story genre's demand for closure or a happy ending (Poletti, 2011): in Noni's story, this is depicted by a rainbow representing hope, and

in Lauren’s story, the kite which got away points to the hopeful possibility of escaping the narrow-mindedness of South Africa’s society (see Table 12).



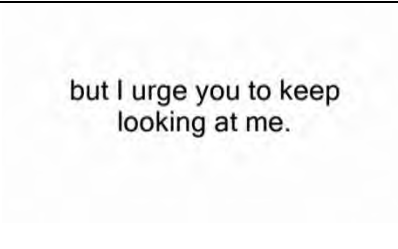
Table 12: Noni and Lauren’s coda / plea for engagement and closure

Noni’s coda		Lauren’s coda	
			
Narrated text			
Will you come to this place with me?		Look at me, see me for me!	
Reflection in interviews			
	DANIELA: And the rainbow at the end NONI: Hopefully we’ll get there one day	I wanted it to relate to the first picture that they’ve seen ... so I chose the same picture because it like ties it together ... this is what they judge me when they see me being a lesbian and then they see it at the end after this ... what they judged me when they saw a lesbian and then they see it at the end after this whole ... it’s supposed to work on your emotions and work towards being sentimental to someone who is gay and seeing me at the end as the same person ... so I used the same picture.	This is my favourite quote by Beatrice Gibbson, the woman I was telling you about, yeah, an activist against heterosexuality and racism ... and that was a quote that she wrote about the labels of people ... everyone has to have a label ... they have to be a boy or girl ...blue is for boys and pink is for girls And I wanna know what that kite is gonna call it if it was, like, having the freedom of being anything you want to be without being held on to.

8.2.2 Interactional meaning

Both students want to shake up and trouble their audiences to force them to engage with issues that they perceive as uncomfortable and usually silenced in class. The tension of negotiating their desire to trouble, but at the same time engage their audience, is reflected in Noni’s title, which reads, ‘You might get uncomfortable...but will you please listen to me?’ and Lauren’s ending of the story: ‘+know some of you who are listening to my story will turn away in discomfort and disgust, but I urge you to keep looking at me’ (See Table 13.)

Table 13: Discomfort in Lauren and Noni's stories

Noni's title screen	Lauren's final screens	
Image 1, 0.00 sec	Image 29, 3.55 sec	Image 30, 3.40 sec
		
No narration	No narration	No narration

How do the visuals they chose impact on audience engagement? When analysing how Lauren and Noni use images in their digital story along their interactional meaning, one can see marked differences. Lauren uses predominantly close-ups and intimate framing: her images are on eye level with her audience, making direct contact, demanding emotional engagement from the viewer. It is done in a non-threatening way, i.e. smiling or looking encouragingly towards the audience. She and her audience are equal, and she appears confident, shown in the open and engaging gaze she applies to her images. Her images are simple, with clear meaning, and underscore the salience of the pictorial elements through central positioning. Lauren's camera positions are also deliberate, zooming in on the focal elements in the picture. Her choice of visuals supports her invitation to engage with her.

There are only three pictures in Noni's movie in which the subject is looking directly at the audience: two are babies/toddlers and one is a young man. The subjects of the other pictures avoid the viewer's gaze, looking down or even hiding their faces behind objects. Noni herself, in the only time she appears in the movie, is looking down at the floor. Her pictures often use a top-down point of view, the audience looking down on the person or object depicted in her images (see Table 14). Noni's camera movement sometimes feels slightly random, zooming in and out without apparent reason. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) would call this an 'offer', allowing the audience to observe participants in the picture in a more detached, impersonal way, ultimately allowing the audience to distance themselves.

Table 14: Noni's use of images avoiding a direct gaze

Image of woman hidden behind scarf	Sad black woman	Vigil
Image 4, 0.22 sec	Image 14, 2.42 sec	Image 16, 3.14 sec
		
... although we have never talked before. In these moments, I realized how little I knew about you, although I have been with you for four years.	... and you can admit that you sometimes feel superior to me ...? When are we going to admit that South Africa has a standard that everyone has to meet, and that standard is your standard?	... in social groups, at work, in schools, at home with our children. I mean everyone has to be part of this, in this South Africa of today So that we can talk about these issues, and find a way forward and a way to forgive each other. A space where we can be as honest and brutal as we can about how all of this makes you and me feel, without the fear of hurting mine and your feelings. We are both wounded!

8.2.3 Compositional meaning

Lauren's and Noni's digital stories might have similar authorial intent – to tackle uncomfortable topics, but they employ – consciously or unconsciously – different narrative strategies. Lauren's orchestration of the different modes creates comfort and engagement. As a composition, her work creates an aesthetic context in which the audience feels compelled to listen and engage: her carefully crafted video has an engaging soundtrack, her voice is confident (although mostly contained and controlled, once in a while allowing emotions to break in), and she shows competence in using images. Despite the provocative content, her story is a feel-good movie: the craftedness of her movie displayed as communication of beauty and harmony (Brushwood Rose & Low, 2014). Her original aim for the movie was to trouble some of the assumptions and beliefs her peers have in relation to homosexuality, to "normalise sexuality outside heterosexual norms". Her raced, gendered, classed and sexualised semiotic history, the semiotic resources inscribed with white privilege that she has access to, and her high levels of visual and media literacy allowed her to create a story that the audience could engage with, even if the story itself focused on a highly uncomfortable topic. Her confidence, the beauty of her own images and her non-threatening gaze allow the audience to affectively connect to her story, despite – for many of her peers – the difficult and potentially alienating content. Her authorial intent and the message that her visuals convey largely overlap, as shown in the reflective part of her interview, where the visual narrative reveals a great deal of emotional content that effectively supplements her

spoken narrative. She seems to be in control of her story and her life, inhabiting a space that, despite all difficulties, still somehow fits and is moulded to her body.

Noni, accessing different sorts of semiotic histories and resources, is equally successful in achieving her authorial intent of troubling her audience. However, Noni's digital story is jarring and uncomfortable, as is the content of her story. Her often-challenging use of semiotic resources includes images that juxtapose and counteract her narration, and whose meaning is not always immediately accessible to the audience. Her voice – which she later told me she had to record over and over again, because she just didn't find the right tone – pleads with us, breaks up with emotions, has a slightly off cadence, seemingly out of rhythm. She uses a Western soundtrack that comes across as sentimental and nostalgic, sometimes overpowering her voice. In all, she creates an unsettling movie that can be seen as fitting representation of the discomfort and alienation that people experience when engaging with issues around race privileges in South Africa.

Noni's story visualises the deep-seated dilemmas and contradictions she has to negotiate as a black heterosexual woman in today's South Africa experiencing a body that doesn't fit the space it inhabits. She creates a somehow unfinished movie about the Unfinished business of race and reconciliation in South Africa, the title of Msimang's (2013) article that sparked her story.

However, she doesn't win over her audience as Lauren does. Rather than giving us a feel good movie, she disrupts her normative reality *from within* by forcing her audience to experience the discomfort she experiences on a daily basis. While one could challenge some of her images and the orchestration of images, sound and narration, attributing this to a lack of visual or media literacy, I would argue that her movie is as well-crafted as Lauren's: instead of beauty and harmony, her craftedness communicates dissonance, tension and ambivalence fitting her story.

As Jewitt and Oyama (2001) remind us, the analysis of multimodal texts, can allow us to access the conscious and unconscious beliefs and assumptions we make about ourselves and others, with reflection on this potentially helping to improve and change practices. In particular, in the often-juxtaposed stories that narration and images tell, I could see tension between the known and the unknown stories my students told. Brushwood Rose (2009, p. 216) reflects on this: “-[this tension] describes something about the unconscious qualities of experience – that we participate in and are shaped by stories we may not yet be aware of – and the impossibility of telling the whole story.” I see both stories as simultaneously reproducing and troubling dominant discourses from within (Butler 1999). Lauren *does*

sexuality differently in her story; Noni *does* race. However, the need to condense stories into 300–500 words meant that students had to focus on one narrative, privileging one aspect of their lives over others. Their silences – what they leave out – can tell us a great deal about their subject locations. By privileging sexuality over race and class, for example, Lauren in her silence reproduces the inequality that Noni is challenging. Stein (2004, p. 17) reminds us that, particularly when working with video and vulnerable research participants, one has to be —. extra-sensitive to the possibilities of absences and silences in the data, which may come about due to cultural, linguistic, gender and racial differences.”

8.3 Concluding thoughts

This chapter focused on the digital story itself as product/outcome of this process of a digital storytelling workshop. In particular, through multimodal analysis, I explored the entanglement of authorial intent and semiotic resources and histories. Nelson, Hull and Roche-Smith (2008, p. 416) remind us, that contrary to popular belief, multimodal texts are not simple: —. while technology-afforded multimedia tools make it comparatively easy for an author to realize a vivid text, they also make it a multiplicatively more complicated matter to vividly realize an authorial intention.” This makes it essential to reflect on how multimodal texts can be —shaped contrary to authorial intent and to how those representations can take on a life of their own.” (*ibid.*, p. 423). Students are embedded in raced, gendered, classed and sexualised semiotic histories and their own dominant discourses. Reflecting on one of her own learner’s use of multimodality, Stein (2008, p. 44) shares: —. uses of semiotic resources are intimately connected to her identity in the ways she draws on her individual socio-cultural history and the language practices of her home and wider community.” Breaking out of these semiotic histories is difficult even if one sets out to create a counterstory. Critical media theorists might classify stories framed by these masternarratives as sentimental. Students also access different semiotic resources that may be more or less effective at engaging an audience. The multimodal analysis was useful for both reflecting on the semiotic histories Lauren and Noni are embedded in and the semiotic resources they have access to.

However, it is important to see the telling of these stories as a process – as chains of semiosis – that doesn’t end when the participants leave the workshop. In this process, students create —[v]isual narratives [...] new fictions with public performances of a personal self” (Kohler Riessman, 2008, p. 178). Within this repeated troubling from within lies students’ agency, their opportunity to experiment and create a new fiction for themselves, and re-shaping available semiotic resources (Stein, 2004), even if they do not always achieve their authorial intent and even if they do not always fit multimodal standards and

norms. The next chapter focuses on the audience response to these two stories along a part of their semiotic chain, starting from a life performance in the River of Life, to solitary writing, and back to digital performance through the digital story.

CH 9: The limits of storytelling and empathy

“Focusing on emotions as mediated rather than immediate reminds us that knowledge cannot be separated from the bodily world of feeling and sensation; knowledge is bound up with what makes us sweat, shudder, tremble, all those feelings that are crucially felt on the bodily surface, the skin surface where we touch and are touched by the world.”

Sara Ahmed

“In a racist society, one of the privileges of whiteness is empathy.”

Sisonke Msimang

9.1 Introduction

Shuman (2005) reminds us that the power of personal storytelling lies in its potential to establish an affective connection between storyteller and story listener. In a digital storytelling workshop, there are assumed rules of engagement, spoken and unspoken, that create a distinctive space. Each student is given the same space to tell his or her story. There is an understanding that it is a private and intimate space for sharing personal experiences. During the River of Life and the story circle, there is suspense of judgement: a person's story is his or her own experience, the storyteller is allowed to hold his or her own and there is no need for the kind of debate expected during dialogical spaces. The storytelling space is also understood to be a highly emotional space, where emotions usually not allowed in a classroom are expressed. Powerful emotions emerge in this space: sadness, grief, anger, discomfort, relief, excitement, frustration and bitterness.

In chapter 8, I discussed the digital story as product, including how students' semiotic histories and access to semiotic resources can work against their authorial intent. In this chapter, I focus on the process of storytelling and on the audience response to the stories in particular as they unfolded in chains of semiosis (Newfield, 2011) in and beyond the digital storytelling workshop, to answer my final research question:

How does the telling of these digital stories impact on an audience's affective engagement with the Other, in particular in terms of an audience's empathy? What are the capacities of personal stories within a digital storytelling process to trouble students' engagement with the Other?

I am interested, to use Shuman's words, how “these stories and the storyteller change when people empathize with each other's experiences” (2005, p.4). In this process, I focus on capacities of stories (Frank, 2010) to elicit empathy, to establish this affective connection, and the affective investment needed to understand and act on somebody else's experience.

I also look at the kind of empathy that these stories elicit: empathy that keeps the distance between the storyteller and story listener, or the sort of empathy that troubles any distance between self and the Other? In this section, I am thus more interested in what stories do – their capacities – rather than in using the stories as a portal into the mind of storyteller” (Frank, 2010, p. 13), this being the usual focus of narrative inquiry. Frank’s (2010) questions (resources, circulation, affiliation, identity and what is at stake?) guide the analysis of stories.

9.2 Lauren’s story

9.2.1 Stories choose us (narrative resources)

Reflective note 1: *Lauren is the last student in her group to share her River of Life. The previous stories have painted a familiar picture of highly unequal life situations: George’s story of growing up in a Cape Town township, Michael’s account of a white privileged life in Cape Town, Siyabonga’s childhood in rural Eastern Cape, Nazma’s growing up in a large Muslim family. So far, although students have shared personal stories, I have had the impression they were holding back, I felt their nervousness, their discomfort at having to perform in front of the group, of not really knowing where this process would lead them: the politeness, tentativeness and caution that rules their engagements. They ask questions, but nobody has so far ventured too far out of their comfort zones. Lauren’s story disrupts this careful balance. She is visibly more nervous than her peers and starts her story by taking us back to her childhood, which she describes as a privileged one of private schooling, white neighbourhoods, family holidays abroad, but also marked by a lack of love and openness in her family. Still composed, she tells us about a near death experience on a family holiday in Mozambique, which seems to have brought the family closer for a while. However, when she starts talking about high school, something changes. She pauses, turns around to look at us, and – visibly shaken – starts to tell us her story about falling in love with a girl in high school and the lack of understanding and support of her school and family. The atmosphere in the group changes completely. We are spellbound; I feel a stunned silence emanating from the group. In all the years I have listened to my students’ stories, I have never encountered a story about a student’s sexual orientation.*

Lauren’s story is a coming out story, reflecting elements of this genre, such as isolation and lack of support from family and school, a growing sense of discomfort of living a lie, and the decision to finally live her own life on her own terms. Stories have a life on their own, as Frank suggests (2010, p. 25): “The storyteller gives breath to the story, but the story is already there, waiting.” Lauren did not come to the workshop knowing what story to share, she did not decide beforehand to come out to her peers; but her story was waiting to be told: it was storyable and tellable (Shuman, 2005) in this specific moment and this specific

context. Frank would argue that she has the narrative – and I would add – emotional resources to tell this story in this specific moment.

9.2.2 Stories move us (circulation and affiliation)

***Reflective note 2:** As Lauren finishes her story, I feel stunned silence emanating from her peers. Usually I ask a number of questions to help students develop their story further, but I also just sit there in silence, at a loss for what to say. Finally Michael, the other white student, and her close friend, asks her advice about how to deal with teachers and learners who have personal issues, such as alcohol dependency or whether Lauren would out herself at a school or not, recognising her newfound position as „expert“ on how to negotiate openness and privacy in a school context. I reflect on the bigger issue of corrective rape and gender-based violence in South Africa and the importance of sharing a personal experience to establish the connection to the larger social issue. I find myself telling my own story about my mixed-race family, and how sharing my digital story with students and opening myself up to their questions, helped to break some of the assumptions and beliefs around mixed-raced relationships. Finally, I thank her for her courage to share her story, but it is only when Michael starts laughing that the tension breaks and we stand up, literally shaking ourselves out of her story.*

Emotions *do* things: they move between bodies, shape bodies and are attached to certain bodies but not to others (Ahmed, 2004). For Lauren to tell her story, she needed a receptive audience, an affective engagement with her audience. The moment described above, where she suddenly broke her story, paused and turned around to look at us was perhaps the first of the moments of pedagogic affect that I was witnessing in this workshop. It was a moment that could have gone either way: she could have withdrawn and continued telling a story that felt safe or, as she did, change her narrative and open herself up to her group. In her interview, she reflected on how only during the sharing of her River of Life – not the drawing of it – did she suddenly feel able to come out to her peers, wanting to share more and more.

The emotions she felt emanating from her peers, the perceived safety of the space, made Lauren decide which story to share. It was a decision taken in those few seconds in which she paused and looked at us, a moment which made the entanglement of feeling and thinking tangible, what Shotwell (2011) calls affective knowing or Curtin (2014) describes as feelings: the integration of thinking and emotions. Lauren knew in this moment that she could share her story to us and that we would not judge her, but this knowledge was based on the emotions circulating between her and us, an affect that had accumulated over time as one peer after the other shared their stories. Her openness and vulnerability opened up a

space for us to connect and engage. Not only did Lauren share her story with us in the workshop: from the onset, she expressed her intent in showing her story to the whole class.

Reflective note 3: *The room is packed. We are reaching the end of the lesson, which as usual took much longer than planned. I wonder whether I should show Lauren's movie as planned or wait till the next week. Siyabonga stands up and reminds me that we had planned to show Lauren's movie. I look at Lauren. She looks pale and nervous. I hesitate, suddenly worrying about her but she nods, and I start the movie. During the screening of her movie there is complete silence in the class. I look around and see people's gaze fixed on the screen. Lauren sits in the front row with her back to the audience. When the movie ends, the silence continues. Holding my breath, I wait to see her class's reaction. Suddenly one of the women stands up and starts clapping. Others follow and finally the class is all standing, giving Lauren a standing ovation. People are hugging and crying; the room vibrates with emotion. It is the end of the class, so students leave, but many first approach Lauren to hug her and congratulate her on her courage in breaking the silence around this topic. Lauren beams and looks very happy.*

Support for Lauren's story in a classroom where students professed strong religious beliefs, both Christian and Muslim, and where homosexuality was usually silenced, was not a given. However, after the screening of her story, she seemingly got overwhelming support. Her story elicited empathy across the class, the support emanating from one or two of her peers contagious, spreading through her peers, affecting even students who carried strong opinions about homosexuality and difference. Beatrice, who is deeply religious and classified herself in our interview as homophobic, Beatrice talked about her internal struggles in her interview: *how she screamed inside* after reading Lauren's script, fighting to continue to seeing her as normal' and denying her otherness' to keep the ability to connect with her.

Daniela: So listening to Lauren's story what does that make you ...?

Beatrice: Ohhh, inside I was like screaming. I think [name of student] was the one who told me quite a long time ago that she's like this. But I didn't believe a thing until I heard it out of the horse's mouth. Oh my god and then she asked me to read her story and then she said: Did you know this about me? And I just swallowed this big lump and I said: No, it's the first time I hear of it. And I had to like: Ohhhhhh, keep it in this morning. She asked me to walk down to the Main Road with her for snacks and I thought: Wohhh! This is unusual: she doesn't approach me for anything. But so far we've had long talks about the [assignment]. And now she asked me to go down to the Main Road with her.

(Interview 1 with Beatrice)

However, even students with more liberal opinions around homosexuality, such as Noni, seemed to look for sameness in Lauren's story, such as the struggles with her parents and the loss of home, which also emerged as a core element of Noni's story:

Noni: I wasn't shocked that she was lesbian, no, for me those kind of things are normal because I've got a lot of homosexual friends. But I was so shocked that her parents kicked her out, because she's lesbian. And thinking that she would somehow get over that, and I'm thinking how brave it was of her to actually leave her home to say: Ok then, if you won't accept me for who I am, I'm going to leave and somehow make it out on my own. You know what I mean that was just amazing for me.

(Interview 1 with Noni)

What these reactions show is that, although Lauren broached a difficult subject, she allowed her peers enough affective connections to latch on to within the bewildering, unsafe, uncharted space that homosexuality may have represented for many of her peers. She told a story that could be understood by all of her peers. In particular, the challenges posed by her unsupportive parents allowed the class to relate to her experience.

Nobody was rendered external by her story, apart from her unsupportive family. Homosexuality does not affect everyone directly. The self Lauren performed was inclusive and supportive, with just enough personal story beyond her sexuality for people to engage with and build bridges across difference. She reflected in her interview:

Lauren: I think that's the scariest thing for every person because your family is supposed to be there no matter what. That's the idea of a family, you know? And once someone admits that their family turn against them, it's like it becomes more real. And that's what people are afraid, that is why people are afraid of coming out Not necessarily because the society is gonna judge them but because their own family and the place where they belong wouldn't be there anymore ... And standing up to that and being like: that has to go, then that's just what has to happen ... that's the hard part and that's what everyone has been saying to me ... they just don't know how to deal with their family And it's not just black people: it's Muslims as well, their families are very against it ... and it's white people.

(Interview 1 with Lauren)

9.2.3 Individual stories can change (identity/change)

Lauren's identity and perception in the class changed after sharing her story. In telling her story, she displayed a willingness to be categorised / labelled in a certain way by her audience (Shuman, 2005). It's a brave and very personal story, but also a political act for

increasing LGBTI visibility and destigmatising identities. Sharing her story allowed her to experiment with a new identity. Literally overnight, she became a LGBTI activist, expert on all matters concerning LGBTI and a support person for anyone struggling with similar issues. A number of students emailed her asking her for help and advice on how to come out to their own families.

Butler tells us that by performing gender, race, sexuality, we become gender, race, sexuality; we act upon our subjectivities. By telling her story, by doing homosexuality, by troubling her story from within', not only did Lauren's positioning towards her peers change, but her own sense of self shifted.

Lauren: This whole thing has like changed my whole, like I don't wanna teach next year. I was set on, like I am gonna teach next year. And now I wanna like focus on a forum for homosexual youth and like a place where people can come, where it's safe to talk and just to talk about issues. Like especially focusing on being black and gay. In that culture and I wanna write a paper on it as well. So like it's completely changed my part. Like I have applied for my Honours I will do that, while am hopefully looking into this.

(Interview 1 with Lauren)

About a year after the creation of these stories, I met Lauren and Noni again as part of the participants' check, asking them for their feedback on first drafts of my findings. As part of this interview, I asked them about their own perceptions of their movies, now that one year had passed. Lauren did go into teaching but continued to engage in difficult conversations with her learners. She became more open about her sexuality as well, at least with her colleagues. I asked her whether in retrospect, she would change anything in her story and Lauren replied that, yes, she would.

Lauren: When I watch my story now, I feel I hate it. Like I just hate how it's done. There is so much that I would want to change ... there wasn't the time, at the time when we made it. Just the way that it flows, it feels very immature, when I watch it now Since then, I have grown so much, because I have been more out ... I don't know how to explain it. But I feel like now I, I could speak with more powerful words, the pictures I use would probably be so different.

It would probably be the same, like I would come from a personal angle, but the way that I would approach it within society, I would approach it differently, I would not try and come across, like, I would not try to win people over, be more, like, not factual, but if you want to hate gay people, then hate them My old story makes me feel

like I was trying to convince people that they should actually understand what it means to be homosexual, this is actually not what my aim was It was more to say that we are people, that was my aim, but I don't feel that my story conveyed that, I felt like I was trying so hard to persuade people to like me for who I am ... when actually they don't have to, you know I would do it quite differently, yeah

(Interview 2 with Lauren)

Lauren told an individual story; and, as she moved on as individual, her story moved on as well. It doesn't fit the new Lauren anymore.

9.2.4 Stories are dangerous (what is at stake?)

Frank (1995) warns us that there is a danger that people can become the stories they tell. While Lauren felt honoured by her class's attention and respect, this was not an entirely safe and comfortable position. During the last day of the workshop, when students reflected on how they felt during the screening of their video, Lauren explained how vulnerable she suddenly felt when sharing her story with near-strangers. I had invited some of my colleagues, including black male colleagues of mine to the screening to prepare students for a possible discomfort when screening of their stories in front of their class.

Lauren: I thought that in the room there were people ... I have no idea who they are ... it could be in their culture and their belief that they ... maybe they've even done it to someone [referring to corrective rape] and that actually scared me because I don't wanna if I were to walk out of this building and someone were to

Daniela: ... accost you?

Lauren: Yeah ... that's the scary thing about revealing the story

(Interview 1 with Lauren)

By telling of her story, Lauren left marks not only on herself but also on her audience. She broke the silence around homosexuality and surprised her peers. She ticked the boxes of a good digital story' as defined by Thumin (2009): one that satisfies, surprises and engages the viewer. In this unsafe space, she felt safe enough to allow herself to be vulnerable. By showing her vulnerability, she allowed others to engage and feel with her and extended this safe enough space to others. However, what is at stake when telling these stories is not the same for each of her peers. Lauren's story moved other people and helped others in the process to tell their own stories, echoing the notion that "— stories are made of air but leave their mark" (Frank, 2010, p. 43). She offered others her story and invited them to inhabit and appropriate this story for themselves, with material consequences. Siyabonga for example,

though careful not to reveal his sexuality to his class, related in his interview how Lauren's story encouraged him to come out to his family.

Siyabonga: I was telling her [Lauren] about the story, her story ... and then she said to me: You know what? The day I was telling my story you cried and then I noticed ... and then she said: I knew those tears were not for nothing! I said: Hell no, you saw me very well (laughing) ... yeah because I was living a lie and then I thought, if Lauren can be so, so brave about her sexuality, revealing about her sexuality in class and with her family, why I can't I do it?

(Interview 1 with Siyabonga)

Lauren's story encouraged another student from the larger class – this time a black male student – to tell a story of sexuality.

Reflective note 4: *It's the day of the screening. We have heard many stories. So when he steps out to tell his story, the audience's attention is already waning. We start his digital story but there are problems with the sound. It's too low, the audience complains, they can't hear. He decides to read his story out loud. In his story, he reflects on the incompetent, unjust and dehumanising treatment he received after reporting a corrective rape to the police. His records are lost, hearings postponed, eventually the case is thrown out of the court. There is no happy ending, no closure to his story. After he has read his story, he looks uncomfortably to the floor. The audience sits in shocked silence. I am struggling to compute what I have just heard and wait for a reaction from the audience. Where is the loving care, support and encouragement that I felt connected Lauren and her peers? No standing ovations. After a while, he simply returns to his seat in the audience. My heart breaks as I watch him sitting there: no hugs, no words of encouragement, no show of support. I can't stop comparing the class reaction to Lauren's story and to his story. What went wrong there? Was it the fact he read his story rather than showing a digital movie? Could the classroom allow for more affective engagement than this public screening? Was his story too difficult for his peers to engage with? Did it lack any point of connection, anything they could relate to?*

A while ago, I came across the following quote by Nopper (n.d.), an academic and race theorist:

— white people are viewed as human. What this means is that when white people suffer, as some who are poor/female/queer do, they nevertheless are able to have some measure of sympathy for their plight simply because they are white and their marginalization is considered an emergency, crisis or an issue to be concerned about"

However dangerous Lauren might have perceived her story to be, the fact that she was a white woman, and that her story fell within the domain of whiteness, eulogised by dominant discourses, made it easier for her audience to identify and accept her story. The reactions to the two stories of homosexuality, told by a white woman and a black man couldn't be more different. While Lauren's story was met with overwhelming support, his story was silenced. Empathy is a white privilege, as Msimang states in the quote at the beginning of this chapter.

9.3 Noni's story

9.3.1 Stories are hidden within stories (narrative resources)

Reflective note 5: Noni is the third student in her group to share her River of Life. The first two students to share their stories both start crying. So when it's Noni's turn to tell her story, the atmosphere of the group is already emotional, and she displays a great deal of nervousness at the start of her story. She cowers in the corner of the room, as if trying to hide. Although Noni pre-empts her story by referring to her nervousness, she performs her story confidently, creating a compelling story of her life, largely uninterrupted by the audience.

The story Noni finally told felt more familiar than Lauren's story. It is a story that, over the years, had been told many times. Noni's River of Life was a chronological account of her life starting with her birth and ending today with her soon-to-be-completed studies. She drew from a known narrative associated with black youth growing up in the eighties: a story of political unrest, displacement, unsettlement and an absent father. The early death of her father during political violence by members of the Inkatha Freedom Party in Johannesburg in the early 1990s disrupted her life traumatically. Eventually her mother decided to move with her to Cape Town, where Noni found some sort of stability, albeit fraught with the economic challenges a single mother was faced with trying to raise her child.

Over the first three days of the workshop, however, her story jarred and didn't seem to progress. Her peers tried to help her find a story, suggesting how to find focus through a critical incident around which she could build her story. She moved from her personal narrative, to discussing inequality in schools, challenging white privilege and, finally, a lack of engagement across race in South Africa. But the story still didn't emerge. I picked up strong emotions from Noni in the process of developing her story: frustration, confusion, feeling lost, discomfort, and even annoyance with feedback and interruption by her audience. Lambert (2010, p. v) comments on this often frustrating process of birthing a story, when describing the story circle:

–Stories move in circles. They don't move in straight lines. So it helps if you listen in circles. There are stories inside stories and stories between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. And part of the finding is getting lost. And when you're lost, you start to look around and listen.”

9.3.2 Stories are co-constructed (circulation)

Reflective note 6: It is day four. We are sitting in our now familiar circle, in what I later term the „Race dialogue“. We discuss Sisonke Msimang's article on race and reconciliation in today's South Africa. Having kept unusually quiet, when it is finally Noni's turn to speak, she asks us for permission to show us some images she has taken a few days ago. She is clearly nervous, alternating casting her eyes down and looking tentatively at her peers. I take her memory stick and open the images on my laptop. The photos are taken in the township where she grew up. They are haunting examples of township life: the poverty and lack of resources, but also the innocence and happiness children display in their play. What we have been trying to engage with in our discussions – what students such as Noni and Vuyelwa have tried to emphasise over and over: the continuous inequality people experience in this country – suddenly becomes an undeniable, unrejectable reality in our space, in our face. We fall silent and watch as Noni provides a commentary on her images, a passionate call to look at this reality, not to run away for difficult issues. As we start to speak and respond to her images, the atmosphere changes dramatically. From a careful, polite space, we move into a highly emotional conversation, where defensiveness, guilt, shame and denial, but also understanding, respect and relief are palpable.

This is another moment of pedagogic affect. It feels like a move Noni has carefully thought through and prepared, but one also born out of the affects accumulated during the course of the days spent in the workshop, an integration of feeling and thinking, resulting in judgement and action (Curtin, 2014). This powerful moment led to an engaged conversation on race and reconciliation from which many of the stories discussed in chapter 7 stemmed. After this race dialogue, Noni decided to move away from a story based on her life history towards a collective, allegorised story about race relationships and privilege in today's South Africa, using in large part the actual words spoken during the race dialogue. As such, it became a memento of our collective engagements in the workshop: a reflection on her own and her peers' emotional reactions in difficult conversations around race and reconciliation in South Africa.

9.3.3 Stories make us uncomfortable (affiliation)

Reflective note 7: *Noni asks me to read her first draft of the script. She seems both nervous and released to have finally found a way into her story. It occurs to me that her story could be written in the form of a poem, repeating certain phrases and words. I suggest that she might enhance the allegoric/abstract nature of the poem by removing the terms black and white, and replacing these with „You“, referring to the white person’s experience, and „I“ referring to a black person’s experience. We discuss that this could add an additional layer of complexity, forcing the audience to engage with the story in more depth.*

Why did it take so long for Noni to find her story? Her story was a difficult one in the context of our classroom, where issues of race and privilege are usually silenced. Noni explained in her interview, that while this story had been with her for a long time, she initially moved away in order to not make others uncomfortable:

Noni: This is the story I wanted to tell initially, way before we even met. When we first heard about that we were going to do digital stories, I thought, what am I going to do mine on? And then I just sort of let it go, and then whenever, whenever for instance I heard things like: You can’t think! Like whenever white people said: They can’t think I remember I was talking to my friend one day, my coloured friend in the res, she said: „But black people are lazy!“ So it’s things like that that got me to that point of that story. So initially that’s the story I wanted to tell ... and I remember, on my phone, I have recorded some ideas during the holidays. But then I thought about it one night, the next morning I woke up feeling like: „No, no, I shouldn’t. I’m going to make people feel uncomfortable, what are they going to think?“

(Interview 1 with Noni)

Noni’s story did raise defensiveness in her peers. Nazma, for example, usually the most silent and cautious of participants, had strong opinions about Noni’s story. In the following comment, she described her reaction to Noni’s story:

Nazma: I felt like: Well, everybody has their own opinion. And I just feel like: Yes, that happened. But it happened a long time ago. And it’s like, the generation that implemented apartheid has died out. And people are living the way they’re living because of themselves. They also have to remember, they vote for the same president every year and that president has made no change. Yes, they have the power and the money to make the most change in the country, yet it isn’t. So why do, why do people get the blame because of the past when we’ve had, we’ve been democratic for almost ten years? For more than ten years! I also understand where she’s coming from, I truly understand, but I think African people are not the only

people who suffer. Like coloured people also suffered and I mean if you go to other areas in Mitchells Plain ... I don't live in that area but if you go further in you'll see, you have gangsters and people, coloured people, also live in shacks. They're also waiting for the same opportunities as others. But I think the story just focuses on their race. I understand why – because she is who she is – but I think she should have broaden it because more than one race suffered.

(Interview 1 with Nazma)

Nazma's comment above points to the complex experience of coloureds in South Africa: the pain at having their experience of oppression relativized or minimized; the feeling of missing out in the current context of black economic empowerment: in the past not white enough, now not black enough. Watkins (2011) argues that unpacking moments of pedagogic affect is helpful in unearthing some of our beliefs and assumptions that are usually difficult to access and reflect upon. While in general very composed, in this moment of pedagogic affect – in her blame of the government, some use of the generic they, and her also claiming victim status for coloured people – Nazma allowed us a glance into the collective anger and frustration felt by coloured people in South Africa. As mentioned before, my student population consisted mainly of white and black students; and the only coloured student, Nazma, was mostly silent. It is one of the limitations of this study that I do not have enough stories to explore the coloured experience in depth.

Lauren and Beatrice are two of the students who managed to move beyond pure defensiveness and allow for more openness in their engagement with Noni's story. Both students described the race dialogue as the most uncomfortable moment in the study. In the interview below, Lauren reflected on the guilt she experienced and the anger at what she perceived as her peers' reaction during the race dialogue: both the belittling of and the pity expressed in relation to Noni's story and experience.

Daniela: Ok emm so what were the most uncomfortable moments for you in that process?

Lauren: Emm, when Noni showed those photos of where she comes from. I felt not guilty but in a sense guilty, because I mean, I can't help that am white. But I don't know, the way that they have lived, it's not their fault either but that's just how they live ... so it was this kind of confusion of „how has this happened? How do some people have to live like that and I lived so comfortably?“ And it made me made guilty in a sense, even though I am not in control of the fact that I was born as I am, you know? And I just felt angrier as well because it was like, I could see that the other black people in the room were going: „That's where we live too, you know, it's not a

big deal!" And the white people were going: „Ooooh shame!" Like that it's horrible you know? And it made me feel so uncomfortable in that moment.

(Interview 1 with Lauren)

Lauren's reaction to the everyday trauma of living in South Africa – or as Frankish (2009, p. 89) calls it, “the systemic trauma of contemporary life” – mirrors students' reactions to what Britzman calls difficult knowledge: the encounter with traumatic experiences and the coming to terms “... with various kinds of trauma, both individual and collective” (Britzman, 2000, p. 202). This encounter with past and present trauma leaves students with feelings of helplessness, loss, “... a sense that no other person or group will intervene” (*ibid.*). The interview, continued below, shows the powerful emotions that circulated between Noni and Lauren, and Lauren's overwhelming feeling of helplessness in the light of black students' stories.

Daniela: Why were you angry?

Lauren: Because I just don't think that it's going away. I don't know how it is gonna go away. Like it's happening around us all the time. I mean the townships are growing – growing and growing – and nothing is happening. So it's just like this, it's an anger, I can't do anything about it and that people have to live like that.

Daniela: So you don't feel that you have a personal responsibility to change this?

Lauren: Yes, I think in a sense there's a personal responsibility to make people aware ... because some people aren't aware of it still. Even though it's out there, like right in front of their eyes. They are just so closed in their own bubble and everyone is so busy with their own little life. I think it's good to, you know, to tell people that they need to start reacting. Otherwise nothing is gonna change and I mean, I do my bit, like I will go out and help the poor people and go and take food to shelters and things like that. But I don't know right now in my life, I mean I have had this huge cloud over my head since I was little, like what is my purpose? I need to do something very big, not small, because there is so much! And I am not one of those people who feel that they need to fix things. And it's like, I think like, if I took it on and said: I need to do something about this, it will actually stress me out more because I wouldn't even know where to start, you know? It's such a big problem and people have been trying to change for years. So that immediately puts you in a position where you are like: what can I do, you know?

(Interview 1 with Lauren)

Lauren's account again shows a moment of pedagogic affect: a student struggling with difficult knowledge; and the confusion, helplessness and despondence experienced by

young white people born into a life of privilege. Lauren's use of the third person plural both for the Other' who is distant to her ("This is how they live...") and the other' who is close, but whom she doesn't want to be associated with ("They are just so closed in their own bubble ...") allows her to distance herself from all of these Others'. Where does this leave her? What would need to happen for Lauren to reflect on her own role in this unjust system beyond the feeling of guilt towards a feeling of shame, and to establish the affective engagement or investment – the interest to travel into the world of the Others' – without firmly established roles and power differentials (such as bringing food and shelter to the poor), but seeing them with more loving eyes' (Lugones, 1987)?

As a mature white student who also experienced apartheid, Beatrice was also deeply affected by and voiced her respect for Noni's story. In her interview with me, she told me that she actually had to remove herself by leaving the room to go to the bathroom and have a good cry. The story made her recognise – seemingly for the first time – what white privilege means. Unlike Lauren, who distanced herself from racist others', Beatrice positioned herself as one of those whites who consciously or unconsciously mistreat blacks, saying: "What do we do as whites to make people feel like they're nothing?"

Beatrice: When we had that discussions in the circle with Noni, when she started talking about how she had to learn the English language in order to communicate with white people, she had to learn to be white in order to... to relate to white people and to mix with them and to be seen as one of them. Oh my goodness gracious me, I was so uncomfortable I wanted to cry myself out.

Daniela: Why? |

Beatrice: Because I am comfortable being white and I am comfortable speaking English. I am comfortable with my whiteness and I only realised when Noni was talking about it how white people unconsciously make black people feel. I had to leave the room to go to the bathroom had a good cry in the bathroom and then splash my face with cold water and then come back to class. And that's why my nose was blocked when I did my recording because that was the day I did my recording. But at the same time I was thinking about Noni's discomfort. I was thinking about my father who was a poor white who was not welcome in wealthy people's homes. Even in his own extended family, as a boy he was given a chocolate wrapper and was thinking there was a piece of chocolate in it. He found nothing, only little strips of melted chocolates which he still licked in the street and afterwards he realised what he had done. He was: It's like, I don't know how to explain it, it's like such total rejection ... and that's what went through my mind for the whole of that day. I was out of it for the whole of that day. I was just thinking about the things we do to reject other

people. Some people do it explicitly and some people don't What do we do as whites to make people feel like they're nothing?

Daniela: And you've never thought about this before?

Beatrice: No! I've never thought of the black/white issues, never!

(Interview 1 with Beatrice)

To allow herself to understand Noni's experience, Beatrice – as also seen with Lauren – needed to normalise Noni's story by constructing a connection to her own life, in this case represented by her father's sense of isolation. She ultimately connected to Noni's story through shared emotional experiences: she connected to what she knew. In this moment, Noni stopped being the Other' for her. While with Lauren, she had to find a way, to keep her staying normal' or the same', Noni, in becoming human, became the -same": someone who has -feelings" and that one can -be intimate with on ... very close terms".

Beatrice: I would actually almost want to give Noni the credit, she made me realise that we are all the same, we are all the same, we all feel the same. And again, in my mind, I was thinking: But you can make the difference! You can be the one to take the first step! Because this workshop showed us, that article actually showed me, where my weakness is. And it's noted, I am not hesitant. It's not that I don't trust black people. It's just that I have never thought of them as being intimate, somebody to be intimate with on a very close terms. That's, that's about it. I can't say, I can't say, that I don't want black people in my life. But the course made me more aware that they have feelings. And then maybe there's something that stops them from approaching me. But maybe they can see something in me that stops them from approaching me and making the first contact. It should come from me - you know? I can make it happen.

(Interview 1 with Beatrice)

9.3.4 Collective stories cannot change (identity/change/what is at stake?)

In moving from a personal story to a more general/allegoric story, Noni's story essentialised, dividing the world in blacks and whites, drawing boundaries and positioning students in opposition towards each other. Because it affected everyone in the class, her story was perceived as accusatory and more difficult to engage with than Lauren's story.

The affective disconnect between Noni and the group was heightened by her refusal to show the impact of the sort of everyday trauma she experienced in her childhood, holding on to her position as non-victim', lucky' and strong'. The following are two examples of how she downplayed the challenges she faced while constructing a strong, agentic self, both when growing up and later in her relationship with her daughter's father.

I had a tough childhood, but then I guess it didn't matter much, because as a child, as children, we sometimes take bad experiences and shove them at the back of our heads. ... Things weren't going ok between myself and Buhle's dad. We were engaged. There was a whole lot of emotional abuse, mental abuse. And 2012, I decided: Ok, this is not for me, I can't do this anymore. I do not want to be that woman who is, who has a way drawn for her....

(Noni's River of Life)

Rather than accepting her carefulness at showing emotions and her distancing herself from the trauma of the past as self-care or even self-preservation, her peers perceived her as guarded and closed. They questioned her and became irritated at her refusal to show herself as hurt. At one point during the River of Life activity, the course convenor picked up on this perceived holding back of emotions as she psychologized Noni's experience:

It's also not right for you to have those experiences (supportive murmuring of others) and you don't have to shove them back (pause), there was probably really painful stuff that was there you haven't allowed yourself to go back.

(during River of Life)

This worried Noni, as the motivation for her telling her story was for her peers to understand her better. She explained in her interview why she decided to develop a more general story, instead of staying with the personal:

Noni: I am a very emotional person. So if I had spoken about some stuff that has happened in my life, we would all have I think I would have had to go home because I am that emotional. It wasn't about: How are they gonna look at me? It was about: I know myself, I can only share to this point

(Interview 1 with Noni)

This decision – to tell a collective story rather than a personal one – impacted on the potential for transformation and change. Her story could have been told by any of the black group members. Lambert (2013) would define Noni's story as a story that does not make its intentions clear or fails to resolve issues that have been raised. It's a collective story, portraying the lived experience of black people in South Africa. As long as this experience can't change, her story cannot change. There is no happy ending or closure to her story. Students were not ready or willing to embrace her take on South Africa's lived reality. The identity she constructed for herself – as strong, agentic, even angry black woman – is one that polarised. Rather than realising what is at stake for her (a potentially falling apart) and recognising her move from the personal to the collective as self-protection, her peers

challenged her to open up. Noni was aware of this. In her interview, she talked about her desire to find the right words to make her peers understand what it means to be black in today's South Africa in a way that wouldn't lead to defensiveness.

Noni: I'm glad I could tell the story, I'm glad I had a chance, I'm glad I have a platform to say that to people and when they're watching I'm hoping they understand what I'm trying to say I wish I could use better words to make her understand what I was trying to say.

(Interview 1 with Noni)

Contrary to Lauren, Noni declared herself still happy with her digital story a year after recording it, and told me that she kept showing her digital story in its original form but also in other forms - as a poem - at various occasions, such as in church, to great support and acclaim.

Noni: ... On Friday there was a talent show I went to, at church and this guy, he is like, I have known for so many years, when you did that poem for us on race, I was like: that's the girl you have to listen to

(Interview 2 with Noni)

9.4 Stories connect the personal and the political

The power of digital storytelling lies in connecting the personal to broader structural, social and political inequalities, as Anna Poletti argues (2011). But does it happen automatically? Or is this connection mediated or facilitated? Frank's work is again useful here. Paraphrasing Foucault, he suggests that "stories are not bad, but they are inevitably dangerous" (2010, p. 81). We need to keep this in mind when we ask our students to share their stories and when we coax intimate stories out of them (Poletti, 2011).

Both Lauren and Noni told their stories out of a deep-seated wish for change: to be seen differently by their peers on a personal level, and to promote social and cultural change on a political level. The stakes were high in both stories, and both students held their own. However, the stakes were different for each of the students: while Lauren feared potential external trauma as a response to her story, Noni, fearing internal trauma, moved from the personal to the collective. The topic and the narrative approach they chose, and perhaps their position of privilege, elicited different affective responses. Their stories did not render them equally vulnerable, and their stories were not equally well received by their audience. While Lauren's highly personal account of her struggles in coming to terms with her own difference touched her audience deeply, Noni's story about race relationships in South Africa divided her class, making it uncomfortable for both black and white students to

engage on a personal level. While both constructed strong selves, these strong selves were not equally well accepted. Most importantly, Lauren managing to display vulnerability within this strength allowed for an affective, contagious connection and respect from the audience that lasted beyond the workshop. Butler asks us: “What makes for a more grievable life?” (2004a, p. 20). In our case, we could ask what makes for a more grievable story? Lauren’s story was perceived as more grievable than Noni’s, but why? And is it fair to expect such vulnerability from *all* students? I come back to this question in the next chapter when I discuss ethical implications of this study.

Shuman warns that personal stories can elicit *empathy*, but that this empathy is steeped in power relationships between storyteller and story listener, maintaining a safe distance for the story listener often characterised by pity. On the contrary, *witnessing* troubles this distance, changes power dynamics, and may equalise asymmetrical relationships (Young, 1997) between storyteller and story listener. Lauren’s peers pitied and personalised her struggle with her family – being the part of the story they could understand and relate to – while distancing themselves from the larger social issue of the abuse and violence against people living outside heterosexual norms in South Africa. This is what Zembylas (2013b, p. 508) warns against when he talks of the dangers of empathetic feeling if confined to the individual, as they may fail to change or even ... may reinforce the very patterns of economic and political subordination responsible for such suffering”. So what Lauren struggled with in her digital story – the experience of not conforming to the image of a lesbian – ended up working in her favour in terms of empathic reactions by her peers.

Shuman also warns of the precariousness of personal stories, which risk sentimentalising both the ordinary and the exceptional: “Empathy is one kind of obligation, sometimes creating a possibility for understanding across differences, sometimes involving sentimentality, sometimes romanticising tragedy as inspiration, but in any case deeply compromising the relationship between tellers and listeners” (2005, p. 20). I see Noni’s story as too normal, too similar to the collective story and still too mindful of not stepping on the other students’ toes; but also too political, too allegoric, not focusing enough on the personal and thus not engaging enough. Her story was in some ways too close to home for her peers, potentially troubling the distance between her and her audience, and thus asking for a defensive reaction. I consider Lauren’s story, on the other hand, albeit a counterstory, too sensational, too shocking, too closely linked to her own personal story of privilege and thus distracting from the political message of her story, allowing the audience to keep their distance and not troubling them too much.

Would a typology of stories (Frank, 2010) – a reflection on the affective reactions to specific stories from their peers – have helped the students create better stories? Such a reflection on narrative resources, circulation, affiliation, identity, room for change and the question of what is at stake may have helped students in shaping their story to better reach their objectives for their stories. Frank (2010, p. 118) reminds us that being aware of what core narrative one uses may help the storyteller to be more aware of what story one is telling and what story one would like to tell: “Naming narrative types can authorize the telling of particular stories, and it also can liberate people from stories they no longer want to tell.”

Had Noni told a more personal story she might have received better affective response while contrary to her perception, Lauren actually produced a seemingly safe story for her audience. Had she produced a less safe story, it might have allowed a more critical engagement with the social issues to which her story related, creating a space for mutual vulnerability where all implicated parties reflect on their implications in each other's stories.

9.5 Concluding thoughts

I end this chapter with Butler's (2004a, p. 24) quote, which started my thinking about why and how we are either affected by other people's stories: “one is undone, in the face of the other, by the touch, by the scent, by the feel, by the prospect of the touch, by the memory of the feel. We are touched by stories we tell.” While I believe in her statement, the analysis of Noni and Lauren's stories has shown me the complexities of an affective engagement with other people's stories. Student peers attached different emotions to Noni and Lauren's bodies. They may empathise with them, but by looking for sameness and by failing to trouble power relationships, they do not act as *witnesses*. Stories go under our skins and leave their mark, but it is not always the mark we had in mind. They are beyond control, sometimes transforming power dynamics, but they do not necessarily trouble existing positions of privilege and non-privilege. They can render us vulnerable, but they can also force us to hide our vulnerability behind a demonstration of strength and resilience. A reflection on the emotions experienced allowed me fascinating insights into how these students' emotions and affects are “individually experienced but historically situated” (Zembylas, 2014, p. 397), as well as insight into the ways their relationships were compromised (Shuman, 2005). This reflection served as a powerful reminder of how feeling, thinking and action are intertwined processes, tightly bound together in an eternal cycle (Curtin, 2014).

CH 10: Conclusions and recommendations

“We think we tell stories, but stories often tell us, tell us to love or to hate, to see or to be blind. Often, too often, stories saddle us, ride us, whip us onward, tell us what to do, and we do it without questioning. The task of learning to hear them, to question them, to pause and hear silence, to name them, and then to become the storyteller.”
Rebecca Solnit

“We must not see any person as an abstraction. Instead, we must see in every person a universe with its own secrets, with its own treasures, with its own sources of anguish and with some measure of triumph.”
Elie Wiesel

10.1 Introduction

Against the background of a continued lack of social engagement across difference in South African classrooms, this study set out to explore how digital storytelling as a post-conflict pedagogy (Jansen, 2009; Zembylas, 2013b, 2014) might help students engage differently across difference. I was in particular interested in a potential *sentimentality* within the digital storytelling process: the tension between using emotions to establish an affective engagement between storyteller and audience and an exaggerated pull on these emotions (Lambert, 2010). Sentimentality is a fussy concept. In trying to operationalise it, I decided to focus on the sentimentality inherent in three distinct aspects of digital storytelling:

1. As conscious or unconscious orchestration of multimodal resources, such as images, sound, voice, working with and against authorial intent – in my study the telling of counterstories – highlighting our embeddedness in semiotic histories and the difficulty to step out of sentimental masternarratives,
2. As an emphasis on both the ordinary and the sensational in the content of personal stories, closely related to the narrow, sentimental genre of digital stories, characterised by closure, accessibility and universality of themes;
3. Lastly, embodied in the feelings of pity, guilt, shame, anger, resentment and desensitization as a sentimental response to the sharing of difficult stories within societies characterised by unequal structures of power and privilege.

My study, addressing a gap in the general literature around the “emotional complexities of teaching for/with compassion and/or empathy” (Zembylas, 2013b, p. 506), looked at how digital storytelling - both as a sentimental process and product - enables and/or challenges

students' critical engagement across difference within the context of South African teacher education.

To answer my research questions, I analysed and compared stories told within a five-day train-trainer digital storytelling workshop (see table 2 in chapter 5) with nine pre-service teacher education students. I looked at both the dialogical spaces (the spaces in which students and facilitators regrouped to reflect on the process and on some of the critical texts that we engaged with) and at the storytelling spaces (where students developed their digital story) to see if students engaged differently in these two spaces.

Adopting performative narrative inquiry (Kohler Riessman, 2008) framed by theorists working at the intersection of critical race theory, queer feminist theory, cultural and social feminist theory, , I used three different analytical approaches: 1. Small-story positioning analysis, 2. a multimodal analysis; and 3. dialogical narrative analysis.

10.2 Dialogical versus storytelling spaces

The aim of this study was to facilitate an engagement across difference as post-conflict pedagogical intervention. An essential part of a post-conflict pedagogy is to recognise our own complicity in and responsibility for the unequal systems we live in. This can allow us to recognise our own role in somebody else's story (see more on this in chapter 2).

As I discuss in chapter 7, findings showed that this did not happen in the dialogical spaces, being the everyday stories that students told about their engagement with and across difference. Instead, students positioned themselves along racial lines, constructing narratives of group belonging based primarily on their racialised identities. This created powerful emotional boundaries between bodies that were read as similar and those that were considered to be different (Zembylas, 2012b).

Students expressed a desire to overcome these barriers and a desire for intimacy with their Other, but struggled to imagine a world in which they could sustain an engagement outside their comfort zones and move beyond the narratives with which they had grown up. They mirrored a continued socially segregated society characterised by a legacy of apartheid: a context which still privileges whiteness and marginalises blackness. Students' responses showed the emotional messiness that accompanies conversations around race in this country: sentimental reactions, such as guilt, shame, the feeling of helplessness, the anger and resignation vis-à-vis these difficult knowledges' (Britzman, 2000) based on the legacy of traumatic times, not necessarily personally experienced but still inscribed into bodies. Within these dialogical spaces, there was little room to cross boundaries, to listen to the Other with an open heart, with active empathy, witnessing, compassion and what Lugones (1987) calls

an interest to travel into somebody else's world. However, in some of students' stories, in particular those that offered a more complex view of privilege through acknowledging the intersectionality of class, gender, age, sexuality and race, these conversations were broken up in interesting ways, creating connections among students beyond a racial divide.

Did storytelling create a different space? Did it facilitate a different engagement across difference? Using multimodal analysis and relating to the act of telling a counterstory, I first tried to understand how two of the students' semiotic histories and access to semiotic resources affected their conscious and unconscious choices in terms of imagery, narration, sound, animation and authorial intent. In my looking at the digital story as a multimodal text with its complex orchestration of meaning-making through its different modes, it became clear to me that conveying authorial intent is difficult and that the message of a digital story can be compromised in various ways. Challenging the dominant discourse in the literature – that effective communication of meaning through multimodal texts by non-expert digital storytellers is possible – I support Nelson *et al.* (2008) and Brushwood Rose's (2009) more nuanced views on the limits of self-representation in digital stories. Noni and Lauren's choices vis-à-vis images in particular allowed a fascinating account of how dominant – sentimental – discourses affect our use of multimodal resources. The limits of the digital storytelling genre, characterised by a focus on closure, accessibility and universality of themes, became evident in the analysis. Representations of self in multimodal texts can be shaped contrary to authorial intent and can take on a life of their own (Nelson *et al.*, 2008). However, I also argued that these products could be seen as aesthetically crafted outputs (Brushwood Rose & Low, 2014), through which storytellers experimented with a new identity. Within the repeated troubling from within lay a student's opportunity to create a new story for herself within raced, gendered and classed subjectivities, even if she didn't always achieve her authorial intent and even if her multimodal text did not adhere to multimodal standards and norms.

Drawing on Frank's work on dialogic narrative analysis (2010, 2012), I then attempted to show how different stories have different capacities and different effects on their audience. Shuman (2005) warns us of the precariousness of personal stories, which can establish affective connections between storyteller and story listener, but also carry the risk of sentimentality through dangerously emphasizing both the ordinary and the exceptional (or sensational). The audience affectively engaged with Lauren's highly personal and – until-then – untold story of coming to terms with her own sexuality in a privileged yet conservative family context, her courage at making herself vulnerable, and her openness to be judged and labelled. Noni's narrative of a life of disadvantage and continued oppression associated with blackness, received mixed reactions in the workshop and was largely ignored when

screened in class. Both students positioned themselves as activists through their stories and were passionate about their topics. However, they were affected by the extent to which they could make themselves vulnerable, this consequently influencing the audience response. This was shown in various ways: the narrative resources they drew from; the context into which their stories were told: who was made external through the story and who they affiliated with; and their positioning within this context in terms of their privilege: the levels of comfort they felt, what was at stake for the storyteller, or using Ahmed's words (2004), the extent to which their bodies could sink into a space moulded' for them.

Active empathy or witnessing assumes taking on responsibility and holding oneself co-responsible for the other's plight (Boler, 1999). It also assumes acknowledging and recognising the Other' from a position of asymmetrical responsibility' (Young, 1997), based on different experiences and from being differently positioned in life, but also valuing these differences, seeing them as affirmative, rather than being less than'. An analysis of the audience response to Noni and Lauren's stories in chapter 9 showed the difficulties of avoiding what Zembylas calls ... a sentimental recognition of potential sameness" (2014, p. 406). Both in the dialogical and storytelling spaces, students resorted to rational arguments or sentimental reactions, in most cases failing to acknowledge how their own emotional attachments affected their knowledge and practices. In the instances where students connected to the story of the Other' – be it the Other' through race, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation – they tended to make them the same', relating to shared experiences, denying the storyteller her difference. This blind' or false' empathy (a concept drawn from Delgado, 1996) is true for both white and black students, as Duncan (2015, p. 91) warns us:

–To be clear, false empathy plays out mainly through caring relationships in which members of the dominant White society believe they identify with members of communities of color. However, false empathy also plays out in significant ways through people of color who, socialized in the various institutions that certify them to assume positions of responsibility in society, uncritically accept or identify with the values that inform these institutions, to the destruction of communities of color.”

As I have shown in chapter 9, when telling personal stories, it is difficult to move beyond the intra- and interpersonal. We get stuck in emotional moments of engaging with our own and the other's story, losing sight of the larger socio-economic and cultural context, the power relationships that impact on our relationships across difference. This happens even where critical elements are added to the process, such as critical readings or PLA techniques, as was done in this study. I would, however, argue that this stuckness is essential: in these spaces, students connect to pain: not to white or black pain, but to the pain of a human

being. As we react to the individual pain, as Ahmed (2004, p. 21) writes, "... the pain of others becomes 'ours', an appropriation that transforms and perhaps even neutralizes their pain into our sadness".

While in this process the socio-cultural and historical context of these stories may get lost, students are able to move beyond what disconnects them and find that bridge of connection and understanding. As Lugones (1987) contends, to engage emotionally with the Other' and learn to love the Other', it is necessary to travel into her world. Students participating in this study have travelled and glimpsed into one another's worlds. One doesn't suddenly become a witness to somebody else's story, in particular if that somebody is a distant Other' with whom and with whose story one has failed to engage so far. The *sentimentality* of the digital storytelling process – the focus on the personal, the vulnerability, the affective connection established – leads to an *interest* in the Other', necessary for such an engagement.

Some authors may argue that this might be dangerous, as it individualises or psychologises pain. Boler (1999, p. 162) for example, contends that, "Passive empathy absolves the reader through the denial of power relations. The confessional relationship relies on a suffering that is not referred beyond the individual to the social". However, it could also be seen as a crucial first step in a long process of transformation, particularly in a context such as South Africa, where the majority of the population, up until 20 years ago, were seen as less than human.

Once we have recognised each other as humans, after establishing this affective connection, we might be invested enough to continue our work of self-transformation. This can create a space where it is possible to care for the distant Other', especially in post-conflict societies, where human relationships in general and friendships in particular are usually defined in binary opposition, of "oppressor-oppressed, master-slave, enemy-friend" (Zembylas, 2013a, p. 1). It might establish a love and friendship, as Zembylas argues, that is not dependent on "being like a brother" in physical proximity", but one outside the "traditional understandings that define the friend in terms of proximity and reciprocity, while considering the emotional implications of trauma in these societies" (*ibid.*, p.2).

Students recognised their vulnerabilities, even if they failed to always recognise their implications in one another's stories. They experienced powerful emotions that are usually not allowed into the classroom. The troubled knowledge they brought to the classroom was evident in how they responded to one another's stories. I saw both defensiveness and resistance to these stories, and, in some of the students' reflections on these emotions, a growing understanding of how these emotions are gendered, raced and classed. The digital storytelling workshop created a space for these knowledges and emotions usually carefully

hidden and silenced to emerge. However, for me, the real learning happened outside the workshop: in the analysis of their stories and reactions, and in my continued engagement with some of these students.

10.3 Contribution of the study: Moving towards a critical digital storytelling process

10.3.1 Pedagogical contribution

What would it take to move beyond this sentimental recognition of sameness and towards a post-conflict pedagogy? Young (1997) argues that to be in a relationship of asymmetrical reciprocity, where we acknowledge our differences, but try to understand the other's experience, where we try *being-with* rather than *being-in* one another's space, needs three things: questioning, active listening with suspended judgement and a sense of wonder.

Although arguing from different theoretical starting points and using slightly different terminology, Boler, Shuman and Young all stress that for somebody to feel the sort of empathy that is critical and transformative, that leads to action informed by a critical awareness of self and Other (Young, 2011), one needs to trouble the distance usually established through difference, while keeping a distance necessary to reflect on our own implications and responsibilities towards social injustices. This is a tough call. Is a digital storytelling workshop the right space for such an engagement?

I suggest two concepts to expand the current digital storytelling workshop mirroring some of the processes that I went through when trying to make sense of the data collected in this study: making experience strange through multimodal testimonial hearing and critical emotional reflexivity, and making sense of our collective narrative.

10.3.1.1 Making experience strange again through a multimodal testimonial reading of digital stories

Ellsworth (1989, p. 19) suggests that "... rather than empathy one should promote counter-practices of queering, disidentifying, denaturalizing and defamiliarizing, producing difference instead of sameness". In my case, students told stories of difference, yet what the audience still connected to was their perceived sameness. How does one achieve this distance from one's story, allowing it to become strange again and for connection of the personal to the political? How can we recognise the dominant discourses we are embedded in and that we draw from when telling stories?

To achieve this, I suggest a multimodal testimonial reading of digital stories. This consists of two steps: first, a multimodal analysis of the images used in a digital story through a

critical media literacy lens, similar to the multimodal analysis I have done in chapter 8. This exercise would allow students to look at their own or their peers' pictures from the necessary distance to recognise how their choice of media might be influenced by dominant discourses. Secondly, a testimonial reading of stories' (see Boler, 1999) refers to the reading of trauma narratives in a way that would force the reader to recognise his or her own responsibility and complicity in the trauma depicted in the stories.

Could digital stories be read testimonially? Hill (2010) maintains that such testimonial reading is possible for digital stories within historically situated power relationships. In her context stories produced by others are shown in workshop settings and consequently lead participants to make themselves vulnerable and tell their own stories. I suggest a different approach. In my case, I attempt to have participants' read their own or their peers' stories testimonially. In my scenario, the stories have been screened already, the emotional, raw emotions have been felt and engaged with already. Rather than raw vulnerability, what is needed for testimonial reading of digital stories may be a certain critical distance between the storyteller and the story, a distance achieved when seeing a story for a second, third or fourth time. One of the basic tenets of feminist thought is the recognition that individual pain will not change the world (hooks, 2000a). It is the linking or, as Ahmed (2004, p. 174) calls it, the "reading" of the relation between individual emotion and structure, between emotions and politics that "undoes the separation of the individual from others" and consequently helps us as a collective to take action.

Asking questions about the context, structures and dominant discourses that these stories are embedded in and draw from, supported by the reading of critical texts, might help students understand how we are always affected by these norms while also troubling these norms. It might allow them to decide which of the masternarratives they are drawing from to keep and which to trouble, as Bamberg (2004, p. 360) notes: masternarratives might "... also give guidance and direction to the everyday actions of subjects; without this guidance and sense of direction, we would be lost". This multimodal testimonial reading could allow students to recognise how their individual stories are always flawed, always incomplete (Coleborne & Bliss, 2011). By focusing on one particular issue, such as gender or race, silencing others, students do injustice to their complex subjectivities.

Testimonial reading may also allow students a first understanding of their own complicities in others' stories. It implies being aware of when and why emotions surface when reading these narratives of trauma. As such, multimodal testimonial reading that assumes some sort of distancing between the reader and the text, while simultaneously troubling this distance (Shuman, 2008), may allow the reader to enter into a self-reflexive space, to reflect on her

own reactions to the story as much as to the story itself. As Boler (1999, p. 167) explains, the reader must pay attention not in terms of fears for one's own vulnerabilities, but rather in terms of the affective obstacles that prevent the reader's acute attention to the power relations guiding her response and judgements".

Boler (1999) reminds us that how we self-police our emotions is determined by social class, gender, race and culture. In similar fashion, Ahmed's (2004, p. 196) work is based on the assumption that emotions involve investment in social norms and as such continued injustices may be linked to this investment in these: "Injustice may work precisely through sustaining particular kinds of affective relations to social norms through what we do with our bodies". She emphasizes that to work against injustices, is to "... show rather than erase the complexity of the relation between violence, power and emotion" (*ibid.*). Reflecting and understanding how our own emotional responses are gendered, raced and classed would be a further step towards a more critical engagement across difference and a recognition how we are all implicated in the systemic structural injustices characterising our lives.

10.3.1.2 Making sense of our collective narrative

Engaging students in a multimodal testimonial reading of their own stories *after* the digital storytelling workshop could also facilitate a more nuanced conversation on consciously and unconsciously held beliefs and assumptions. This awareness of not only themselves but also of the emerging collective lived experiences, their emerging collective narrative', may be a powerful recognition of the systemic forces and unequal structures defining our lives in South Africa, serving as a necessary next step for students to start questioning and disrupting the dominant discourse they have been socialised in. This would allow for what feminist authors such as Haug and hooks have long called for: the move beyond the sharing of personal stories towards a critical analysis of women's political reality. As Haug (1992, p. 17) argues, it is only through a collective analysis of individual stories that we can "uncover the social construction, the mechanisms, the interconnections and significance of our actions and feelings"; that we can move beyond a "simple duplication of the everyday with all its prejudices and lack of theoretical insight and ultimately a collective social action". Eventually this could even lead to what Segal (2009; 2007) terms social empathy' and Boler calls witnessing', an empathy that goes beyond the feeling-for or feeling-with an individual towards an understanding of the social and political structures of our society.

Learning to be a witness to one's own and the Other's' story is a transformative process, that may last a lifetime, facilitated and mediated by many encounters and engagements with the Other' within and out of the classroom. If we believe that our subjectivities are not fixed, but constantly shifting, this process might start or support a continued transformation. Walker

(2005a) reminds us that understanding our subjectivities as raced, gendered, classed and sexualised also implies that they are constantly shifting, that there are ways in which one can unlearn race, gender and class; and trouble it from within.

This transformation is part of an ongoing reflective and critical process that acknowledges the importance and entanglement of both the knowing and the feeling for social change. As shown in figure 3 below, the digital storytelling workshop space allows for personal healing. It makes us see the Other as human and similar to ourselves, and establishes an affective connection in class. However, to move beyond the sentimentality of sameness and the psychologising of individuals inherent in this healing, this process needs to continue beyond the workshop space through reflective activities.

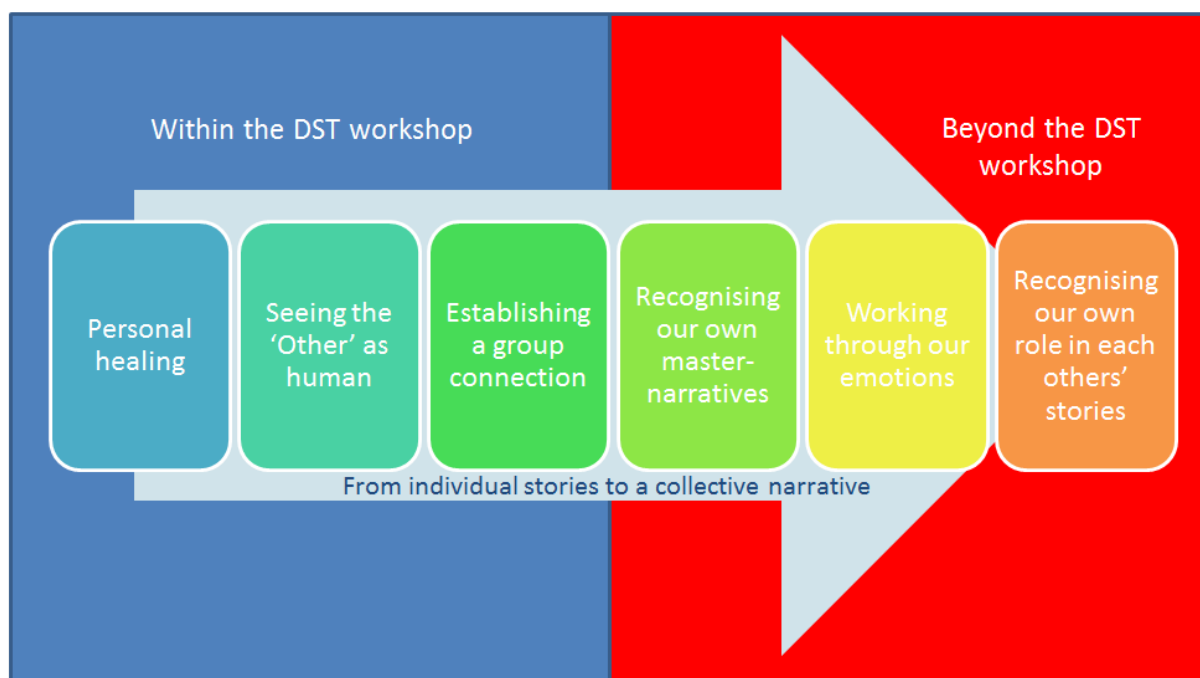


Figure 3: Towards a critical digital storytelling process

If one doesn't see the digital story as final and the process as finished when the stories have been screened, but rather as a necessary starting point for a series of debriefing and reflective sessions we might be able to move beyond sentimentality and allow students the seemingly impossible: feeling close enough to the Other, feeling emotionally invested while keeping the necessary distance to critique their own and their peers' work (Latha, 2005). A multimodal testimonial reading would help students to recognise their own master-narratives, start a reflection on their own emotional responses and how these are defined socio-culturally constructed and may finally allow them to recognise and accept their own responsibilities in each other's story. It would allow a shift from the individual to the collective

narrative. This might finally also allow us an *enlarged thought*, as Young (1997, p. 360) argues, that would allow us to both relativise our own assumptions and views in relation to others and to learn from others –how the world and the collective relations they have forged look to them”. This includes playfulness, creativity and an imagination that reaches beyond common sense and dominant narratives to envision a new space, where we can travel next to each other, recognising our similarities and differences. It will be messy and difficult, we will fail and make mistakes, inflict hurt and pain on each other, but also be enriched by *hearing, questioning, pausing, and naming* our diverse stories, as Rebecca Solnit suggests in the quote cited at the beginning of this chapter.

10.3.2 Ethical contribution

Can such an engagement across difference be achieved within a classroom? And, is it ethical?

How can one draw the boundaries between storytelling as a therapeutic intervention and a pedagogical activity? Zembylas (2012b, p. 123) asks some critical questions in his more recent work: –Is the teacher of anti-racism to become some sort of therapist (how are such skills developed?) and what happens when students leave class?”. How far can students be pushed? What are the limits of discomfort before driving students crazy? (Zembylas, 2012a).

Aveling, who also uses personal narratives in her teaching asks herself: What was the limit to which I could challenge students before they –turned off”? (2004, p. 267). Do educators need to undergo therapeutic interventions as well to debrief on the often traumatic experiences they encounter in class (Zembylas, 2012b)?. I reflect here on some of the observations from my study in relation to the discomfort students felt in this process.

While I am very clear at the beginning of these project, that we are in a pedagogical and not in a therapeutic space, I wonder whether such a distinction is possible? What is the role of the teacher in this process? Jansen (2009, p. 259) emphasises the critical role of educators in creating a safe space for students to voice, listen to, analyse and reflect on one another’s beliefs and assumptions. He points to the need for teacher education programmes that prepare future teachers to consciously create spaces that allow for beliefs and assumptions - often disguised by emotional defensiveness or outbursts - to be disrupted:

–... the success of post-conflict pedagogy depends almost entirely on the qualities of those who teach ... this means listening for the pain that lies behind a claim, the

distress that is concealed in an angry outburst, the sense of loss that is protested in a strident posture.” (p. 263–264)

But can a classroom with its inherent power dynamics ever be a safe space for our learners? Would it not make more sense to recognise and embrace this lack of safety among our learners and among us as facilitators? I would argue that, instead of protecting and mollycoddling our students and sheltering them from uncomfortable emotions, we need to engage and give students the tools to deal with these emotions.

If what we are trying to achieve with this kind of work, is a sense of wonder, a willingness to see the Other and to travel into the other’s world with loving eyes without subjecting them to our own experiences and fantasies (Lugones, 1987), then it is important to reflect on how such a space would look like. Ahmed describes this space of wonder beautifully (2004, p. 180):

–But for me the expansion of wonder is bodily...The body opens as the world opens up before it; the body unfolds into the unfolding of a world that becomes approached as another body....wonder is a passion that motivates the desire to keep looking; it keeps alive the possibility of freshness, and vitality of a living that can live as if for the first time.”

How do we create a space where wonder can expand bodily? The vulnerability established through the telling of stories seems to have created such a space for some of the students. Lauren’s story motivated her peers to *keep looking*, not to turn away (see chapter 8). But not all stories had such an impact on the audience. If we are to put our students in spaces of discomfort, to render them vulnerable and invite them to *tell their story*, we need to do so ethically and mindfully and in a way that allows all students to be uncomfortable and vulnerable in what is assumed to be a *safe* space.

This means being fully aware of the consequences their stories may have, of what is at stake for them when telling their stories - based on the narrative and other resources they draw from in sharing their story, and their position of privilege or non-privilege - the micro- and macro-context of their social lives, their studies and their work place. This has to include a conversation on different genres of stories and the genre of digital storytelling in particular, how different stories construct different affective connections with an audience and most importantly, how students are positioned in their class in terms of power and privilege, and how this affects audience response.

Ahmed's (2004, p. 152) definition of comfort and discomfort is useful in this context, to start to understand the different social positioning of students and the resulting effects of the discomfort they experience. She suggests that:

... comfort is the effect of bodies being able to sink into spaces, that have already taken their shape. Discomfort is not simply a choice or decision – I felt uncomfortable about this or that' – but an effect of bodies inhabiting spaces that do not take or extend their shape."

What my analysis has shown is that the digital storytelling workshop is not an equally uncomfortable, yet safe, space for every student (see chapter 9). The way student bodies sink into the spaces that have or have not already taken their shape, has a concrete impact on what stories they can and should tell, as seen in Noni's case. It also has an impact on how these stories are received. Within a pedagogy for discomfort both privileged and nonprivileged learners need to be put in a place of discomfort, since, as Boler and Zembylas (2003) argue, no-one escapes hegemonic thought.

What does this mean in practical terms? Do we expect the same kind of cognitive and emotional labour from both students associating with privilege and disadvantage? Is it fair to intentionally create uncomfortable spaces for learners, whose life is an experience of permanent discomfort in their lives? Is it not more important for privileged learners to experience this discomfort in order to recognise and develop empathy for the Other? While white students may have the privilege to step in and out of spaces of discomfort, black students can never leave their black skin and associated experiences of everyday racism.

Young's (2011) more recent work on shared responsibility for justice provides a first pointer on how to engage with these questions. She contends that to decide who would carry the main responsibility in a fight for a more just society, one needs to consider three aspects: an agent's power, his or her position of privilege and an agent's interest.

I have centred whiteness in this study, and I find my focus shifting towards the experience of white students. As white educator, their experience is closer to mine, I understand them better, their narratives are more familiar and, in some ways, I find it easier to challenge them than challenging black students in the class. Do I, in some ways, expect more from them than from the black students, as Young suggests? More work? More engagement with their privilege than black students?

My aim is for white students to recognise their privilege and take responsibility for it. What is there for my black students to learn, apart from finding their voice? The development of their

confidence to counter white students' stories with their own? Is it enough, as Berlant (2008, p. ix) argues, to share their stories and to consequently realise a shared humanity, decreasing the feeling of "being alone", for her "one of the affective experiences of being collectively, structurally underprivileged"?

While the pedagogy of discomfort aims at troubling the binaries set up by critical pedagogy, at the end of the day the approach still thinks in these binaries. Conducting research on race, gender, class without essentialising our research participants is a difficult task. Elie Wiesel reminds us in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, to not use our students as abstractions or placeholders for the white or the black student experience, but see them in their uniqueness while acknowledging the socially constructed nature of their emotions within their stories. Following Chaudry's (2009) suggestion, I have tried not to flatten the voices of my research participants, but to portray them as complex characters, with specific experiences, embedded in specific contexts, and focusing on our actual encounter, rather than frozen in time and space. If I have managed, only you the reader, can tell.

10.3.3 Theoretical contribution

This study reaffirmed the centrality of working with and through emotions when engaging with difficult knowledges, being social and historical traumas in the classroom. As Ahmed reminds us (2004, p. 171):

"Focusing on emotions as mediated rather than immediate reminds us that knowledge cannot be separated from the bodily world of feeling and sensation; knowledge is bound up with what makes us sweat, shudder, tremble, all those feelings that are crucially felt on the bodily surface, the skin surface where we touch and are touched by the world."

The digital storytelling workshop is a space where strong emotions circulate between student bodies and have material consequences: students talk about the urge to scream, hide, run away and distance themselves, but also to connect, engage, and embrace each other. In my zooming in and reflecting on what Watkins (2015) terms "moments of pedagogic affect", the entanglement of thinking, feeling and doing became evident and a "teachable moment" for students.

In reflecting on these moments, easily remembered for their emotional intensity, a conversation started on the origins and implications of these emotions, allowing us a glimpse into our own hidden assumptions and beliefs, so often buried and silenced under a polite veneer of colour-blindness and shadowed by a rainbow nation discourse. The digital storytelling workshop can create an alternative space in which emotions are valued and

used as pedagogical tools: a space for students to explore different subjectivities and experiment with different narratives.

The affective turn has given me a vocabulary for looking at how emotions move bodies, bodies group and re-group, identities are established, and boundaries are drawn between the self and Other. It has also allowed me to understand the difficulty of changing the affective investments, characterised by an accumulation of affect over time, which hinder transformation and social change. As Watkins (2011, p. 140) notes:

–These affects don't simply dissipate. They are embodied and move beyond the spaces in which they were first generated and, as constitutive of subjectivity, affect all those with whom these bodies, in turn, interact.”

As much as this affective investment might hinder transformation of beliefs and assumptions, it is also what allows a new affective engagement to develop – through the accumulative affects experienced in the digital storytelling workshop space and beyond – and that makes us act differently in these moments of pedagogic affect.

What my study has also shown is that emotional and cognitive labour are not necessarily neatly aligned, as the notion of critical emotional reflexivity may suggest. Zembylas argues that only through the reflection on emotions experienced may we understand the social and political constructedness of emotions. I agree with the importance of both emotional and cognitive labour in this context. Emotional labour without cognitive labour could be seen as mushy, sentimental, and steeped in dominant discourses and masternarratives; cognitive without emotional labour can turn self-righteous, if not vicious. However, I don't see this as a linear process: emotions and cognition are intertwined, entangled, messy and act in a cyclical, recursive way. It is this entanglement that makes them critical. Students' affective knowledge (Shotwell, 2011) impacts on how they engage with their peers. Affective knowledge can both unlock and block understanding. Affective knowledge allowed students to engage in acts of solidarity and social justice, opening up to and supporting their peers; but also in acts of defensiveness, lashing out when feeling under attack or unfairly treated.

What a pedagogy of discomfort expects from students in such projects is to take action. It falls short if students are not compelled to take action, to take a step towards a more socially just society (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). In the context of black feminism (but relevant, I would argue, to all feminism), Ahmed (2004, pp. 182–183) reminds us about the strong link between emotions, critical thought and activism:

“Feminism demonstrates the intimacy between the emotional response of wonder, critical thinking and forms of activism that try and break with old ways of doing and inhabiting the world.”

The main criticism of the affective turn is its lack of impact as a political project (Pedwell & Whitehead, 2012). Structural transformation cannot be achieved through changes in public feeling, as Pedwell and Whitehead (2012) warn:

“... feminist enthusiasm for the possibilities of community, solidarity and change associated with the force of affect must thus be tempered with acknowledgement of the persistent difficulty of generating structural transformation through projects of collective feeling”

I want to challenge this. I see that collective feeling in such encounters can work towards acts of solidarity. Both Noni and Lauren had many ideas of what to do with their digital stories beyond the digital storytelling project. Some of them materialised, such as Noni showing her story at various occasions in church and at community events. Both Noni and Lauren’s stories were also shown at various conferences and workshops. Noni joined a race dialogue group and Lauren became more open about her sexuality, within her social context and at her workplace. But there are other, more subtle, “small-scale acts of solidarity”, as Zembylas (2013b, p. 515) calls them, that are equally powerful in this context. The first student who stood up to applaud after the screening of Lauren’s story in class committed one such act, as described in chapter 9. Rachel’s angry reaction – related in chapter 7, towards me – her accusation that I perceived and labelled her as a “typical white racist”, unwilling to reflect on her privilege – was another example. Both are equally important signs of students’ agency and caring, their willingness to engage. Rachel’s defensiveness forced me to question my own racist reading of her world, challenging me to see my reaction to her as framed by my own beliefs and assumptions about, in her case, white South Africans. Rachel’s powerful affective reaction also prompted Vuyelwa to tell the story about her grandmother, one of the most evocative moments in the workshop.

Zembylas (2013, p. 516, my emphasis) reminds us that change is slow and gradual:

“Solidarity does not become radicalized from one day to the next; the intensification of solidarity comes *gradually* based on empathy, a community of engaged citizens and the constant interrogation of various modes of action and engagement for their effectiveness to fight injustice and subordination.”

This emphasizes the importance of allowing emotions into our lives as educators and researchers, to use emotions to reflect on why we react to certain situations in a certain way.

It allows us to see our own lives as part of a larger social-economic and historically-shaped reality, and our own emotional narratives as political. This also enables us to use our own narratives as lenses through which to understand how power and privilege is acted out in the microcosm that our classrooms represent mirroring the larger society. By doing this, we may find ways to resist this normative nature of emotions governing how we act in and outside our classrooms, and become agents of social change, refocusing on the old but still valid notion that the personal is always political, but this time acknowledging the relationship of feeling and knowing.

10.3.4 Curriculum contribution

The interconnectedness of being, feeling and knowing has immense impact on how knowledge acquisition is conceptualised in HE and consequently on how the curriculum should be structured. In their paper, *'An Ontological Turn for Higher Education'*, Dall'Alba and Barnacle (2007, p.682) argue that if the focus shifted from viewing knowledge acquisition as a purely intellectual act, context and practice-independent, to a view of knowledge and being/becoming as being interdependent, this would transform the HE sector: "If being and knowing are inextricable, then exploring this interdependence provides a means of not only problematising but also transforming higher education". This would imply a raised consciousness about how knowledge is engendered and embodied, how affect impacts on knowledge acquisition, and how knowing is always situated within a personal, social, historical and cultural setting.

A project such as the one explored in my study cannot be seen as a once-off intervention. Troubling perceptions on raced, classed, gendered and sexualised subjectivities need to be infused across the curriculum. That my students encountered critical thought and critical theory only in the last project of their teacher education programme is highly problematic and needs to be challenged. Zembylas (2014, pp. 403–404) makes this point when he asks:

"How can pedagogy and the curriculum get organized by teachers so that they move learners from affective dissonance to affective solidarity, without ending up reinstating empty empathy, pity, or sentimentalism?"

Latha (2005, p. 50) warns us that such a goal could be:

"... especially elusive and problematic in South African classrooms if the pace of educational transformation is hindered by a lack of training and a resultant lack of understanding by teachers of the principles of the new curriculum, and (in a few instances), it would seem, a total unwillingness to accept changes".

As such, one might have to start by working with lecturers as well as students, to allow academic staff to reflect on their own biases and assumptions when working with their students. If one takes government policies and white papers seriously, emphasising the necessity for a critical engagement with difference, a critical look at the teacher education curriculum is not only necessary but vital within a social justice project.

10.3.5 Methodological contribution

In this study, I attempted to find ways to look at narrative through an emotional lens, focusing not only on the words uttered in this process, but also on other emotional markers, such as students' body movements, gestures, and facial expressions. Multimodal analysis of video recordings made it possible to revisit these highly emotional spaces, but my own recollections and field notes proved essential as well. The digital stories created were also a useful memento of the space created in the digital storytelling workshop. Through this work, I aimed to further the field of a narrative inquiry of emotions, to date an area attracting less attention in the broader field of narrative research.

Both the small-story positioning analysis and the dialogical narrative analysis helped me move beyond the content of the stories in order to look at the complex relationships between story, storyteller and audience, focusing on what stories *do*.

I felt less at ease within multimodal analysis. In particular, the multimodal analysis used to engage with the two digital stories, felt clinical, in some ways losing the orchestrated magic of digital storytelling. Analysing these stories through a researcher's analytical and evaluative gaze outside the lived context of the workshop often felt wrong, doing these stories and storytellers injustice. I am left wondering whether such an evaluation might be missing out on the depth and impact of these stories, challenging my own critical gaze. In some ways, such an analysis is trying to represent the unrepresentable (Brushwood Rose & Low, 2014): the magic of these stories gets lost. For both Lauren and Noni, the telling of their stories were acts of courage; both stories had to negotiate ways of telling emotionally difficult stories within a given context and within given social, cultural and semiotic histories and resources. Both students also put enormous effort into the crafting of their digital stories, both as a process and a product, within their own aesthetic frame' (Brushwood Rose & Low, 2014), communicating beauty and harmony, along with tension and dissonance.

Nelson *et al.* (2008) contend that, while social semiotics emphasises the reading of visuals as social practices and learnt within a specific context, we are only starting to understand how different socio-cultural practices impact on a viewer's meaning-making. Multimodal analytical frames are in some ways prescriptive and not overly intent on allowing for socio-cultural ambiguity. This became clear in the way Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) define

demand and offer pictures. What happens in societies where a direct glance towards elders is considered rude, as observed in many African cultures? Would visuals with characters not directly gazing at the viewer still be read the same way, i.e. as allowing the audience to observe participants in the picture in a more detached way and more impersonally, ultimately allowing the audience to distance themselves? If one considers cultural context, would Noni's and Lauren's pictures still be read in the way I read them? When using multimodal analysis, we need to heed Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006, p. 266) warning that conventions for reading signs are constantly changing as people are engaged in ever new and ever different acts of visual sign-making".

10.4 Limitations

There are various limitations to this study:

1. From the onset, I tried to prevent a potential conflict of interest with the larger research project, which had its own specific aims and objectives, by discussing this openly with the other researchers and regularly updating them on the progress of my PhD study study.
2. Some of the work that I focused my research on was assessed, such as the digital stories students produced for their course and which were a crucial element of my data collection design. These artefacts were produced for a specific purpose and for a specific audience. The brief encouraged students to create narratives that followed the principles of critical digital storytelling, such as promoting the telling of counterstories. Students' creation of the digital stories was perhaps less authentic than in a typical digital storytelling workshop, being created in response to a very specific brief.
3. I felt a strong tension in being both the facilitator of the digital storytelling workshop and the researcher (or observer) of the process. Facilitation is crucial both in the digital storytelling process but also in the conduct of dialogues. While I had a research assistant who helped in recording sessions and moving recording equipment around, it was still hard for me to stay in the facilitation process and not move to a more reflective space. I often felt an urge to take notes, which clashed with the need to focus on facilitating highly difficult conversations. As researcher, I could not dedicate as much time and effort to facilitation; as facilitator, I could not allow myself to step back and simply observe students' engagements with one another. To get around these constraints, all conversations were video- and audio-recorded.

4. The stories emerging from this workshop were told and produced as a result of the context of the workshop, the people participating in the workshop, and as a result of the fact that it was part of my PhD study. I am aware that, had this workshop happened outside my own research agenda, the stories produced might have been very different. Would I have encouraged Noni to tell a more personal story, for example? I think so. As a researcher with a particular focus on race and reconciliation, I was happy for Noni to write a story challenging white students but, from a digital storytelling perspective, I should have known that a personal story might have engaged her audience more. This is the nature of qualitative research, particularly narrative inquiry, where storytelling is seen as social practice, co-constructed and a product of contextualised social settings. Findings need to be read within this context, with its own limitations, as my own interpretations, compromised by my own semiotic history and resources.
5. My not being South African and hence my lacking deep insights into the South African context and history was also a potential limitation for this study. As a non-South African, subtleties in students' stories were lost on me, a stranger to cultural, historical, social and linguistic context. While as outsider I could ask questions and address issues that were usually not asked or engaged with, there also was a loss in understanding that I cannot deny and that came with my position as outsider. Invaluable resources in my quest to understand and interpret the South African experience were my study participants, the storytellers in this study, who helped me make sense of the intricate emotions I encountered. In a sense, I am following other researchers, such as Squire (2009), a UK-based researcher who conducted narrative research among South African women living with HIV/AIDS and who relied heavily on her interpreter to help her understand how these women's personal narratives were positioned in relation to the master narratives they live in. Showing my stories over and over again, inviting feedback and interpretation from as many colleagues, friends and students as possible, has allowed me to gain more insight, but only to a certain point.
6. Finally, what and where is my own story? Within narrative inquiry, both the participant and the researcher are invited to tell their stories, as Connelly and Clandinin (1990) emphasize: "Narrative inquiry is ... a process of collaboration involving mutual storytelling and re-storying as the research proceeds". Thus I need to tell my story as well. Did I share enough of myself with the students? Have I made myself vulnerable? What story would I tell? I am part of their dialogues and of their process of storytelling. I gave feedback and suggested changes which impacted on their final

products. I prodded, poked and challenged students. But did I open up enough about my own story to them? In some ways, this is again about power and control that a facilitator holds. Feminist research methodologies aim at breaking down the usual power dynamics between researchers and participants and provide more relational, participatory ways of conducting research, foregrounding, for example, the importance of the researcher making herself vulnerable by sharing her story as well (Riessman, 2001). While I am central to the process, my own story is not part of the process. But my story impacts on how I interpret the data, how I read and understand my students' stories. Where is my own digital story? These questions made it clear to me how important my own positioning is within the storytelling process but also for this study, which is why I reflected on this in length in Appendix 1.

10.5 Recommendations for future research

A critical area to explore is the sustainability of this process: to see if indeed students created an affective economy (Ahmed, 2004), allowing them a more sustained engagement across difference beyond the workshop and the classroom. How has this project affected the way they engage with the students or learners in their own teaching practice? Are they using digital storytelling or any of the elements of the process with their learners? How sticky are the emotions felt in the workshop? How do you keep this affective connection alive? Have the emotions experienced bound subjects together into collectivities? Would these collectivities be ready to continue to work through their discomfort, to keep nagging, asking questions, to keep questioning affective investments? As Ahmed (2004, p. 178) points out:

–This discomfort [...] means not sinking' into the spaces in which we live and work, and it means always questioning our own investments.”

It would be necessary to engage more with the ethical questions around digital storytelling as a post-conflict pedagogy, in particular with what Zembylas (2015, p. 8) terms a “... critical and strategic response to suffering and pain, not in the sense of annulling violence altogether (because that would be impossible), but in terms of minimizing ethical violence and expanding relationality with vulnerable others”. By strategic empathy, he refers to the intentional willingness of a teacher to empathize with the troubled knowledge students carry with them, even and especially when this troubled knowledge is disturbing to other students or to the teacher (Zembylas, 2012a). In my study, I have shown that reflecting on defensiveness is a useful starting point to move towards a critical emotional reflexivity. Would such a strategic empathy be helpful in reducing the defensiveness of students in a digital storytelling workshop? Without defensiveness, how would we be able to recognise and understand how our emotions are socially and historically constructed?

Another area of research is to look at other students' stories, particularly the coloured and the male experience which I have neglected in my study.

Lastly, applying a new theoretical framework might also allow a new reading of my data. Posthuman new materialism, for example, with its belief that practices of knowing and being – what they term ethico-onto-epistemological' (Barad, 2003) – are mutually implicated (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012b), and the emphasis on the material could provide new insights into my study. Their attempt at exploring the intra-actions between bodies, both human and non-human, both inscribed with agency, could add another lens onto the relationship between storyteller and digital story. Barad (2007) sees agency not as something one possesses, but as enactments, and consequently attributes this agency to both nonhuman and human forms. Applying a diffractive methodology, such as reading insights through one another, might also add another layer of understanding when analysing students' stories. Barad defines a diffractive strategy as "reading important insights through one another" (2003, p. 811), and thus reworking concepts that structure these insights or appear in the traditions of thought from which they stem. This would suit my study, where I have tried to marry different theories and disciplinary fields, such as critical pedagogy, critical media studies, critical race studies, cultural and queer theories. Furthermore, their pushing the boundaries in qualitative research in thinking about how to deal with "bodily incursions" (Maclure, 2013, p. 664), the "quasi-linguistic stuff, such as the tears, sneers, sighs, silences, laughter" that are part of interviews – and were part of my study as well – can provide useful ideas for engaging more with the emotional markers of narrative interviews.

Most importantly for this study, however, their view of difference as positive, affirmative and constantly shifting might help move away from the continued establishment of essentialising binaries within a pedagogy of discomfort and allow a fundamental shift in how students conceptualise and experience their engagements across difference.

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Appendix 1: Digital Storytelling Scripts

The story of the „I am what I am“

One of my favourite books when I was a child was Das kleine Ich bin Ich, which means The small I am what I am. It's about a strange little pink creature, with blue hair and long orange ears, that travels the world to discover who it is. It meets all sorts of animals on the way: a frog, horses, fish ... even a hippo; but none of these look like it.

Growing up, I often felt like this little creature. I come from a diverse family. My mom comes from Austria; my dad was born in Italy. So from a very early age my sister and myself experienced what it meant to grow up with two different cultures, two different languages, two different realities. For a long time, I struggled to find my own identity, which for me somehow always meant choosing between my parents' identities: was I more Austrian or more Italian? Was it possible to be a mix of both? For a long time, I couldn't see a way of marrying those two cultures. Those two lifestyles. I was looking for certainties but I couldn't find any. So for a long time, the label I chose for myself, was the one of difference. To be different to others. And to be different meant that I wouldn't have to fit in with expectations, roles, careers.... Feeling different gave me the freedom to leave home and travel. It prevented me from being too attached to people. To a place. This freedom made it possible to have the most amazing experiences, to meet the most amazing people. But it also meant to say good bye to these people, after a while, when it was time to move on. Or to having to start over and over again on my own.

Eventually my adventure led me to one of the most remote places I could have imagined: Botswana. And this place really changed me. It showed me such a beautiful, simple life, a life devoid of distractions, where connecting with people was the only thing that kept you sane. I met the most amazing people there. One professor in particular influenced me. A widely published scholar, who at the same time showed real empathy for his students. He reached out internationally but was also deeply grounded in the local culture. He made me think about the person I wanted to be, what I wanted to do with my life. He showed me that life doesn't have to be an either/or, but can be a both. He made me want to be a teacher, a teacher on my own terms, a teacher who bridges gaps, gaps between the north and the south, gaps between academia and business, gaps between tradition and innovation.

This time in Botswana also made me feel my loneliness as I hadn't experienced it before. A desire to settle and start a family grew in me. And not surprisingly this family is even more diverse than the one I grew up with. But I guess that's my life, my destiny. To create my own family, on my own terms. And not accept anything as given.

So, although my life is anything but a straightforward line, but one of many detours, self-doubts and difficult decisions, it looks like it has taken me where I want to be, at least for the moment. And I feel that each and every detour has taught me something important, something I needed to learn. Learning to accept who I am, a product of both my mother's and my father's family histories, but also of my experiences of travelling, seeing the world, of each and every person I have met on this road. I learnt that I didn't need to label myself as different anymore, but I could accept, that whoever this person was, it was me, like the funny little creature in my favourite children's book, who at the end of the story discovers, that it doesn't have to resemble anybody, but that it is enough to know that it knows itself, and knows that, I am what I am”.

On becoming white

My first digital story ended on a very high note. Gloria Gaynor's I am what I am' provided the title and created a fine ending to my story. A story in which I reflected on what it meant to me to be different. Growing up between two cultures, marrying into a different race, bringing up two children whose identity is in flux and not mine. This story was a hopeful one, one celebrating difference and promoting the idea of bridging worlds, continents, lives ... a rainbow story.

The story stemmed from experiences within Botswana, a country whose first president married a white woman, and for who thus mixed raced families were something to respect, hold precious and celebrate. And then from the UK, where while not always as warm and welcoming as Botswana, there was still a sense that what we were was maybe alien and strange but worth at least a curious glance and acknowledgement.

When I look at my story now, I cringe. After five years in South Africa, I struggle to see difference and especially my whiteness as something to celebrate or to be proud of. My CPUT story would be one of success: over the last five years I have gone from strength to strength. I have published; I have joined national research projects; I have started my PHD; I got promoted; I have become an academic. I perceive CPUT as a place of opportunities, a place of growth for those who reach out for it.

But I also have – maybe for the first time in my life – made intimate acquaintance with the knapsack of being white. I have become white; I have experienced white privilege. While I am proud of what I have achieved, there is a nagging feeling: is this only due to the fact that my skin is the colour white? Does my white entitlement and self-assurance allow me to ask for what I want? Does my white voice demand that people listen to me in meetings, even if they are older and more experienced? Is it my white voice that should be heard?

While my CPUT story is one of maturing, growing and settling into my identity as academic, my private life in South Africa is one of edges, tensions, constant struggles and self-doubt. I live a life among people of colour. I enjoy this. It feels good to reach out to others in a country that still struggles to engage socially across difference. To – in the eyes of others – feel at ease among black people, maybe even to be seen as one of them. But is this comfort and ease not an illusion? In my most intimate relationships, I struggle, I fight, I cause pain and I get hurt; I often become the Other.

I have run out of answers to my younger son asking me why he is the only brown child in the kindergarten, a school that I chose for him to learn my language and my culture; to my older son yearning for my fair skin and straight hair; to myself when I have to question my inability to stand up for my husband when I witness that he is unfairly treated; or to my friend's anger and frustration when I seemingly judge her decision to finally give in to her daughter's pleas for relaxed hair.

I hurt and I inflict hurt; and in this cycle of pain, inflicted over centuries by people who look like me to people of colour, and who have paved the way so that people who look like me can reap the rewards in this country full of sorrow and inequality, I struggle to acknowledge and recognize my own.

Deep down, I know that to move on in this also strikingly beautiful country of – do I have the right to say this? – ours, we would have to acknowledge that we are all wounded and in need for healing. Do I become part of this country through my pain? Recently I came across a quote that struck me to the bone: You cannot hate somebody after you have heard their story. Which story would I tell? The rainbow story is long gone. What story can I tell now? What story can give me an answer to the one question that I am carrying with me: will I ever belong?

Appendix 2: 2013 Course Outline: Digital Storytelling Workshop

Course outline Digital storytelling in Education

28th of August 2013 – 23rd of October 2013

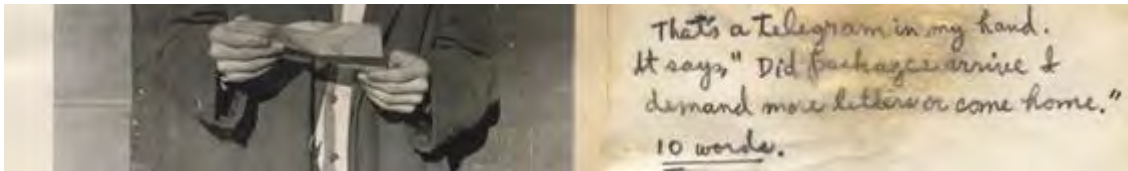
Introduction

Teacher portfolio

As part of the Professional Development Course, fourth year Education students have to develop a final year Teacher portfolio. Since 2010 this teaching portfolio is being developed as a digital story.

Digital stories

The Center for Digital Storytelling at the University of Berkeley (<http://www.storycenter.org>) defines digital stories as:



digital story (dig-i-tal sto-ry)

A short, first person video-narrative created by combining recorded voice, still and moving images, and music or other sounds.

Digital stories in diverse classrooms

Digital stories have been used in diverse classrooms as a way to openly listen, understand and appreciate experiences of students from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. One of the main purposes of digital stories is to give every student, also those who traditionally are silent or at the margins of society, an equal voice. In addition to creating digital stories, we will explore ways of using digital stories and other pedagogical tools, such as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) techniques in a diverse classroom.

Course outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able:

1. To help your students write and edit a personal narrative that reflects an understanding of the complex socio-economic realities that affect today's South African society, and in particular South African's classrooms.
2. To integrate Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) techniques, such as the River of Life, into your teaching
3. To develop a digital story using the software "Photostory" for Windows (or a similar programme)
4. To engage with and support the often complex and discomforting emotional responses that students display when discussing sensible issues such as privilege in a diverse classroom

5. To critically reflect on your story and the process of developing digital stories in diverse classrooms
6. To understand the implications in terms of copyright of using digital images and other digital media found on the Internet in Education and to select media under creative commons license

Assessment and attendance

Assessment of this course consists of the following elements:

- Development of digital story (60%), deadline: Saturday, **19th of October 2013 (screening)**
- Reflective essay (30%), deadline: Wednesday, **23rd of October 2013**
- Attendance (10%) (workshop 1-4)

In addition to development the digital story, you will have to submit a reflective essay at the end of the course in which you critically reflect on your own story and on your experiences in developing your digital story. Rubrics for marking the digital story and the reflective essay will be handed out during the course of the project. The model of digital storytelling we are adopting focuses on the collaborative element of digital storytelling, on the sharing of your story within a group of your peers. We will organize a number of group work activities, such as the River of Life or a story circle, to help you shape your story. Therefore **attendance** in the first four workshops is compulsory and will count for 10% of your course mark.

1. Digital Story brief

Aim: to create a digital story, which reflects on a social issue in South African's Education system, that you are passionate about and have encountered in your journey of becoming a teacher.

In your digital story you will reflect on **one critical incident** that exemplifies the social issue you chose. A critical incident need not be a dramatic event: usually it is an incident which has significance for you. It is often an event which made you stop and think, or one that raised questions for you. It may have made you question an aspect of your beliefs, values, attitude or behaviour. It is an incident which in some way has had a significant impact on your personal and professional learning.

Describe the context of the incident:

1. Describe the actual incident in detail.
2. Explain why the incident was critical or significant for you.
3. Explain your concerns at the time.
4. Describe what you were thinking and feeling as it was taking place, and afterwards.
5. Mention anything particularly demanding about the situation.
6. Explain how the incident impacted on your studies.
7. Place the incident in a broader socio-political and historical context.
8. How else could you look at the incident?
9. Explain how it will impact upon your future role as a teacher.

Guidelines

- Your story should be told as a personal narrative in your own personal voice. The narrative will reflect on a social issue in Education that you have selected, interlinked with your own personal experience of this social issue. The narrative should explain why this social issue is close to your heart.
- You can write your story in any language you want. However you will need to provide an English translation to include subtitles into your digital stories. You will receive help with the translation of your stories.
- The script should be 300-500 words long, and the digital movie not longer than 4 mins.
- Your story should be critically reflective and show honesty and authenticity, in particular regarding the emotions you are trying to convey through your story. Criteria for critical reflection will be negotiated together in class.
- The digital story will incorporate images and sound.
- You need to be aware of copyright infringements and where possible use your own media or media that are licensed under the creative commons license.
- List all your references of media used in your movie, such as images in the film credits (even if they are licensed under the creative commons license)
- You can use any software you like to create your digital story.
- Submission of work: you will submit a folder including the 1. typed copy of your script, 2. The photostory project file, 3. The published movie.

Deadline: 20th of October 2013 (day of screening)

2. Reflective Essay brief

Aim: to write a reflective essay on your experience of the digital story project

In this essay you will reflect on:

- How you experienced the digital storytelling project, e.g. what you liked and didn't like about the digital storytelling project
- What you learnt in this project about yourself and your colleagues
- Whether you think that digital storytelling and other techniques that we will explore during the project will be useful for your own teaching in a diverse classroom

The essay should be max 2 pages long (11 font, 1.5 space).

Deadline: 23rd of October 2013

Project Team

We will try our best to support you during all steps of the project. This is a joint project between the Faculty of Education and Fundani, the Center for Higher Education Development, at CPUT. We will provide technical and pedagogical support, support in writing, editing, performing, creating your stories. In addition to CPUT staff, there will be student support as well.

Course plan

	Topic	Activities	Who	Homework	Location
WS1: 28 08 13, 1 session, 8.30-11.45	Introduction to critical digital storytelling Rules of Engagement Intro in PLA, River of Life	Presentation Discussion River of Life – individual, group Freewriting	DG	Reflection on critical incident / critical incident analysis Reading	1.16
WS2: 04 09 13, 1 session, 8.30-11.45	Pedagogy of discomfort, vulnerability Story circle	Check in Brene Brown video Presentation Sharing of stories Freewriting	DG	First draft of story Reading	1.16
WS3: 18 09 13, 2 sessions, 8.30-11.45 and 13.00- 16.00	Owing your emotions vs sentimentality Critical reflection Storyboarding	Check in Analysis of movies Discussion Scripting Storyboarding	DG	Final draft of story Development of storyboard Reading	1.16
WS4: 25 09 13, 2 sessions, 8.30-11.45 and 13.00- 16.00	Reading images Copyright issues / Creative commons Image taking, collecting and editing	Check in Presentation Sourcing of images	DG / EI	Collect images Reading	Khanya lab
WS5: 02 10 13, 2 sessions,	Photostory	Check in Importing and editing images	DG	Working on digital movie	Khanya lab

8.30-11.45 and 13.00-16.00		Recording			
WS6: 09 10 13, 2 sessions, 8.30-11.45 and 13.00-16.00	Photostory	Check in Recording Transitions Publishing movie	DG	Working on digital movie	Khanya lab
WS7: 16 10 13 2 sessions, 8.30-11.45 and 13.00-16.00	Ethical practice of digital storytelling Photostory	Check in Recording Transitions Publishing movie	DG	Finalising digital movie	Khanya lab
Screening, 19 10 13 9.00-16.00	Screening			Reflective essay	
WS 7: 23 10 13, 1 session, 8.30-11.45	Reflection / debriefing Way forward	Discussion Vision exercise	All		1.16

Extra lab sessions

Extra lab sessions will be offered on the following days:

- Friday 04 10 13, 9.00-13.00
- Friday 11 10 13, 9.00-13.00
- Friday 18 10 13, 9.00-16.00

Compulsory readings

Open the floodgates with emotional stories by Aspen Baker: <http://storycenter.org/blog/2013/7/1/fight-the-flat-open-the-floodgates-with-emotional-stories-by-aspen-baker>

On creating uncomfortable safe spaces for South African conversations by Rebecca Freeth, will be distributed in class

Our unfinished business race and reconciliation by Sisonke Msimang:
<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2013-06-12-our-unfinished-business-race-and-reconciliation/#.UcKV2vr8KMk>

Elizabeth's story by Amy Hill: <http://storycenter.org/blog/2013/7/1/elizabeths-story-by-amy-hill>

How not to be alone by Jonathan Safran Foer:
<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2013/06/09/opinion/sunday/how-not-to-be-alone.html>

Recommended readings

Benmayor, R. (2008). —Digital Storytelling as a Signature Pedagogy for the New Humanities.” Arts and Humanities in Higher Education 7: 188–204. doi:10.1177/1474022208.

Boler, M., & Zembylas, M. (2003). Discomforting Truths: The Emotional Terrain of Understanding Difference. In P. Trifonas (Ed.), *Pedagogies of difference: Rethinking education for social change* (pp. 110–136). New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Bozalek, V. (2011). Acknowledging privilege through encounters with difference: Participatory Learning and Action techniques for decolonising methodologies in Southern contexts. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 14(6), 469–484.

Lambert, J. (2010). *Digital storytelling cookbook. Elements*. Berkeley, CA: Center for Digital Storytelling. <http://www.storycenter.org/storage/publications/cookbook.pdf>

Long, B. (2011). Digital Storytelling and Meaning Making: Critical Reflection , Creativity and Technology in Pre-service Teacher Education. *Proceedings of the Digital storytelling conference* (pp. 1–27). <http://lillehammer2011.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/bonnie-long-conference-paper.pdf>

Robin, B. R. (2008). Digital Storytelling: A Powerful Technology Tool for the 21st Century Classroom. *Teacher*, 220–228.
<http://digitalstorytellingclass.pbworks.com/f/Digital+Storytelling+A+Powerful.pdf>

Robin, B. R. (2005). The Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling. *Elements*.
<http://digitalliteracyintheclassroom.pbworks.com/f/Educ-Uses-DS.pdf>

Rolon-Dow, R., 2011. Race(ing) stories: digital storytelling as a tool for critical race scholarship. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 14(2), pp.159-173. Available at: <http://www.informaworld.com/openurl?genre=article&doi=10.1080/13613324.2010.519975&magic=crossref||D404A21C5BB053405B1A640AFFD44AE3>

Zembylas, M. (2012). Teaching in Higher Education Pedagogies of strategic empathy: navigating through the emotional complexities of anti-racism in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, (April), 37–41. <http://www.conspireforchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/ZembylasStrategicEmpathy-1.pdf>

Appendix 3: Additional elements for a critical digital storytelling process

Element 1: Theatre of the oppressed

The theatre of the oppressed, developed by the critical pedagogue Augusto Boal (2000), is a set of games for actors and non-actors meant to prompt a reflection on power. These games allow students to become aware of the socially constructed character of the oppressed. In a series of mainly non-verbal activities (in pairs or groups), led by a facilitator, students experience what it means to lead and to be led, how some activities necessitate a leader and some don't, how leaders establish themselves naturally, and the power of communication. By reflecting on these activities, students realize that power is not something that somebody holds, but that it is relationally negotiated, through persuasion, acquiescence or resistance. They also realize that even the most mundane aspects of an interaction seem to follow a certain script, regulated by a social code. As such it is a pedagogical technique that can help make the difficult transition from critical theory to practice, by combining critical pedagogy with interactive performance practice. The game I introduced to students was a role-play, in which students improvised a play depicting social issues in education to start a brainstorming process on topics for their digital stories. These activities overcome the limitations of disembodied forms of knowledge by allowing students to learn about power experientially: *through their flesh*, their bodies (Gomez Albarello, 2007).



Figure 4: Noni and I performing the „Theatre of the oppressed“

Element 2: PLA techniques

Participatory learning and action (PLA) techniques – such as community maps or the River of life’ – are open-ended, flexible visual learning methods, that allow students with diverse academic literacy levels to explore how they have been placed in relation to resources and the privilege and harm emerging from their positioning in relation to resources in the light of their own experiences” (Bozalek, 2011, p. 475). This is done both on their own and in dialogue with their peers. By focusing on visual literacies as opposed to written modes and academic discourse, power relations can be decentred (Leibowitz, *et al.*, 2010).

One application of these techniques is that they can promote critical reflection on social arrangements of inequality and privilege (Bozalek, 2011). Of particular importance is the

collaborative interaction PLA techniques provide, allowing differently positioned students to share their perspectives and to engage with one another's background (Bozalek & Biersteker, 2010, p. 554). Furthermore, PLA techniques start the process of positioning oneself as vulnerable, which is one way of opening up opportunities to deeply connect across difference. The particular PLA techniques chosen for this project are the River of life – placed at the beginning of the process – and a Vision exercise – placed right at the end of the process.

In the River of life, students draw their own life journeys on flipchart paper, visually representing/indicating critical moments in their journey to becoming teachers. One of the exercises do is to link the social issue they may develop in the theatre of the oppressed exercise to their own personal life, thus moving from the general to the specific. After creating their Rivers of Life individually, students share these drawings with a randomly selected group. I have seen that this is a first moment of discomfort for many students. For many students, opening up to their peers about their personal lives, which they have often kept apart from their academic space, is difficult; and some resist this process more or less openly. Facilitators have to consider some of the implications of such a potentially evocative activity and discuss among themselves how best to support students. Based on my previous experience, I believe that trusting the group process is useful and helpful in supporting students.

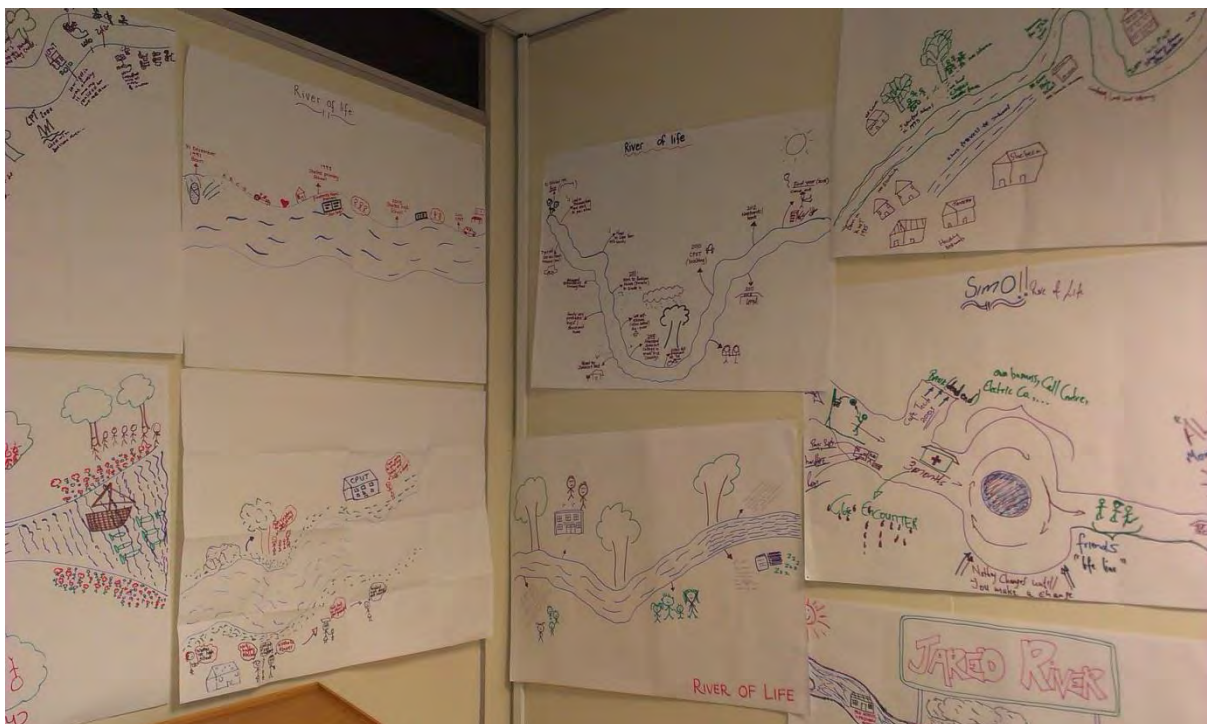


Figure 5: „Rivers of Life“ created during the workshop



Figure 6: Noni sharing her „River of Life“

The ‘Vision exercise‘, one of the last exercises of the process, allowed a visual representation of personal growth and learning. In groups and using all sorts of craft materials (such as paper, play dough, stems and pom-poms), students were asked to visually represent a social system that they belong to. They then discussed ways of improving/changing this system in their group. In my project, both groups chose schools as their social system, and discussed how to counter some of the inequalities encountered in the current South African school system.



Figure 7: „Vision exercise“

Element 3: Counterstorytelling and critical media literacy

One of the most powerful tools of feminist pedagogy and in critical pedagogy is a person's voice, a person's story. As I have discussed in chapter 4, my definition of critical storytelling differs from CRT's notion of counterstorytelling. I aim to give voice to all students, not only normally silenced people, and to reflect how we are *all* products of hegemonic discourse. To help students understand the concept of counterstorytelling, I showed various stories in which stereotypes were reversed, and led them into a discussion on how these sorts of

stories impacted on the audience. Example of counterstories showed are: SABC1 racial perspective advert <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcWsTwvtyOI> and Nando's diversity advert <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7vu9SuxaQ>



Figure 8: Scenes from the SABC reverse racism ad

The images students choose for their digital stories are powerful vehicles for counterstorytelling. One way to combat sentimentality and tell counterstories, is to look at a story through a critical media literacy lens. Kellner and Share (2005) highlight the importance of embedding critical media literacy into teaching and learning: by analysing media culture as product of social production and struggle, by teaching students to be critical of media representations and discourses, but also by stressing the importance of learning to use the media for self-expression and social activism. Again, by showing students images of stereotypical and counter-stereotypical depictions of e.g. roles in a relationship, discussing and reflecting on these, I aimed to facilitate a more critical approach to selecting the kinds of images students used in their own stories.



Figure 9: Images used to show stereotypical and non-stereotypical usage of images

Element 4: Owning your emotions vs sentimentality

A focus of my study is to make students aware of the fine balance between authentic emotional engagement with their own and one another's narratives, and the risk of sentimentality. By showing different digital stories that led to different emotional engagements in students, discussing and reflecting on this, I aimed to enhance students' awareness of their audience; their own ideas of what they would like to achieve with their digital stories and consequently promote more careful design of the emotional content of their stories. As an activity to enable students to reflect on the emotional impact of the different modes of a digital story (such as narrative, sound, images and voice), we analysed and compared two stories developed in previous years, Rafiq and Haley's story (see link). As an excellent example illustrating the power of multimodality to manipulate emotions, I also shared Ikea's "#s a lamp" advert (<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=I07xDdFMdgw>).



Figure 10: Images of the Ikea ad

Element 5: Freewriting/journaling

At the end of every workshop day, students were asked to freewrite/journal about their experiences/feelings/thoughts on the processes of the day. They kept this journal over the course of the project. Freewriting is a writing technique that allows one to write without the internal and external censor that often limits our creativity. Freewriting is short, usually timed to ten minutes, with the instructions that the writer not bother about grammar, syntax and logic, but write about anything that comes to mind without stopping. As Elbow (1989, p. 48) explains:

–This kind of freewriting is precious to me because my mind seems to work best - at the level of ideas as well as of syntax – when I allow it to be uncontrolled and disorganized. I cannot find as many ideas or perceptions if I try to stay on one track or be organized. And the not-stopping seems to build mental momentum – helps me get wound up or get rolling so that more ideas come.”

In particular, freewriting helps students who struggle with academic literacy to lose their fear of the written word. I have found it a useful exercise in the digital storytelling process to start a student's scriptwriting process. However, I also encouraged students to keep an emotional journal throughout the course of the eight-week project to capture their thoughts and feelings about the process, which some of them took up.

Element 6: Critical texts

Students were encouraged to engage with critical readings in their own time beyond the workshop, and discussed these texts during the check in at the beginning of every workshop. Authors such as Benmayor (2008), Bozalek *et al.* (2010) and Aveling (2006) argue that critical readings can – beyond triggering memories and emotions – help students theorize their own stories against these readings: “personal experience becomes theorized, situated” (Benmayor, 2008, p. 159). Within the digital storytelling context, Benmayor suggests that the multimedia process enhances student's understanding of what it means to theorize their own identities 'from the flesh', by combining experiential, emotional learning with an intellectual analysis based on the reading of critical texts. My hope was that by engaging with carefully selected articles students would be able to frame and set their stories in a the larger socio-cultural and historical context, and interrogate their own assumptions and beliefs (Bozalek & Carolissen, 2012). I decided to use newspaper articles and blog posts rather than academic papers to allow an easier engagement with these issues for students who were already under major pressure due to the timing of the project at the end of the final year of studies.

Examples of these critical texts:

- Open the floodgates with emotional stories' by Aspen Baker:
<http://storycenter.org/blog/2013/7/1/fight-the-flat-open-the-floodgates-with-emotional-stories-by-aspen-baker>
- On creating uncomfortable, safe spaces for South African conversations' by Rebecca Freeth (2012)
- Our unfinished business race and reconciliation' by Sisonke Msimang:
<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2013-06-12-our-unfinished-business-race-and-reconciliation/#.UcKV2vr8KMk>
- How not to be alone' by Jonathan Safran Foer:
<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2013/06/09/opinion/sunday/how-not-to-be-alone.html>

- Elizabeth's story' by Amy Hill: <http://storycenter.org/blog/2013/7/1/elizabeths-story-by-amy-hill>

Element 7: Dialogue

Check-in sessions, in which students reflected on these critical texts, became spaces for dialogue. By dialogue, I mean a safe space where participants can explore sensitive issues such as race and sexuality, in a way that allows open discussion. These are spaces where participants can be vulnerable and where power relations and dynamics are openly acknowledged and reflected upon. In particular in South Africa, authors such as Freeth (2013) or Gobodo-Madikizela (2008) argue that these spaces are essential to overcome racial divides. The dialogue I intended to create was based on hooks's (2000a) consciousness-raising groups', which consisted of regular encounters of women of all classes and backgrounds who came together to engage in conversation and debates around the issue of gender. Communication and dialogues were at the heart of these conversations. They presented a non-hierarchical model for discussion, in which every voice was honoured, women took turns to speak, and argumentative discussion was used to clarify collective understanding: "only through discussion and disagreement could we begin to find a realistic standpoint on gender exploitation and oppression" (p.8). However, it is important to mention that contrary to the usual consciousness-raising groups, which usually meet regularly over a prolonged period of time, my students only dialogued' over the course of the five-day workshop and in weekly follow-up sessions during the course of the eight-week project. Furthermore, their participation in these dialogues was not completely voluntary as they were part of the digital storytelling workshop. This might explain why resistance and defensiveness in and to these dialogues was high in some students, as I explore when engaging with Research Question 1, where I analyse how students construct narrative identities in these conversations.

Appendix 4: Seven steps of digital storytelling

1. *Owning your insights:* Digital stories developed in the digital storytelling process as developed by the CDS are first personal narratives, which have the specific purpose of helping both the storytelling and the story listener to learn more about themselves. They are stories of self-discovery, growth and reflection. Thus, the first step in the digital storytelling process is aimed to help the storytelling find the one story that he or she has to tell in that specific moment. The storyteller should be conscious about why he or she has chosen to this specific story and how that story can reveal the story listener more about the person himself. To do so the facilitator of a digital storytelling process asks specific questions: What makes it your version of the story? How does this story show who you are? And how does this story show why you are who you are? Storytellers need to be conscious about the audience, about what they want to achieve with their stories, not just for themselves but also for the story listeners.
2. *Owning your emotions:* A strong focus of the digital storytelling process is for participants to become conscious of the often complex emotions that are evoked when trying to decide which story to tell and how to tell this story. Lambert argues that by owning your emotions and sharing them honestly with the audience, the audience will be able to understand the core of a story, be able to connect to a person's story. However, when emotions are exaggerated, when the audience listens to a story that has an exaggerated tug on emotions, they will also experience this story as dishonest. Thus, storytellers have to think carefully what emotions to convey, which emotions to exclude and be conscious of the reasons for excluding those emotions. Lambert also reflects on the contextuality of stories and the importance of being aware of cultural sensitivities of the storytelling and listener when drafting stories. Questions to be asked are: As you shared your story, or story idea, what emotions did you experience? Can you identify at what points in sharing your story you felt certain emotions? If you experienced more than one emotion, were they contrasting?, Which emotions will best help the audience understand the journey contained within your story? Is there an overall tone that captures a central theme? Can you convey your emotions without directly using feeling words or relying on clichés to describe them? For example, how can you imply the idea of happiness without saying, I felt happy?
3. *Finding the moment:* Digital stories are short. To convey the meaning of a story, storytellers are asked to find a specific moment in time that is representative for the kind of story they would like to tell. Questions to be asked are: What was the moment when things changed? Were you aware of it at the time? If not, what was the moment you became aware that things had changed? Is there more than one possible moment to choose from? If so, do they convey different meanings? Which most accurately conveys the meaning in your story? Can you describe the moment in detail? This moment of change doesn't necessarily have to be a dramatic moment, it can often go unnoticed by the storyteller and the facilitators and other participants in the workshop can help the storyteller chose the moment. It is often very hard for storytellers to choose from many important moments, the one that will distill their

story. It is important to carefully select the scenes that will make up a story. Lambert emphasizes that storytellers need to also think about the ending of their story – while the genre of a narrative compels a storytelling to find some sort of closure for his/her story, it is often the more open-ended story that is most powerful in intriguing and engaging the audience, interesting in light of Poletti's (2011) critique of the digital storytelling genre.

4. *Seeing your story*: Digital stories are multimodal. Storytellers not only tell their story through their written and later spoken narrative, but also through images, sound and pacing of the movie. Therefore the next step after scripting a story is to find images that could support a story's narrative. Facilitators ask participants about the kind of images that come to mind when thinking about their story, about images that can help the audience to make sense of a story. Participants discuss various ways to convey emotions, for example by using explicit or implicit imagery, visual metaphors or juxtaposition. Implicit imagery helps more complex meanings beyond the literal/explicit meaning of an image. Questions to be asked are: What images come to mind when recalling the moment of change in the story? What images come to mind for other parts of the story? Why this image? What is it conveying to you? Is the meaning explicit or implicit? Does it have more than one meaning? If so, can you describe the multiple meanings?
5. *Hearing your story*: The focus on personal narratives in the CDS digital storytelling model, highlights the importance of a personal narration of the narrative as part of a digital story. A person's voice captures his/her essence, origins, cultural and linguistic background. Storytellers can impact on a story's feel by pacing their narration, by focusing on the rhythm, allowing for natural breaks, for storylisteners to have the space to conjure associated memories and reflect on how a story can resonate with one own's life. Part of this step is also consideration around background music, which are highly influential on the atmospheric context of a story.
6. *Assembling your story*: In this step storytellers write their scripts, which means structuring their stories and develop a storyboard, identifying images that will support their narrative. To focus storytellers, guidelines for scripts and images are helpful, as Lambert explains (2013, p. 67): a word count of 250-375, and fewer than twenty images ... helps the storyteller figure out what's most important in his or her story, while also helping to organize their time in the production process'. Part of this step is also reflecting on pacing one's story: a fast pace conveys different meaning from a slower, more reflective pace. It seems as if the CDS' digital stories in general follow a slower pace: A adjusting the pace of your story provides an opportunity for the audience to listen more clearly. Stories can move along at an even pace, stop to take a deep breath, and then proceed. Creating space for silence, for example, provides the audience with time for all layers of the story to be absorbed'.
7. *Sharing your story*: The final part of the digital storytelling process is the screening of a story among workshop participants. It is often a very emotional process, where participants feel their vulnerability but also the pride of being able to create and share a story, that is personal and important to themselves. Participants often introduce their digital story by providing context and rationale for the choice of this story. Part of

sharing your story are also questions around further dissemination of stories on institutional websites, on YouTube or other means of sharing, such as through mobile phones or on CDs/DVDs. The strong focus on social change by the CDS makes it important to allow the sharing of stories outside the immediate workshop, in particular if stories have a strong advocacy background. Stories of healing might be less powerful outside their original context of a digital storytelling workshop, as for example stories for advocacy (Reed & Hill, 2012) losing meaning in the anonymous space of a website without the backstory shared in the workshop space. Again consideration about the audience may change final edits of a story.

Appendix 5: Consent form

Daniela Gachago
Educational Technology Unit, Fundani

gachagod@cput.ac.za
460-3795

Cape Town, 12th of June 2013

TO ISP EDUCATION STUDENTS

Dear student,

Daniela Gachago, from the Educational Technology Unit in Fundani, in collaboration with your lecturer Prof Janet Condy and other researchers, is conducting a research project on the use of Digital Storytelling at CPUT as part of her PHD. This letter is to ask you whether you would be prepared to take part in this research project.

In your response, please consider the following:

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to explore various models of integrating digital stories into the curriculum.

Procedures: We wish to ask you for permission to use the data from the various feedback you gave in and outside class, such as surveys, interviews and focus group discussions and the digital movie and other artifacts you produced as part of this project.

The right to withdraw: You may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You can also refuse to answer any questions that you don't want to answer in the interview or withdraw from giving permission to use any of your materials or specific materials. If you wish to withdraw during the debriefing interview at the end of the course, you may also do so. In the event of psychological discomfort, you may be referred to appropriate professional services.

Confidentiality: Any information which is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by use of pseudonyms in publications. Furthermore, any background information that will make identification possible will not be included in any academic paper or public document. With regard to the artefacts and the interviews conducted, you will have the right to review the data to be used and to edit any information which pertains to you. However, since your digital stories will form an important part of this research, confidentiality might not always be complete, since your digital story may be part of the actual reporting and dissemination of the findings. Please be aware of this when signing the release form for your digital story.

Remuneration for participation: You will not be remunerated for participating in the project.

Identification of principal researcher and members of the development team: The contact details of the principal researcher and the identities of other members of the development team are known to you and you may feel free to contact any of us at any time you wish to if you have questions relating to your participation in the action research project.

We subscribe the core principles of ethical practice in digital storytelling, as developed by the Center for Digital Storytelling (<http://www.storycenter.org/ethical-practice/>), which you can find

in the appendix to this document and which we will discuss in our workshop.

Consent form

I, _____ give the researchers mentioned above permission to use the material which has been generated during the course of my participation in the project and the data that was collected through: my digital movie, surveys, my participation in focus group discussion and interviews.

I understand that those involved in planning and implementing this joint module are intending to share the work generated in the module in the form of a PHD thesis, publications and conference presentations. Whether or not to give this permission is a personal decision, and it is entirely voluntary. There will be no rewards for giving this permission, as there will of course be no penalty for refusing it. I have the right to withdraw your permission at a later stage – so long as it is prior to any publication which the researchers produce – and the researcher/s then refrain from including my materials in their research. My own identity or that of any other person included in my materials will be protected as much as possible (if you allow us to use your digital story as part of our research, complete anonymity might not always be possible).

I also understand that: (please tick to show that you agree to this point)

- The researchers may use audio taped materials generated as part of this study only and not for any other purpose (eg in interviews and focus groups).
- The researchers may use video taped materials generated as part of this study only and not for any other purpose (eg in interviews and focus groups).
- The researchers may use written materials generated as part of this study only and not for any other purpose (eg reflective essays, emotional journal, digital story script).
- The researchers may use my digital story (including images) as part of this study only and not for any other purpose.
- The findings from the research may be published as a PHD thesis, in institutional reports, academic journals, books and book chapters and presented at academic conferences.

My signature below indicates my permission to use the material I have generated in the 2013 ISP Education – digital storytelling project.

Signed at _____ (Place) on _____
(Date)

_____(Signature)

Appendix 6: Release form for digital story

Release Form for Digital Story

Instructions: Please review and complete this form and return the original copy to Daniela Gachago, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town campus, P O Box 652, Cape Town, 8000. If you have any questions contact Daniela Gachago at 021 460 3795 or by Email: GachagoD@cput.ac.za . Thank you for your involvement in and support of this project!

I, the undersigned _____ (please print your name), grant the researchers in the Digital Storytelling Project to use all or part of our final digital story (title of story: _____) during a public screening during training, education and/or other prevention events. Additionally, I authorize the researchers to use or distribute all or part of my final digital storytelling project for the following promotional and educational uses. (Please write your initials next to each option that you agree to). I understand that by initialing and signing this form, I voluntarily and knowingly agree and consent to include my digital story, my script or images:

- in the PHD thesis publication (e.g. on an accompanying CD-Rom)
- in Teaching and Learning, classroom and community settings,
- in Educational research, trainings and conferences;
- to feature on the collaborating organizations' web sites or blogs;
- in the CPUT Digital Story Repository (<http://www.youtube.com/user/cputstories>)

By entering into this agreement, I as well as my representatives, successors and assigns, release and forever hold harmless the Digital Storytelling Collaborators (listed above) from any and all claims, demands, damages, losses, obligations, rights and causes of action, whether known or unknown, including but not limited to, all claims, causes of action that I now have or may have against the Collaborators relating in any way to this volunteer activity.

Signature _____

Date _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Core Principles for Ethical Practice in Digital Storytelling

Source: <http://www.storycenter.org/ethical-practice/>

Introduction

Digital stories can do many things, including celebrate triumphs, preserve memories, and help storytellers unearth and integrate painful experiences. At the Center for Digital Storytelling, we are strongly committed to high ethical standards for our own work and within the larger global community of digital storytelling practitioners. The following principles are intended as an evolving set of recommendations for ethical practice in digital storytelling. We recognize that the ethical considerations arising within each project and storytelling workshop are unique. As with all such statements of principle, this one is shaped to protect those who are at greatest risk. It grows out of the practices of countless allied professionals working across sectors of health, human services, and human rights. We hope that you will engage in a dialogue with us about how best to ensure the safety and dignity of digital storytellers worldwide

Well-Being. Storytellers' physical, emotional, social, and spiritual wellbeing should be at the center of all phases of a project. The *process* of creating stories within a workshop is as important as the *end products* (media pieces) resulting from the workshop. Strategies to ensure the wellbeing of vulnerable participants are particularly important; the digital storytelling process is not appropriate for individuals currently experiencing strong symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Those storytellers who are sharing stories about especially painful life experiences should be supported in approaching their narratives from a position of strength rather than from a vantage point that reinforces victimization. Facilitators should maintain appropriate boundaries at all times while remaining open to processes of listening and understanding.

Informed Choices. Storytellers must have the ability to make informed choices about the content, production, and use of their work. Storytellers should be provided with the information they need to make these choices and should have the right to withdraw their stories from public circulation at any time, recognizing the constraints of withdrawal from Internet forms of distribution. Facilitators must strive to offer guidance in these decision-making processes in a way that protects the dignity and safety of storytellers.

Ownership. Storytellers have the right to freedom of expression in representing themselves, in their stories. They should be provided with the space and flexibility to describe what they have experienced, within the parameters or thematic concerns of a given project, and without being coerced or censored. If they so desire, storytellers should be engaged in outlining context and messages for their stories and in determining where, why, and how their stories will be distributed. Storytellers have the right to determine whether or not their names are attached to their stories and whether images of themselves / others are blurred to protect privacy. Storytellers and facilitators must

agree to maintain confidentiality about information and materials that are shared in a workshop but that may not make it into publicly circulated stories.

Local Relevance. The digital storytelling process should be sensitive and appropriate to the local context of a given project. Facilitators should work with local partners – and, where possible, engage the assistance of local teaching assistants. Workshop facilitators should follow the principles of cultural humility and, to the extent possible, workshops should be conducted in local languages with assistance from facilitators who are –cultural insiders.” Methods should be adapted to fit local technological resources and capacities, emphasizing always the importance of first-person voice, group process, and participatory production.

Ethics as Process. Facilitators should view ethics as a process, rather than as a one-off occasion of –gaining consent.” Ongoing dialogue between storytellers, staff members, and partner organizations/institutions about how best to design and implement an ethically responsible project is key to ethical practice. Discussion and decision-making about the responsible distribution of stories should be a key aspect of this dialogue.

Digital Storyteller’s Bill of Rights

In relation to a workshop, you have ...

- The right to know from the outset *why* a workshop is being carried out.
- The right to assistance in deciding whether you are ready to produce a digital story.
- The right to understand what is involved in the process of producing a digital story.
- The right to know who might view your finished story, after the digital storytelling workshop.
- The right to decide for yourself whether or not to participate in a workshop.
- The right to ask questions at any stage of the workshop, before, during, or after.
- The right to ask for teaching instructions to be repeated or made clearer.
- The right to skilled emotional support, if your experience of making a story is emotionally challenging.
- The right to tell your story in the way you want, within the limits of the workshop.
- The right to decide whether or not to reveal private or personal information to fellow participants and instructors, at the workshop.
- The right to advice about whether revealing your identity or other personal details about your life, in your story, may place you at risk of harm.
- The right to leave information and/or photographs that identify you or others, out of your final story.
- The right to reject story feedback (about words and images) if it is not useful or offered in a spirit of respect/support.
- The right to decide what language to use in telling/creating your story.
- The right to be respected and supported by capable workshop facilitators.

- The right to a written consent form, if your story will be shared publicly, including a signed copy for your records.
- The right to know what contact and support you can expect after the workshop

In relation to sharing your digital story after a workshop, you have ...

- The right to decide with project partners how your story will be shared.
- The right to view and retain a copy of your story before it is shared publicly in any way.
- The right to know who is likely to screen your story and for what purposes.
- The right to know who is likely to watch or read your story and when (e.g. rough timeframe).
- The right to advice about how the process of publically sharing your story may be difficult.
- The right to emotional support if you are present when your story is shown in public.
- The right to demand that no one should be able to sell your story for profit.
- The right to know if any money will be made from your story being shared (e.g. to support not-for-profit human rights work).
- The right to withdraw your consent for the use of your story at any time.
- The right to information about the limits of withdrawing consent for your story to be shared, if it has already been circulated online or on CD, DVD, etc.

Special thanks to Aline Gubrium, Lucy Harding, Amy Hill, Photovoice UK, and WITNESS for their important contributions to these principles.

Appendix 7: Representational, interactional and compositional meaning

Representational meaning

The *representational* meaning of images refers to both the *narrative* representation, what's happening in the image or multimodal text, what are the participants depicted doing, ---. the unfolding of actions, events, or processes of change" (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p. 141) and the *conceptual* patterns, referring to the meaning behind the image, as ---. being something, or meaning something, or belonging to some category, or having certain characteristics or components" (*ibid.*).

Interactional meaning

The *interactional* meaning of images looks at the how images create relationships to the viewer and the world inside the pictures. There are three key elements in this dimension: contact, distance and point of view (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p. 145).

Contact or *gaze* refers to how participants in a picture look at the audience. As in the semiotic speech analysis domain, one can distinguish between four different approaches of interaction: statements, questions, demands and offerings. A direct look at the audience would for example be categorised as a *demand* picture by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p. 118), and would imply the expectation of some reaction from the viewer; to take a stand about an issue, or so on. The subject in the image would typically look straight into the camera or towards the viewer, eliciting a response: ---. the participant's gaze (and the gesture, if present) demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her". What this demand is depends, among other things, on a participant's facial expression – it could be deference or pity. In the case of *offer* pictures, where the audience would observe participants in the picture in a more detached way and more impersonally: ---. it offers' the represented participants to the viewer as items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 119).

Similarly, *distance*, also affects relationships between participants in an image and the viewers. Images can be placed on a continuum from close personal distance to public distance: --To see people close up is to see them in the way we would normally only see people with whom we are more or less intimately acquainted...to see people from a distance is to see them in the way we would normally only see strangers" (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p. 146). The main categories here are close ups, signifying intimate relationships, medium shots signifying social relationships and long shots suggesting impersonal relationships. This social distance can also be applied to objects in the image (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Point of view or perspective again can be used to establish audience identification and involvement. Kress and Van Leuwen (2006, p. 134) distinguish between horizontal and vertical angle. *Horizontal angle*, a function of the relation between the frontal plane of the image-producer and the frontal plane of the represented participants" (ibid) can be parallel, aligned with each other or at an angle, diverging from each other. The former increases the viewer's empathy with and direct involvement, while the latter suggest detachment and lack of involvement. *Vertical angle* is concerned with power, status and solidarity relations between the viewer and the depicted world in the picture, a low angle suggesting power of the participant in the image over the viewer/producer of the image, while a high angle suggest power of the participant in the picture over the viewer/producer of the image. An image at eye level represents a view of equality; hence no power differential is involved. So would a bird's eye view, for instance, convey a feeling of disconnect and distance, while an extreme low angle would elicit a feeling of inferiority and inadequacy.

Compositional meaning

Compositional meaning refers to any way of conveying a certain emotion by way of image quality, placement, use of colour or angle and level of eye contact (for instance), that influences or manipulates the value that a recipient would ascribe to that communication. This relates to the layout, placement and relative salience of an image, text and other multimodal elements of a text, which in total allow us to recognize this text as a specific genre: "... the composition of the whole, the way in which the representational and interactive elements are made to relate to each other, the way they are integrated into a meaningful whole" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 176). Kress and Leeuwen (2006, p. 177) suggest three resources of compositional meaning: information value, salience and framing.

Information value refers to the placement of elements (both participants and objects that relate them to each other and to the viewer) which endows them with specific informational values attached to the various zones of the image: left and right, top and bottom, centre and margin. Left/right orientation creates a given-new structure, elements placed on the left are represented as given, while elements placed on the rights are new. Top/bottom orientation refers to the ideal (idealised, generalised information) vs. the real (down to earth information, more specific information). Centrality is another important notion here and refers to the person or object that is placed in the centre of the image and holds elements together.

Salience refers to "... the most eye-catching element in the composition" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 176). Different levels of salience are realized by such factors as placement in the foreground or background, relative size, contrasts in tonal value (or colour), differences in sharpness, etc.

Framing: The presence or absence of framing devices (realized by elements which create dividing lines, or by actual frame lines) disconnects or connects elements of the image, signifying that they belong or do not belong together in some sense.

Baldry and Thibaut (2006, p. 82) summarise the information value of images in the following way:

Table 15: Information value of images

<p>TOP LEFT</p> <p>Ideal/given</p> <p>Saliency: median</p> <p>Importance: high</p>	<p>TOP RIGHT</p> <p>Ideal/new</p> <p>Saliency: high</p> <p>Importance: high</p>
<p>BOTTOM LEFT</p> <p>Real/given</p> <p>Saliency: low</p> <p>Importance: low</p>	<p>BOTTOM RIGHT</p> <p>Real/new</p> <p>Saliency: median</p> <p>Importance: low</p>

Appendix 8: Summary of digital stories

Student name	Gender	Race	Title of Story	Content
Noni	Female	Black	Will you listen to me?	Lack of engagement across difference and lack of recognition of white privilege in South Africa today. Plead for dialogue.
Vuyelwa	Female	Black	New beginnings	Reflection on practice of labelling learners at school. Her own life as daughter of a single black mother. Her challenges at school. The role of the one teacher that treated her differently. That saw her talent and supported her, showed her that school can be a place to grow rather than a place that belittles you.
Beatrice	Female	White	Letters to teacher	Reflection on her own self doubts, challenges she encountered in the recent past, such as divorce, coming to terms to life as a single mother. Contrasted with reaffirmation from her learners, through the letters she receives at the end of teaching practice.
Lauren	Female	White	Stereotypes	Coming to terms with her sexuality in the context of white, conservative family and society.
Nazma	Female	Coloured	My story	Reflection on role of teachers, in particular responsibility towards poor learners. How far does one's responsibility go? Influence of Muslim family which tells her that it isn't her role to support learners beyond the classroom.
Michael	Male	White	I am..	Reflection on his own growing awareness about the importance of the teacher as social justice educators. Experiences that shaped him as a teacher, the growing knowledge about important role that teachers play vs the lack of societal recognition for teachers.
Siyabonga	Male	Black	Education is my weapon	Reflection on growing up in rural Eastern Cape. Violence in family. Recognition of being different. Education as way out of poverty. Awakening of passion of human rights education.
George	Male	Black	Broken fences	Reflection on life as a teacher from the townships. After apartheid with integration of schools, learners from townships have access to better schools. However, this is a double edged sword, as education can also alienate children from community. Importance of choice of school for children's education but also understanding of self and other. His own decision to go back to teach in the township. But to which school will he send his own children?
Rachel	Female	White	Being the difference	Role of teacher in learners' lives. Teaching as a calling. Teachers can change children's lives.

Appendix 9: Small stories

Conversation 1: Debrief after „River of Life“(day 1)

Story 1: Noni (38.40–39.29)

- 1 I have a friend who is from the USA, who was here for a year. (*looking down*)
2 was like: you guys claim to be the rainbow nation. (*looking at white students*)
3 But you are not building relationships with other races.
4 I am like: ah, ah. (*grimacing*)
5 He is like: trust me, I know what I am talking about.
6 He was friends with like a few whites and then a black girl and a few coloureds. (*looking at Beatrice*)
7 And he is like:
8 Whenever he was with the black friend, (*looking down*)
9 the white friends would be like: emmm we see you later.
10 And then whenever he was with the white friends,
11 the black friend was like: listen Connor, I will call you later. (*looking towards white students*)
12 So he is like: as much as we claim to be rainbow nation, (*looking towards Michael*)
13 we are not doing anything about it. (*Beatrice nodding*)
14 We are not trying to be the rainbow. (*shaking head, gesture of resignation, giving up*)

Story 2: Vuyelwa (39.33)

- 1 I think being in the same area, or in the same institution,
2 has changed a lot of people.
3 People who grew up in the township,
4 we had different perspective.
5 We would say: Ok, that person is white, so we can't speak to that person.
6 Like we have to respect them, all the stuff.
7 Because we don't have the same skin colour,
8 so you can't speak to them.

Conversation 2: Sentimentality vs Critical Reflection (day 2)

Story 3: Beatrice (app 25.00)

- 1 When I came to the University for the very first time,
2 that first week was hell.
3 The first person who actually reached out to me was a black lady — ~~Am~~ "Amess".
4 She was very thin at the time (*E. Laughs*).
5 She told me that she had dropped out so many times before,
6 but this time she was going to stick it out.
7 I remember telling her that I am so proud of you.
8 And not even knowing her very well, she said to me: So tell me your story.
9 And I just told her my story and then she told me her story.
10 And I have such a deep appreciation for her for making the first move,
11 because I felt intimidated by all these young people.
12 And I felt like overwhelmed: their first thought might be, what is that parent doing here?
13 I didn't reach out to anybody.
14 Not voluntarily, because I was protecting myself and it amazed me.
15 I am a people loving person, but I lived a very sheltered life,
16 and didn't expose myself to many experiences, because I wanted to be safe.
17 You see?
18 And just to have her ask me: tell me your story!
19 Then I go: Oops... here we go, this is why I am here.
20 And we have a very good relationship today.
21 Four years later, we don't visit one another but we understand one another.
22 We don't visit on each other's doorsteps but we certainly do understand one another.

Story 4: Vuyelwa (16.59)

1 To speak in front of a large group is difficult.
2 not being an English speaker,
3 most of the time you feel like,
4 I don't know, how I can explain this?
5 Sometimes you wanna say something,
6 but you don't know how to say it from our side.
7 Because sometimes you do wanna say something
8 But we start saying it after the class:
9 Did you hear what Michael said? (*everybody laughs*)
10 Did you hear who and who said - whooooo ...
11 I would have said that, I would have done that but...
12 Even Michael asked me one time:
13 Vuyelwa, I can see that you are a nice person and all the stuff.
14 But why can't you sit next to us because you can speak?
15 And you can do that and that.
16 And I said to him:
17 No, sometimes in life you want to sit with the group of people that you know.
18 Michael I can smile with you and talk with you, make jokes with you.
19 But even though I can do that,
20 I feel much safer when I am with that group.
21 And I can speak freely when I am in their group.
22 Maybe if I speak to you guys mostly,
23 you gonna say ah ah...
24 I never went through that or I don't have the same feeling like that person.
25 But speaking to those groups of people that I have spoken to,
26 they went through the same thing as me and I feel more connected with them.

Story 5: Noni (27.47)

1 I think we all have preconceived assumptions, (*looking down*)
2 ideas about who everybody else is.
3 We don't give ourselves the chance to get to know each other. (*Vuyelwa: Yeah*)
4 For instance - whatever we say stays here right (*everybody laughing*)
5 I remember, when you [*addressing Michael*] wanted to be in the SRC. (*Michael: you asked...*)
6 I remember you had to sign a petition.
7 He had to gather a whole lot of signatures.
8 And I took his thing,
9 and I was like going to every black students to sign.
10 Some of them were like:
11 No, Michael is white (*Noni posing as arrogant, black students, Noni and Vuyelwa laughing*).
12 I am not gonna sign, you know.
13 So because we don't know each other,
14 and we don't know who this person is,
15 we never, this country will never gonna go anywhere.
16 Because we are afraid of what we don't know,
17 but if we knew who that person was,
18 we would gonna be like ,
19 of course let me sign (*everybody laughing*).
20 *Rachel: you need to get to know the person not just on the outside.*

Story 6: Siyabonga (31.19–32.44)

1 Another thing with Capetonians: (*Vuyelwa laughing, resigned hand gesture*)
2 They have their own minds. (*Vuyelwa laughing*)

3 They think differently. (*Beatrice smiling*)
 4 if you have been to Gauteng,
 5 like when I was there.
 6 My first friend in Joburg was white.
 7 is a white Afrikaner, he is my friend.
 8 And we are still best friends.
 9 When I am there, I even sometimes forget that Leo is white. (*Beatrice, Vuyelwa, Noni nodding*)
 10 I forget that, because even when I was raised up,
 11 I wasn't raised to say this one is white and this one is black.
 12 I mean we are human beings, it's just the skin colour.
 13 But when I came to Cape Town,
 14 I was like: ok, things here are different.
 15 you are black you must feel that you're black. (*Vuyelwa laughing*)
 16 I worked in a mall in Joburg,
 17 and rich white people they used to come into the store,
 18 but they never made me feel small, neh?
 19 This other day I was at the Waterfront,
 20 and there was this guy.
 21 I think the CEO of a big company. (*smiling while he is telling his story*)
 22 He came to the store
 23 and he had like an argument with the cashier.
 24 And he used the K-word!
 25 I was like: ok, maybe this is true.
 26 That is how Capetonians behave (*Vuyelwa laughing*)
 27 but not all people are like that. (*Vuyelwa nodding*)

Story 7: Lauren (32.45–33.29)

1 I think it's a stereotype. (*mood changes, becomes more sober, urgency*)
 2 Which is so unfair, you know?
 3 I mean, I was serving a table the other night.
 4 And that was a table of four black people.
 5 And they immediately had this attitude towards me,
 6 like she is gonna think less of us. (*Siyabonga: Yes*)
 7 So they treated me...they spoke to me so badly. (*Siyabonga: Yes, Noni squirms in her chair*)
 8 And I was trying to be so friendly, you know. (*Siyabonga: Yeah*)
 9 I treated them like any other customer.
 10 It really didn't make any difference to me.
 11 But immediately because they had that stereotype of what I am gonna think of them, ((*Siyabonga: Yes*)
 12 they spoke to me completely differently. (*Siyabonga: hmmm*)
 13 And it really actually upset me.
 14 Because I would NEVER, EVER treat anyone differently because of their race.
 15 People have ruined that, that has ruined the society.

Conversation 3: Race dialogue (day 4)

Story 8: Beatrice 00.40–3.25

1 The article you gave was really thought provoking.
 2 I watched those days when The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was in action. (*looking at me*)
 3 I watched a little bit of it.
 4 The people who felt that they needed to go and talk there, were very, very emotional.
 5 On the outset it seemed as if there was very little forgiveness.
 6 I've actually seen people trying to redeem themselves,
 7 asking for forgiveness for things that they have done.
 8 And the hope was that the TRC would,
 9 would open a way for people to be able to communicate with each other.

10 To kind of fix up the wrongs of the past.
 11 But from the article it appears that we have moved on from that,
 12 yet we still haven't really changed from the way we think or the way we act.
 13 The article speaks about blacks and whites still gathering only in their groups
 14 and not really visiting each other.
 15 We claim to be friends with each other
 16 and yet we don't visit each other at home. (*looking at Vuyelwa and Noni*)
 17 I actually reflected on that for quite a long time and I asked myself:
 18 when last did I ever entertain my black friends at home?
 19 My daughter has plenty and she goes to a lot of them socially but I don't. (*looking at me*)
 20 Mind you, I don't even have a lot of white friends either.
 21 So for me it's now to decide whether I could include my friends from a different race.
 22 Not that I exclude them, it's just that (pause) I just never think about just opening your home...
 23 I employ black people and they are in my home.
 24 But I don't ever think of visiting with them. (*looking at me*)
 25 And it means then that I need to know that I need to step out of my little circle,
 26 my little comfort zone, and I need to reach out and invite my friends home and have a good visit.
 27 I don't know if am just preoccupied coz I like my solitude.
 28 But it's definitely something that I need to work on,
 29 that I can work on because I am not against having black friends.
 30 It's just that I never thought to just open my space,
 31 I don't open my space to a lot of people in my home. (*looking at Vuyelwa and Noni*)
 32 I am in my home because that's my place of safety and that's where I like to be.
 33 But I definitely can do something about it.

Story 9: Lauren (3.27–5.13)

1 Just on what Beatrice said about she has black people in her house,
 2 but they work for her. (*looking at me, Noni smiles*)
 3 I found it interesting how the article said,
 4 our interactions with other races are normally over a counter,
 5 when we are buying something at the shops or normally in a work environment,
 6 and not really on emotional social level.
 7 Whilst I do think that's true,
 8 I was saying to Rachel in the car this morning, (*turning towards Rachel*)
 9 one of my really good friends is black, she lives in Joburg.
 10 She comes to stay with me in the holidays you know.
 11 I don't see that she's black you know, we have been friends for so long.
 12 She's just like any of my other friends.
 13 But then Rachel said to me how many other black friends do you have?
 14 And I sort of thought she is kind of my only black friend.
 15 So it's not that I have like a wall up and I am thinking
 16 I don't wanna be friends with black people,
 17 because of that I don't even I suppose you know that side of it.
 18 But I just think automatically our brains are in tune with white people:
 19 let's go sit with them, white people, lets invite them over.
 20 And we are almost scared to break that cultural barrier of inviting another race into our home,
 21 of entertaining and letting them in,
 22 because we feel subconsciously this difference.
 23 And I think it's about getting through that
 24 and that's what the reconciliation is all about: (*Beatrice nodding*)
 25 it's not just about saying you are black and I am white.
 26 We can sit together and have a chat.
 27 It's about emotionally opening ourselves up and saying:
 28 we do have different backgrounds and different cultures but we can still get along.
 29 Just like I get along with a white person and be just as close you know,
 30 that's just what the article sort of spoke to me about.

Story 10: Vuyelwa (7.47)

1 I am hearing what she says, but it's not the same. (*looking at me*)
 2 They are saying that a white person can be like that but on our side I think it's different.
 3 If I want to be friends like with Beatrice, most of the time
 4 have to try to act the way she's acting and speak the way she's speaking,
 5 because most of the times she's gonna say:
 6 Whoooo Vuyelwa, some of your words are sooo...
 7 you can't pronounce some of the words like this.
 8 When I was at the college, there was one word that I used.
 9 I said: I must go and make my affidavit and everyone was laughing at me (*E. Laughing*)
 10 you can't say that affidavit and I say like what?
 11 What am I supposed to say: affidavit (*E. Laughing*)?
 12 and I would say: nooo you want me to adapt to your way of speaking.
 13 This is my kind of way of speaking. I am a Xhosa, so am proud of it.
 14 So if I pronounce this word like this - that is my own kind of a way.
 15 So if you guys believe that am saying it wrongly, you can't judge me.

Story 11: Siyabonga

1 I remember when we were kids, if you just had had a hair cut,
 2 then people would say: you look nice, you look like you know *umlungu*,
 3 which means you look like a white person,
 4 yeahh so there is still that thing on our minds that a white person is better.
 5 I was home in January and then my nephew is 13.
 6 He said: Yo, you know what,
 7 he called me *buti*, you know what, *buti*,
 8 I want to go to school like you and I want to be rich like a white person,
 9 Like what is it with white people? Why do you want to be like white people?

Story 12: Beatrice (11.57)

1 Throughout my life, I learning something: black people are very protective of white people.
 2 My friend Eunice lives in Denoon.
 3 I visited my friend Dorothy before she moved to Summer Greens,
 4 but Eunice would not let me visit her.
 5 She said: I don't want you to come to this place, this place is not for you. You can't come.'
 6 And I said: Eunice, it's day light. I want to come and sit with you in your home'
 7 And she said: No, don't come here'.
 8 My friend Caroline whose grandchildren I mentor, she won't let me come either.
 9 She lives in Phoenix which is just the other side of Sable square.
 10 She says: noo you don't come to my house,
 11 you can't come in here because it will look suspicious if a white person comes into my house.'
 12 (*Vuyelwa: It's like that*)
 13 You see, it's not my attitude, I didn't put the thought into her head.
 14 Its the way she thinks.
 15 We have white missionaries in the areas, which I spoke to Siyabonga about.
 16 If there is any kind of trouble black people open the door and say:
 17 Come here, come here, come here! You can stay here for a couple of hours.'
 18 This I appreciate that very much but the question is: will we reciprocate?

Story 13: Noni (00.05–2.30)

1 One of these days, I was with a friend of mine. (*looking at Nazma and Lauren*)
 2 This other lady who works at campus at library at night,
 3 we were going to a Saint Peter's mall in Observatory.
 4 I don't know, what she did, but she was driving,
 5 and then this white man came up on the window and said:
 6 Ohhh you people can't think what's wrong with you? why did you do that what not what not'
 7 And I thought: Wait, why can't she think?'
 8 I mean, yes, she, it's her brain and stuff, but why can't she think?

9 Her parents got an education that discouraged thinking and her parents raised her!
 10 Whose fault is that?
 11 Is it really nobody's faults, is it really not YOUR fault it's not your fault. (*addressing Lauren*)
 12 Yes you know it's not our fault right here?
 13 But its someone's fault and it's not my people's fault,
 14 because someone forced laws and what not on them, so that they be like this.
 15 And today when I can't think in class, when I can't raise my hand up
 16 and respond to whatever or participate in class,
 17 you are thinking, why can't they think?
 18 Forgetting that I am being raised by the same person, who was taught not to think.
 19 And then I thought how we as South Africans are running away from the truth. (*addressing Rachel*)
 20 This is our truth in South Africa, there is like a huge wall between us.
 21 There are extremely privileged people and those people are white people most of the times,
 22 yes they're rich black people look...
 23 but look at that we are running away
 24 from talking about issues like this (*pointing at images on screen*),
 25 where we, yes like Lauren was saying, we do mix, we do become friends with other races like,
 26 do we make meaningful relationships?
 27 We are running away from the fact the best schools in South Africa are still white schools.
 28 And then I thought: I don't want to tell this story,
 29 because I don't want to make people to feel uncomfortable.
 30 But then we are talking about uncomfortable spaces the whole week, (*Rachel nodding*)
 31 and I am thinking: why should I run away from it? (*addressing Beatrice and Lauren*)
 32 From the moment Beatrice opened the mouth, everybody was saying the same thing.
 33 How we all are brushing over this race issue of one race being privileged
 34 and the other race being less privileged.

Story 14: Noni 3.47

1 I didn't say, someone must be responsible. (*firm voice, looking down, hands in between knees*)
 2 I said it's someone fault if this country is like this.
 3 I think in our first year or second year
 4 we were talking about race issues and stuff (*looking at me or Lauren?*)
 5 and someone in my class said: But whose fault is it? I never did that to you!
 6 Yes, you never did that to me but ...
 7 Not even your parents but maybe your grandparents did that.
 8 That's why you were privileged because YOUR grandparents were privileged.
 9 And that's why YOUR kids are gonna be privileged because YOU are privileged.
 10 It's not your fault but it's the people of your colour's fault. (*looking at Lauren, Beatrice*)
 11 We are running away that it's someone's fault. (*Looking down, shaking her head*)

Story 15: George after 3.40

1 I think the way you were brought up coming from a white family,
 2 coming from a black family...
 3 The way you were brought up.
 4 Seeing other people who were more suffering than you
 5 and seeing that I get these clothes,
 6 it doesn't matter if they are like labels and stuff...
 7 I am wearing these shoes....
 8 This person doesn't have shoes,
 9 she goes to school on a bare foot,
 10 I think that is privilege to me.
 11 Eat three times a day and maybe that person eat once a day,
 12 I think that is also privilege.

Story 16: Rachel

1 And it's just that since Monday,
 2 we have been throwing the word privilege around

3 and you made it seem like white people's privilege.
 4 You are reading my story and you said:
 5 Ohhhh you are not bringing through that you are a white privileged person
 6 and I said to you: Well not all white people [are privileged]...
 7 My privilege was having love and praise and supportive parents.
 8 I am not privileged because I am white and not only white people are loved.
 9 So I wasn't privileged because I had a lot of money in my life...
 10 That's not privilege.
 11 I was talking about it in my story.
 12 I was privileged because I had food, I had love,
 13 George was saying: I have clothes to wear every day.
 14 So I think we have to define the term privilege that we are talking about here.

Story 17: Vuyelwa (4.57)

1 It can change but at the same time coming from that side (*pointing at images on screen*)
 2 We believe that: ok the white people would always have the best things in life,
 3 and the black people would always...
 4 was a movie that was played by [a lecturer]
 5 About black schools and white schools. And we felt offended by that.
 6 (*Me: Why?*)
 7 Because he showed the part whereby we were so poor,
 8 we ate on on a dish that was something like aluminium,
 9 something like that (*turning to George for help*).
 10 (*mmmh*)
 11 We grew up in that space but we are proud of it because today we are here.
 12 That makes us who we are today.
 13 And he showed the other side of a privileged school whereby they got everything.
 14 Like in the classroom, there are twenty something learners,
 15 whereby we were 50 -60 or 60 something.
 16 But we managed to learn even though we were in that class,
 17 at that space even though our teachers didn't teach us that well.
 18 But in our mindset, we believed that we can make it even though we were in that class.
 19 Not everything was there, textbooks we had to share, we didn't have computers,
 20 In grade 12, if you wanted to pass you had to form a group,
 21 we had to explain every word and it was explained in English,
 22 we never had a Xhosa textbook that explained some of the science stuff,
 23 some of the history stuff.

Story 18: Vuyelwa 26.12–29.30

1 When I grew up with my grandmother,
 2 she used to work for a white person. (*directed at me, hands folded in front of chest*)
 3 What fascinated me was, every time she comes back from work,
 4 she would come back with a bag in her hand.
 5 Having like something like breakfast and lunch and supper. (*hands opening up*)
 6 We felt privileged that we had to eat the white man's food.
 7 The type of food that wasn't there, we don't normally have it.
 8 We felt like: Ok. I am better ...in my house, we eat better than other person,
 9 because my grandmother brings this and that.
 10 But while she was sitting down, she will say:
 11 Yohhhh I work my butt off, because this week the person who owns me said,
 12 I must wash all the windows and then next week I must do it again,
 13 and the following week I must do it again.
 14 That felt to me like ok, they are doing this to my grandmotherwho are they?
 15 The white people.
 16 So I felt like: Ok these people, how come they do not see that she's an old lady,
 17 whereby she works hard to get just a little sum of money?

18 Just to have food on our table. Even though our parents are,
 19 my mother was scattered around and my half sister was on the other side of the house,
 20 and we had to sit there as grandchildren and cousins and all those stuff.
 21 But we shared that food - we felt like ok they are privileged like ok...
 22 Like they had nice food and all those stuff.
 23 So I think I am being privileged is a big word, it is a big word.
 24 Because there are some of things that we experienced, that are not the same as them.
 25 And some of things that white people did experience, are not the same as ours.
 26 The experience is not the same.
 27 They might feel: Ok I feel they might like, I feel less privileged,
 28 because I didn't get that and that and that.
 29 But the black person didn't get the opportunity to experience life like this and that and that.
 30 But on our side we feel like: Ok , they get much privilege,
 31 because my mother was looking after her,
 32 and then at night she got tired at home and she won't have time to spend with me.
 33 Most of my time that she was supposed to be spent with me, she spent it with them.
 34 But when she, when she got home, she couldn't do my homework,
 35 she couldn't, she couldn't cook for us or maybe if she did,
 she look tired while she was doing it.
 36 So I think being privileged is a very big word. *(Noni: yes, mmm...)*
 37 Seeing that you guys are talking about it, it makes me go back to what I was in, what situation
 I was in.
 38 We can't point fingers at who does this and who does that.
 39 But at the same time we had the feeling and we had experience even though it was not the same.
 40 So we can't come to a conclusion as who did get better than the other, who got less than the other.
 41 *Rachel: I don't think we want to get there...isn't it that is what you are saying?*
 42 *We should talk about it... (directed at Noni)*

Story 19: Noni 29.40

1 We are running away from that. We know it's there, but we are like....
 2 We still we are sort of seeing it from a distance you know
 3 *Vuyelwa: yeah...*
 4 We know deep down in us we know: this is happening in our country.
 5 It's no longer about the past – it's what the past is still doing to the present.
 6 For instance in our class, like you were saying *(addressing Lauren)*:
 7 Your mind is just conditioned to go to a certain group of people.
 8 In our class you would find, I don't know how it happens,
 9 but you would find black people on this side, coloured people here, white people there.
 10 We are running away from the fact that we think we are a rainbow nation
 11 but look at our classroom.

Story 20: Vuyelwa 31.40–33.45

1 There was one guy, I don't know his name. *(addressing me)*
 2 We were sitting like [student name] and all the old generation *(everybody laughing)*
 3 Like we were sitting in a group and there was one guy,
 4 don't know his name but I still remember what he did:
 5 He came in and he sat next to us and we spoke in Xhosa
 6 *(Noni: And we said: What is he doing here?)*
 7 He said: sorry guys, can I asked you a question?
 8 I answered: ok you can ask?
 9 What are you guys doing here?
 10 And I said: ok, it's our first day but we came here for education.
 11 And he said: Oh my god I am here for education also.
 12 And he asked us questions: Ok which class are you gonna be in?
 13 And we answered.








14 But in the long run I looked at him and he was so brave.
 15 Like being coloured and coming to us and talking to us.
 16 Like he never knew us but he spoke and we saw that he was afraid.
 17 But it took courage to speak to us and he asked us questions.
 18 And when he left we said: Ok what was that for? (*laughing*)
 19 And we were wondering: Ok he is a nice guy and
 20 But during the course of the year he changed.
 21 He started going to his group and but he was speaking to me all the time:
 22 Ohhh Vuyelwa, because I am a nice person (*Noni: Noooo. Everybody Laughing*).
 23 He makes jokes of me most of the time.
 24 And I asked him one day: Do you remember the first time we met?
 25 And he said: Yohhh, that was so hard for me, to go to you guys and speak.
 26 Because I can see that that there are Xhosa people who are sitting there (*gesture of group*).
 27 And there was no one else to speak to because we are so early that time.
 28 So I think: it's still happening sometimes.
 29 The other side it's gonna be white people
 30 and the other side gonna be the coloured people
 31 and the other side gonna be ...
 32 and we made fun of that when we go in.
 33 (*Course convenor: and there is another circle for the old people, everybody laughing*)
 34 Ja!

Story 21: Vuyelwa

1 No is not that like I didn't talk to you guys or something,
 2 but our group used to say: ok, you can speak for example, with Beatrice.
 3 Anytime we wanted something we go to Beatrice.
 4 Beatrice can you help me with this and that and that,
 5 but we couldn't go to the others and say...
 6 We saw you as withdrawn, we can't speak to that one,
 7 we can't ask for something from this one.

19 Yaaa it did because you did help us with technology.
 20 We had another perspective of you guys, ok.
 21 She is a helpful person, we can go to her and speak to her

Appendix 10: Multimodal transcript of digital stories (example)

		image 1 0.00 Orientation	image 2 0.02 Orientation	image 3 0.04 Orientation	image 4 0.06 Orientation	image 5 0.08 Orientation	image 6 0.10 Orientation	image 7 0.12 Orientation
Timing								
Narrative structure								
Picture								
Written text		Stereotypes:	Nurse	Doctor	Teacher	Men	Women	
Narration		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	When I reached high school, I knew I was different. I began to discover a part of myself that I did not understand.
Soundtrack	Voice	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	White, privileged, female voice, private school accent, neutral tone / soft / high pitch / slow pace
	Sound	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	instrumental song / backgrounded
Representational meaning	Narrative	Title slide, white font on black slide.	Young, white woman posing as nurse. Holding folder. Smiling looking directly at viewer. White background.	Black male doctor. Smiling directly into the camera. Stethoscope around neck. White background.	White young female teacher. Glasses. Conversatively dressed. Holding books. In the background blackboard and globe, tables and chairs	Ronaldo, soccer star. Naked body. Doesn't smile. On the soccer field (indistinct background). Looking up toward audience.	Stiles style kitchen with perfectly made up house wife, leaning on her mop. Bored look into the camera.	Stiffness in the middle of excitement, being different, not engaging with others. Turning the back to the others, she also looks more mature than the boys in the background. Serious. Growing up too
	Conceptual	Stark contrast						
Interactional meaning	Contact/gaze / orientation		Demand / direct gaze. Friendly, inviting.	Demand / direct gaze. Friendly, inviting.	Demand / direct gaze. Friendly, inviting.	Off screen / indetermined (audience in stadium)	direct gaze / demand. But not menacing / bored look.	depicted world / disengaged / mental process
	Distance		Medium close shot.	Medium close shot.	Medium close shot.	Medium close shot	Medium long shot	Medium long shot
	Point of view horizontal		Horizontal: parallel	Horizontal: parallel	Horizontal: parallel	Horizontal: at an angle / diverging from viewer	Horizontal: parallel	Horizontal: at an angle
	Point of view vertical		Vertical: eye level	Vertical: eye level	Vertical: eye level	Vertical: eye level?	Vertical: top/down	Vertical: Top/down
Compositional meaning	Modality		Colour, stock quality	Colour, stock quality	Colour, stock quality	Colour, stock quality	Black and white	Sepia, own picture
	Information value		Central position	Face: top left, ideal / given	Central position	Central position	Central position	Face: topright
	Saliency		Person	Person	Person	Person	Person	Person
	Framing		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Camera position		N/A, still	N/A, still	N/A, still	N/A, still	N/A, still	Zooming out, from her face into the crowd

Appendix 11: Lauren and Noni's images

Lauren's images






























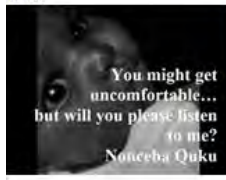
















image 1 0.00 Orientation 	image 2 0.02 Orientation 	image 3 0.04 Orientation 	image 4 0.06 Orientation 	image 5 0.08 Orientation 	image 6 0.10 Orientation 
image 7 0.12 Orientation 	image 8 0.23 Orientation 	image 9 0.32 Orientation 	image 10 0.40 Complication 	image 11 0.51 Complication 	image 12 0.58 Complication 
image 13 01.11 Complication 	image 14 1.16 Complication 	image 15 1.26 Complication 	image 16 1.36 Complication 	image 17 1.49 Complication 	
image 18 2.00 Evaluation 	image 19 2.23 Evaluation 	image 20 2.35 Evaluation 	image 21 2.40 Evaluation 	image 22 2.49 Evaluation 	
image 23 2.59 Evaluation 	image 24 3.06 Resolution 	image 25 3.17 Resolution 	image 26 3.28 Resolution 	image 27 3.32 Resolution 	

image 28 3.44 Resolution	image 29 3.55 Coda	image 30 4.00 Coda	image 31 4.03 Coda	image 32 4.06 Coda	image 33 4.08 Coda	image 34 4.19 Coda
	I know some of you who are listening to my story will turn away in discomfort and disgust...	but I urge you to keep looking at me.	I am the same person you saw yesterday...	who sat for four years in class with you.		I want to know what the life called itself when it got away. -Anna Sless

Noni's images

image 1 0.00	image 2 0.04 Orientation	image 3 0.10 Orientation	image 4 0.22 Complication	image 5 0.35 Complication	image 6 0.53 Complication
					
image 7 1.20 Complication	image 8 1.32 Complication	image 9 1.45 Evaluation	image 10 1.56 Complication	image 11 2.11 Complication	image 12 2.22 Resolution
I'm afraid to listen, For if I listen I might understand And I might be changed By my Understanding... Carl Roger					
image 13 2.37 Resolution	image 14 2.42 Complication	image 15 2.56 Complication/Resolution	image 16 3.14 Resolution	image 17 3.49 Coda	image 18 3.54 Coda
					

Appendix 12: Lauren and Noni's written scripts

Stereotypes (Lauren's story)

When I reached high school, I knew I was different. I began to discover a part of myself that I did not understand. Feelings that I did not know how to cope with.

I am one of millions of girls, who face the stereotypes, the stigmas and the abuse around being gay. Throughout high school I felt isolated and uncomfortable. When I tried to seek advice, I was told that it was wrong', and was not part of God's plan for me. I lost a lot of friends and I felt uncomfortable in my own skin. If nobody else could accept me, how could I accept myself?

Eventually, I became so tired of living with a secret, I had fallen in love with a girl and I wanted my family to understand me. After giving them a letter one evening in which I tried to explain my being different, they asked me to leave their home until this phase' was out of my system. There are no words that could describe the loneliness and desolation I experienced when my family turned against me, but I knew that my life had to be my own.

The way in which my parents reacted was not uncommon for the South African society as a whole. In spite of the 1996 Constitution, which is one of the most progressive constitutions worldwide that guarantees the right to equality and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, society itself is not nearly as progressive. On the contrary, homosexuality is seen as sinful and unnatural.

There are an estimated 500 000 cases of corrective rape every year. This shameful record of male domination and violence has helped to build a brutal and oppressive culture, in which women are forced to conform to gender stereotypes or suffer the consequences.

Although I have become a stronger person, and I have very supportive friends, I am still facing the difficulties of being someone different' in a society filled with ideals.

I cannot hold my girlfriend's hand in public without receiving blatant stares, let alone be respected by many people I come into contact with. As I become a teacher, I am terrified of being isolated again. I know in my heart that I want to listen, to support and to care for the children whose lives I touch, but it is still a path I know I will battle along. I have learned that it is important to be honest about who you are.

[I know some of you who are listening to my story will turn away in discomfort and disgust but I urge you to keep looking at me, I am the same person you saw yesterday- who sat for four years in class with you.] See me, for me.

You might get uncomfortable ... but will you please listen to me? (Noni's story)

We have been together for a week now. A week full of uncomfortable, awkward moments where I had to share personal stuff about my life with you and be and feel with you although we have never talked before. In these moments I realized how little I knew about you, although I have been with you for four years. I became conscious of how for four years we have been avoiding interacting with each other on a personal level; we only spoke to each other when we needed to, like for group work.

This “uncomfortable safe space” made me aware of how we are trying so hard to run away from our truth, running away from the fact that our past still has effects on our present, our today, how we do not want to admit that there is still an advantage to being you in this country and there is a disadvantage in being me in this country ... like how the best schools in the country are your schools, like how being you gets you first preference for a job over people like me. It got me thinking about how we are turning a deaf ear on the fact that you and I in this country still do not have the same opportunities. Do not get me wrong I am not focusing on who is more privileged and who is less privileged or whose fault it is. I am not accusing you

This got me thinking about how we can laugh and joke together, but are not making real friendships ... you may say “eh I have friends that look like you” ... but really ... how often have you invited me into your home to come and dine with you?

We are running away from admitting that we have unfinished business with each other; we have stuff to admit to each other, stuff we need to talk about to each other.

When are we going to create spaces where we can talk about the truth, where I can be honest and admit that I feel inferior to you and you can admit that you sometimes feel superior to me ...? When are we going to admit that South Africa has a standard that everyone has to meet, and that standard is your standard? Look at how I needed to learn to speak English so I can speak with you, whilst you cannot even speak a few sentences of my language.

We need to start creating these uncomfortable spaces wherever we go; in social groups, at work, in schools, at home with our children. I mean everyone has to be part of this, in this South Africa of today ... So that we can talk about these kinds of things, and find a way forward and a way to forgive each other. A space where we can be as honest and brutal as we can about how all of this makes you and me feel, without the fear of hurting mine and your feelings. We are both wounded! Will you come to this place with me?