“WHAT MAKES A GREAT STORY?”: MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON DIGITAL STORIES BY YOUTH FORMERLY IN FOSTER CARE IN CANADA

BRYN LUDLOW, BFA, MA

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“What makes a great story?”: Multidisciplinary and International Perspectives On Digital Stories By Youth Formerly In Foster Care In Canada

Bryn Ludlow, BFA, MA
Communication and Culture
York and Toronto Metropolitan University Joint Program in
Communication and Culture
York University
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Abstract

What makes a great story? This qualitative arts-based dissertation study explores multidisciplinary and international perspectives on digital stories created by youth formerly in foster care. Over Skype, thirty-five participants from the arts, healthcare, education, and social services sectors watched three short digital stories about experiences of youth in foster care. Then, each participated in a 90 minute semi-structured interview to discuss the value, impact, and potential for digital storytelling to influence social change.

All participants spoke about how the three digital stories presented honest and personal experiences that contrast dramatically with stories presented in the media about foster care. After viewing these stories, all participants asserted that there is a need for the creation and sharing of authentic and emotional stories that connect with specific audiences to subvert idealistic narratives in the media about youth currently and formerly in foster care.

I drew on participant narratives using Constructivist Grounded Theory approaches to develop the 4A model to describe the attributes of “great stories”: Anticipation, Actualization, Affect, and Authenticity. I also created seven multimodal outputs that contributed to the shaping of the findings and enhanced reflexive praxis.

The implications of this work varies across disciplines. Digital storytelling facilitators may develop insights into better supporting future participants to think critically about the impact and value of their stories before they write them. Artists may consider how best to employ their aesthetic skills and techniques to create compelling and storied artworks. Social service professionals may consider how to further leverage stories to build empathy and positively impact care delivery.

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Land Acknowledgement

I am thankful for the ability to live, work and gather on this land and it is my hope that this acknowledgement recognizes the complex nature of naming identities, especially since identities have multiple intersections.

I recognize the discourse surrounding the inappropriateness of the use of the word 'settler' in reference to Black people on Turtle Island, as we were involuntarily uprooted, scattered, and subsequently reinserted into lands that are not our own.

This acknowledgement is a demonstration of groups coming together around shared identities–identities that have also been marginalized and the target of violence—while at the same time sorting through what it all means within the context of living on stolen and occupied Indigenous land.

This acknowledgement reminds us that we each have different relationships to the land that we live on, depending on our ancestry, and where we sit in relation to the struggles for justice occurring on this land.

I acknowledge this land is the traditional and unceded territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Huron-Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. I also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

I acknowledge all Treaty peoples—including those who came here as settlers—as migrants either in this generation or in generations past and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Dear Reader,

The reason I began my PhD was to help underrepresented populations who are struggling with accessing ways to effectively communicate their experiences of pain and emotional distress to healthcare providers who have the ability to help, heal, cure, and comfort them. The final dissertation that I have produced responds to this need, and a greater need was revealed after completing this work: for us all to consider active advocacy for youth and child welfare systems in Canada and around the world. As a preamble to this doctoral dissertation, I call on you, the reader, to (1) read Appendix V and learn about the history of adoption and the foster care system, (2) support child welfare programs that advocate for youth leaving care, (3) write to your representatives at the provincial/state, and/or federal levels about the urgent need to place youth into permanent homes, and (4) listen to the stories of youth in care and youth leaving care so that your actions have impact.

For more information, contact: https://brynludlow.com

A few resources:

- Children's Aid Foundation of Canada: https://www.cafdn.org/
- Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth (Ontario), https://www.provincialadvocate.on.ca/
- *Adoption,* Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services, https://www.ontario.ca/page/adoption
- Adoption Exchange Association, https://www.adoptuskids.org/?r=1
- *International Adoption,* Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services, *https://www.ontario.ca/page/international-adoptions-ontario#:~:text=The%20rules%20and%20process%20for,licensed%20to%20facilitate%20international%20adoptions*

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mom.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation study would not be possible without the gracious participation of three youth who bravely participated in three-day workshops in Central and Eastern Canada to create digital stories about their experiences of foster care, and who selflessly agreed to share their stories for social change and research. Other key contributors include all adult participants who volunteered to view the stories and talk about "What makes a great story?"—thank you for participating and speaking openly and honestly with me about this topic.

Since beginning the doctoral program in 2014, I have had many wonderful meetings and discussions with my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Sarah Flicker (York University). Sarah, your community and scholarly leadership are inspiring. Your patience, acceptance, and compassionate approach to mentorship has provided stability throughout this doctoral research journey and helped me become who I am today.

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Finally, thank you to my friends for your unwavering support and encouragement.

Bryn Ludlow

"It takes a village to raise a child"
–Ancient African/Indigenous Proverb

It takes a village to raise a child
(Ancient African/Indigenous Proverb)

Bryn Ludlow

Acrylic on canvas with AI-generated graphic printed on polyester.

32x60” (81.28 x 152.4 cm)

2009 & 2022

This painting was created in the spring of 2009, and the AI-generated graphic was produced in 2022. In 2009, the painting was called, “Abandonné,” (French) which translates as “Abandonment.” The painting is a depiction of my immediate caregivers and of myself as I was beginning to understand and acknowledge my identity as an adoptee of African Canadian heritage.

At the time of painting “Abandonné,” I was wrapping up my third year at OCAD University in the Integrated Media program. Due to the intense studio-seminar course load, I felt compelled to express myself freely and create an artistic piece that would not be counted towards my degree. Close to the time of painting this piece, I presented a live performance art project and installation about the birth of my half-sister called “Zygomotion.” When I finished “Abandonné” my first half-sister was almost two years old and my second half-sister was almost a year. The birth of my first half-sister had an emotional impact on me that compelled me to think deeply about the reason for my adoption, and I channeled that energy into this painting.

“It takes a village to raise a child” is an ancient African/Indigenous proverb that emphasizes the fact that when a child is born, the village or community that they are born into will contribute to their well-being and help to *raise the child* (Byrne, 2022). Indeed, an assumption of when a child is born is that the child’s parent(s) and immediate family will raise the child. However, the meaning of this proverb emphasizes that the standard notion of a family is not inclusive for everyone. Many children grow up with little to no connection to their biological family caregivers and will need the support of a village or community, such as an adoptive family. Even with a standard dual-parent family, *it takes a village to raise a child* is a common phrase used to emphasize that raising a child is a great responsibility requiring a community of caregivers and that no single family raises a child entirely on their own. Byrne (2022) highlights that many

people shorten the sentence to, “It takes a village…” which deemphasizes the point that it is the responsibility of a community to look after the community members. So, the title of this painting attempts to signal the reason for the separate areas and stories within the painting that depict the individual and collective community collaboration that is necessary for raising a child, the issues and barriers that may prevent or get in the way of caring for a child within the child’s biological family, along with the child’s understanding and reckoning with their personhood.

Oftentimes, I am compelled to create an artistic response to an emotional experience that I have or witness. Yet, as a younger artist I did not know about my African heritage, and I felt disconnected and at a loss to respond to questions about cultural imagery and influences in my artwork. When thinking of this now, I remember feeling emotional anguish from not having that ability to respond to questions about my artistic influences, because all I knew at the time was that I did not know about half of my culture, specifically of my South African birth father and his family. Perhaps I practiced creating artwork about emotional experiences that I have and witness as a way to cope with this void. As I learn more about my individual and cultural connections in my artwork, I feel less ashamed about developing this coping mechanism.

Western society privileges the written word above other forms of expression (Okun, 2021). I have tried to write my story many times, and I have many documents with pieces of my story. Yet, I have struggled with the idea of *finishing* the writing of my story. Stories are inherently deeply personal artifacts. Every word and word combination has meaning for the author and the reader. Through a process of learning about white supremacy (Okun, 2021), I understand that the overemphasis of writing about experiences and striving for perfectionism are unrealistic scenarios that are in place because of white supremacy. A core reason why I have not been able to connect to my heritage in my artwork is because of white supremacist policies that were in place to specifically mask my South African heritage on my adoption record. Through painting “Abandonné” and creating “It takes a village to raise a child,” and reflecting on the process, I recognize that the ripple effect of white supremacist policies also hindered my ability to connect to the artistic side of my culture. White supremacy has restricted my personal growth and expression in written and artistic forms. The restriction of my personal growth that is imposed by white supremacy is due to what Lugones (2007) calls, the “the modem colonial gender system” (p. 189). “It takes a village to raise a child” is a sculptural montage that represents the initial attempt to understand the harms of white supremacy on my personhood as a mixed race adoptee,

and in the conclusion of this dissertation, I return to discuss this issue that mixed race individuals experience in-particular, with reference to the film, "Imitation of Life" (Sirk, 1959).

The merging of Abandonné with the AI-generated artwork represents my initial attempt to "…understand the organization of the social so as to make visible (the) collaboration with systematic racialized gender violence, so as to come to an inevitable recognition of it in our maps of reality" (Lugones, 2007, p. 207). As an African artist of mixed ancestral heritage, I create to connect with my heritage, to share my artwork and written work about my process of connection with my heritage and the impact of white supremacy on my personhood, in order to support other Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) peoples with their journey of self-discovery. Visual, multimodal, digital forms of exploration have revealed these processes in ways that writing has not.

Part of my struggle with writing my story is that it was fragmented before I was born. Another issue that I have realized while attempting to write about my story is that writing is an act of "restorying" (Mishler, 2004): writing a story entails creating a new version of an old story. As I began to write the script for my first digital story, I asked myself, "Who am I to decide what part of my story I can share, and what part I cannot, since my story is also my ancestor's story?" The important thing to remember is that storytelling gives one the opportunity to acknowledge their selfhood and sharing a story—whether it is in oral, written, or visual form—might help someone else realize how to find their sense of self. The deeply personal aspect of storytelling reminds me that even when there is a story to tell, I am not the only person involved, and many others experience challenging circumstances that can benefit from learning from the stories of others. Stories can have life-changing, and possibly life-saving effects on the listener (personal communication, Tiffany Hsiung (Director, "*The Apology" 2016), guest lecture, York University Prof. Ali Kazemi, 14 Feb. 2022).*

The background of Abandonné is abstract and I painted it entirely with my feet. At the time, I was processing my recovery after surviving a sexual assault. While coping with challenging symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), including flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, and difficulty concentrating, I tried many forms of therapy including mindfulness-based stress reduction. I understood that learning a new skill or doing something differently helps the brain heal (Doidge, 2007). Painting was and still is a therapeutic art form that I enjoy, and the challenges that I had with concentration made it frustrating to use a paintbrush and focus on

accomplishing a detailed work. In contrast to writing, visual and other non-written forms of expression tend to be embodied, subconscious, and mimic actual expressions that are seen and felt. By painting with my feet, I was able to relinquish a sense of control and could express myself in a similar way as some of my favourite American action painters, including Helen Frankenthaler and Jackson Pollock. However, the thoughts and story about my adoption and reunion that I was reminiscing about stayed with me while painting this piece with my feet, and I added the other figurative elements to illustrate the story over the foot painting in the background.

As mentioned, the word, "Abandonné" translates to "abandonment" in the French language. I chose the title because abandonment is an experience that I had as an adoptee and because of the multilayered meaning of the word in French. As an adult, certain experiences mimic the sense of abandonment. Though the perception of these experiences in adulthood feel the same, in a relational sense it is not possible to be abandoned as an adult (Baratz, 2022). In adulthood, individuals come and go, and the coming and going of adult connections is based on individual choices and circumstances, not the experience of abandonment (Baratz, 2022).

Whenever I asked my parents about my adoption, and my place within their lives, they often told me that I was "the greatest gift" that they received. Another reason for choosing the title, "Abandonné" is because the French translation offers another word within the word, which is "donné," meaning, "to give." When I began to unpack the meaning of my adoption, I acknowledged that it involves the dual act of giving and letting go: the birth parents give life and let go. In adulthood, by acknowledging and understanding my adoption as an abandonment by my birth parents and birth family, instead of a loss of my selfhood, I choose to give myself life experiences and connect to communities that are nurturing. One of the ways that I could leave behind the thoughts and feelings about my abandonment as a self-abandonment was through painting "Abandonné". By painting the feeling, I was recording it to show that it existed, and it is how I felt at that time.

The foundational AI-generated graphic was added to the base of "Abandonné" to ground it, and to *give back* my sense of self and heritage that I never experienced authentically due to the concealment on my adoption record. I included this graphic with the painting after seeing Anishinaabe Saulteaux contemporary artist, curator, writer, critic, and educator, Robert Houle's exhibition, "Red is Beautiful" at the Art Gallery of Ontario in March 2022. In Houle's exhibit,

there were a series of paintings showing detailed portraits and landscapes, and a band of stripes representing colours from his heritage (Penney, 2022). I felt a connection with Houle's method of combining recognizable imagery with unrecognizable, abstract, yet bold geometric shapes, and I wanted to try a similar application in my own work.

At the time, I was exploring collage-making with textiles from my cultural heritage, which I read about on my Ancestry DNA report. To create the collage, I merged found images of textiles from a Google image search onto an Instagram story, then I saved the story as an image and imported the collages into Adobe Photoshop. From there, I rearranged the collages and mixed the patterns together in a visually-pleasing way. Following this, I imported a square JPEG image to the Adobe Capture application and created a kaleidoscopic pattern with the setting in the application called "Pattern." The application automatically confines the design to a square, so if there is important graphical information outside of the square it will not be included in the pattern. Within seconds, the final pattern is produced.

With my convocation ceremony approaching, I created a Stole that connects to my mixed ancestral heritage. There are many Stole patterns available to purchase online, and I was interested in a design that I could feel connected to, not only through a national flag, for example. To transfer the pattern onto the Stole, it was printed directly onto heat-sensitive paper at George Brown College's Fashion Exchange Studio and transferred onto polyester fabric with a sublimation printer. Then, the Stole was sewn and finished, and it is ready to wear at convocation. Following my convocation, I wish to exhibit the Stole and share the Stole with my family as a keepsake.

While searching for images, I learned about the similarities in designs across cultures such as Inuit, Norwegian, Cameroonian, and South African geometric patterns, and I discovered patterns that are traditional to my ancestry that I already have on clothing and housewares, such as Manjac from Senegal in a handwoven shirt, and Bantu patterns from South Africa on a handwoven table runner. By researching the textiles and creating the collages, I felt like I connected to cultures that I felt disconnected from, and reconnected to the cultures that I have actually known for many years. The emotional anguish that I felt after painting "Abandonné" is now relinquished with the addition of the AI-generated pattern. The Stole design is one way that I have been able to tangibly connect to my independent identity as an adult adoptee and to share my story in a way that is meaningful to me.

Preface

My first-hand experience as an adoptee informed the writing of my doctoral dissertation on many levels. It impacted how I co-facilitated digital storytelling workshops with youth formerly in care. It also influenced how and why I chose to interview a diverse group of people about digital stories created by youth formerly in care. As an artist, researcher, and educator, it is important to me that I feel connected to my mind, body, spirit, and soul, and not only the academic side of my life (hooks, 1994). In "Teaching to Transgress" the late bell hooks said, "…teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own wellbeing if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students" (1994, p. 15). This is my story.

On February 22, 1984, my parents picked me up at the Children's Aid Society in Guelph, Ontario. It was only five days after my birthday, but it was two years after they experienced the devastating loss of their son, who was 2 ½ when he died. A couple of days after I was born, my mom received a phone call at work. The woman on the phone said that she was calling from the Children's Aid Society, and she said something like, "We have a child for you to adopt. She is a baby girl. The only thing is, she has a brown complexion." In response, my mom said, "That doesn't matter—we will adopt her."

Language about ethnicity differs quite a bit now. In the past couple of years, the acronym "BIPOC" has evolved to acknowledge the oppression that Black and Indigenous Peoples experience specifically, alongside People of Colour (POC) (Garcia, 2020). Yet, it is still a heavily contested term that is apt to evolve. The birth record that my parents were given when they picked me up describes the ethnicities of my birth mother, maternal grandparents, aunt, and uncle by the origin of their ancestors: Norwegian and Scottish. By contrast the ethnicity of my birth father and my paternal grandparents, aunt, and uncle include descriptors about their medium to dark skin tones, including the phrase, and derogatory term (spelled incorrectly), "of malatto (mulatto) racial origin." Upon realizing this, I created a digital artwork using the phrase, and repeating it 35 times (my age at the time of completing the artwork) (see Figure 1). Given this, I was curious to know about my paternal biological family's heritage.

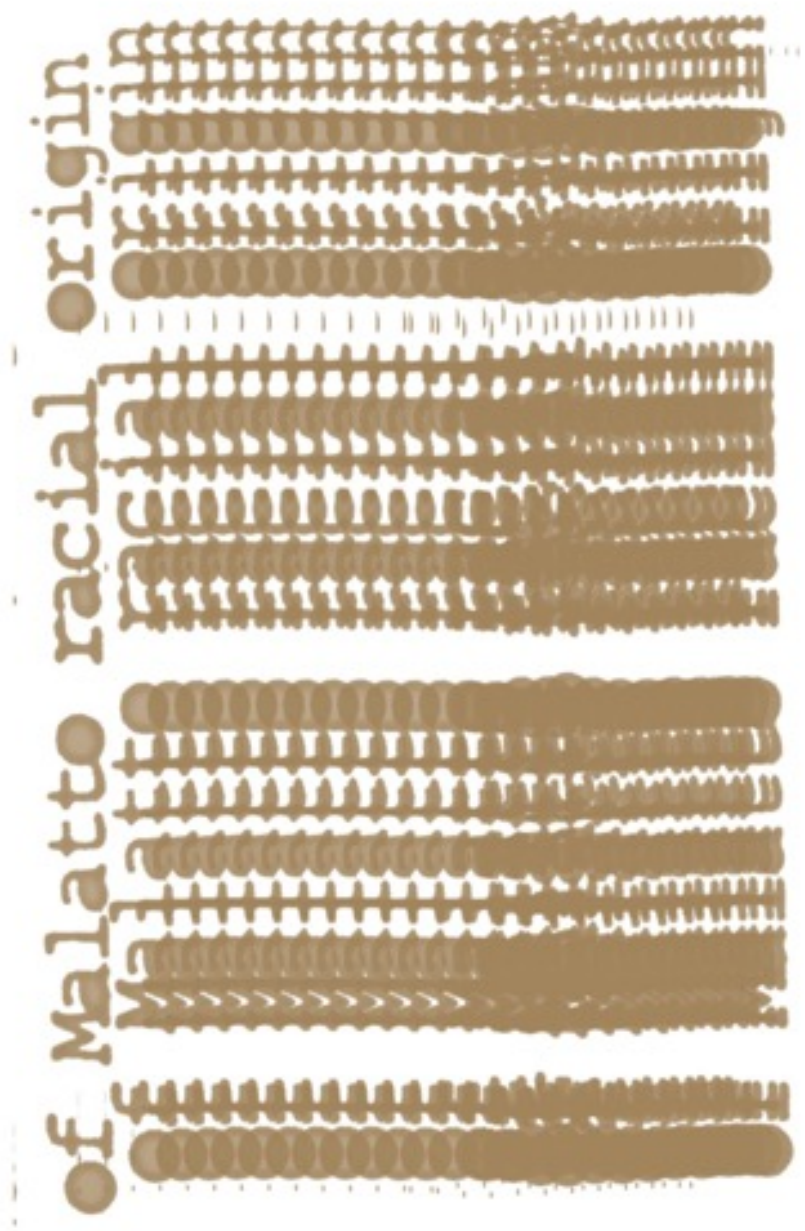

Figure 1: "'of Malatto Racial Origin' Repeated 35 Times" (Influenced by the Works of Glenn Ligon), 2018. Digital

In 1986, on the children's television show, "Sesame Street", Susan and Gordon adopted a baby boy named Miles. I was filled with questions after watching the episode. By then, I knew that I was different than my white, European Canadian parents. My mom cleverly used the story and a book, "Susan and Gordon Adopt a Baby" by Judy Freudberg and Tony Geiss (1986) to tell me about my adoption story. After learning about my adoption, I remember feeling reassured that my parents were still "my parents" and that I could be who I am. Growing up with this backstory was not easy.

My paediatrician was South African. He guessed that I was *maybe* South African too; my mom also supported me with learning about Black and South East Asian history. Yet, in our small city of Guelph, Ontario, most parents looked like their children. Most of my friends looked like their parents. I knew that I was different. Gradually, the racism that I experienced and that my parents experienced with me in public places, took an emotional toll. As a mixed-race adoptee, it was difficult experiencing racism and not knowing how to defend myself.

In 1998, my mom shared my adoption records with me and asked if I wanted to meet my birth mother. We did not know that it would be possible to meet my birthfather or his family, as it was uncommon to do that in adoption reunions (Latchford, 2019; Verrier, 1993). In July 1998, I met my birth mother and her immediate family. At our reunion in a local park, she told me that she had kept in touch with my birth father off and on throughout the years, and that they happened to have spoken only a couple of months earlier.

Two weeks later, I met my birth father too. Initially, I wanted to meet my biological parents so that I could learn more about my heritage and why I was given up for adoption. Then, I thought I could continue in my life, with some reassurance that I knew a bit more about my heritage. The emotions I felt after each reunion were confusing, partially because of the grief of not knowing these people who created me and not having a choice in the matter, and from the excitement of thinking about the memories that we could start creating together.

When I met my birth father, I learned about my South African heritage for the first time. Mixed race adoptees experience "racial stigma" (Loury, 2005)— stigma for not knowing about their cultural heritage, and racism for being different. Not knowing about cultural heritage because of colonial practices of erasure creates another barrier to self-discovery (Lugones, 2007).

Finding out about my birth father's heritage was welcoming, empowering, and confusing —why was this information not shared with me, when the other side of my heritage was? I learned that my late grandfather was also a teacher and had 11 brothers and sisters. Since he was the only sibling with a darker complexion, he carried a different "passbook" and he was not allowed to speak with his own family at a party. On a drive in North York, my late paternal grandmother talked about South African people who have ancestors in Java, Indonesia. In 1965, my grandparents immigrated to England, and then to Canada. While visiting my grandmother during March Break in high school, we watched a VHS tape of my grandparents arriving on a large ship in England, waving to their friends at the port. For 14 years, I grew up not knowing why my skin is brown. Suddenly, I had some answers.

Today, I still grieve for the loss of my culture. Despite feeling more connected to the artistic and culinary aspects of it, I still feel like an outsider. To say "it is a journey" to self-discovery, is an understatement. When I went to Johannesburg in November 2011 for a research conference and workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand, one of the first things I did when I got to the place that I was staying was remove my shoes and stand in the grass.

After reuniting with my biological parents and finding out more about my heritage, I have grown to be an independent woman who is comfortable telling her story. I hope that my story helps other mixed race adoptees feel less alone. It would be nearly impossible to undertake this doctoral research without feeling clear about my own adoption story.

As youth workshop participants often said, "There are many missing pieces in my story". The important aspect about that statement is that they said it and they were heard. By incorporating that sense of missing pieces, they create a coherence and a kind of wholeness despite the missing pieces. This is my story, and knowing it makes me feel whole, strong, proud, and capable to make positive connections with others. By knowing my story, and telling it, I can move forward in my life.

"It may be that when we no longer know what to do we have come to our real work, and that when we no longer know which way to go we have come to our real journey. The mind that is not baffled is not employed. The impeded stream is the one that sings."

–"Standing by words: Essays," Wendell Berry (1983)

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Chapter 1 Introduction

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."

–Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Former South African President
(Launch of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund,
Mahlamba Ndlopfu Pretoria South Africa, 8 May 1995)

In the spring, summer, and fall of 2017, I co-facilitated three digital storytelling workshops with adopted youth, youth in foster care, and youth formally in foster care, including youth who have "aged out" of foster care, in Toronto (Ontario), Moncton (New Brunswick), and Winnipeg (Manitoba). Each workshop included 12-15 youth participants and five to eight facilitators. Youth were invited to create digital stories about their experiences of adoption, foster care, and transitioning from foster care.

What is 'digital storytelling'?

Digital storytelling combines digital production techniques and methods that are often artful. Storytelling about personal lived experiences is usually done with the objective of sharing the story for other people to learn from, and relate to (Fiddian-Green et al., 2019). Digital stories are often created with video cameras, but can be created with any digital tool, such as a cellphone camera (MacEntee, Burkholder, & Schwab-Cartas, 2016), or they can be designed as an interactive website (Klamma, et al., 2009), or as an augmented reality digital story (Widiaty, et al., 2018), and so forth. Workshops to facilitate their creation usually last three to five days. Storytellers are guided through specific stages to share, write, produce, edit, and screen (present) their stories at the end of a workshop (Fiddian-Green et al., 2019; Lambert & Hessler, 2018).

Dayna Winslow Atchley III, also known as, "Ace (the Colorado Spaceman)" (Pink, 1998, para 8) was a digital media artist and pioneer of digital storytelling who combined "…QuickTime, Adobe Premiere, and Macromedia Director (and) devised a system that allows him to tell stories through film, video, music, and photography" (Pink, 1998, para 8). In 1994, Dayna joined forces with director and producer Joe Lambert to create the StoryCenter at the

University of Berkeley, California (Lambert, 2013). It is likely that many other people around the world were exploring the same technologies in similar ways at the same time. Yet, Atchley III and Lambert took this exploratory method a step further to teach people how to create and share their stories with their method called "digital storytelling." Like other video production methods such as documentary practice, digital storytelling involves a "democratizing mechanism" (Lambert, 2013, p. 43) that can evoke a transformative experience for participants and viewers alike (de Jager, et al., 2017). Some digital storytelling workshops focus on advocacy. In these situations, the resulting digital stories can be shared to influence public policy decision-makers.

Prior to the formalization of the digital storytelling method by Atchley III and Lambert in 1993, there was a long history that led up to the practice of creating stories with technology and digital materials. Artists have used film to tell stories since Thomas Edison and his assistant, William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, developed a camera called the "Kinetograph" in 1890 (Rush, 2005, p. 15). With this machine, filmmakers like Sergei Eisenstein created stories with multilayered narratives by physically overlapping two film negatives (Rush, 2005). It is important to recognize this historical perspective for storytellers, audiences, facilitators, and researchers to understand how the arts made it possible for digital storytelling to be what it is today.

Film entered the world as a scientific *and* artistic medium (Rush, 2005). Artists, physicists, and engineers were keen to experiment with the new image making machine. As a tool to capture the world, the film camera became a political documentation device. New artistic movements emerged and the camera was used to reinforce these new ways of thinking, including political perspectives such as Marxism, which Sergei Eisenstein explored in his film artwork (Rush, 2005). As a new medium, the film camera was used by photographers such as Man Ray, and Marcel Duchamp (artists of the New York salons) to deconstruct the old world into a new, material-based response to what was lost in the brutalities of WWII. These artists used photography and painting in the Dada movement, specifically, to deconstruct existing objects and present them as new art objects (Savedoff, 1989). The materialization of film-based artistic production carried into the USA with Marcel Duchamp and new American Expressionist artists

such as Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, and Helen Frankenthaler who included documentary film to show their process (Rush, 2005).

With all of these changes in a short period of time compared to the slower progression of painting, Rush (2005) makes an intriguing statement that film experimentation is a "secondary practice" to the original craft that some artists work with and stated, "The technology improved when artists adopted it, but the technology came first" (pp. 27-28). Rush (2005) further notes that "…other artists have engaged new media from the start, not as a secondary practice" (p. 28). Whether or not artists start or end with mixed media involving digital film-based technologies, I wonder if cinema and film would have taken off so quickly if artists did not experiment with the medium as early as they did.

As artistic movements became formalized by critics, pioneering video and "multimedia performance artists" (Rush, 2005, p. 36) broke away from these confining systems to create their own collectives which responded to political events of the time, for example: The Civil Rights Movement, the global riots in 1968, and the Vietnam War. The physical design of the camera changed in this time as well. Artists from the 1970s Video Arts movement (Rush, 2005) were pioneers who sought to inject personal perspectives in their artworks. Andy Warhol, Ken Jacobs, Carolee Schneemann, Joan Jonas, Vito Acconci, Bruce Nauman, Nam June Paik, Valie Export, Gerhard Richter, ORLAN, and Vera Frenkl among other artists of the time were highly influential to the development of personalized narratives in video form (Rush, 2005). They continued the work of early film artists such as Dziga Vertov, who worked with dialogical montage, which involved layering negatives to create poetic and provocative compositions about everyday life (Rush, 2005).

As film was influential on the big screen in Hollywood, video art changed the way that media was consumed at home and how stories are told to mass audiences. Rush (2005, p. 84) notes, "…by 1953, two thirds of American households had televisions; and by 1960, it was up to ninety percent, a fact which was to have a profound effect on the film industry." The medium of video helped journalism expand to involve "…on the spot news coverage" that continues today (Rush, 2005, p. 85). As new technology emerged, similar technological experiments occurred in video art, with artists working in film and fine arts adapting to the medium of video art. Though Andy

Warhol was one of the first artists to exhibit video art, Nam June Paik was one of the first video artists to create a "personal expression" of a commercial product (Rush, 2005, p. 87). For example, Paik's video installation piece, "TV Buddha," (1974) combines a live camera connected to a small monitor that faces a sitting Buddha (Rush, 2005). The installation is one of many in a series that illustrates the duality, and tension between the physical and digital: between producing, and experiencing material art and video art (Rush, 2005).

Though digital storytelling can be regarded as a personal expression with video, today the number of personal expressions on digital video are overwhelming, with video on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The latter two facilitate the creation of "personal stories" that are arguably inspired by the work of Vito Acconci and Bruce Nauman who were the first video artists in the 1970s–1980s to face the camera at close proximity (Rush, 2005). The abundance of digital media at our fingertips is alarming and of great concern for those with addictive tendencies. It is affecting some of the most vulnerable individuals, specifically young girls (Hansson, et al., 2012). Governments are rightfully uniting against the use of hateful live documentation of violent acts on social media. In the conclusion of this dissertation, I return to this discussion on the mediation and mediatization (Couldry, 2008) of digital storytelling.

One of the most influential, but largely unknown videos that I have seen is Japanese artist, Mako Idemitsu's "HIDEO, It's Me, Mama" (1983) (Rush, 2005, p. 93). It is an intelligent use of the television and video art that references current uses of the laptop computer and teleconferencing systems such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, and Skype. In the video, we see a family at the dinner table enjoying a meal together. Their eldest son, Hideo (referencing the name for the media itself, *video*), is also eating the same meal, but on the television, which sits on top of his parents' dining table (Rush, 2005). Idemitsu (1983) aimed to illustrate the experience of an overbearing parent, specifically Hideo's mother (Rush, 2005). Yet, in our digitally interconnected world today, ironically, it is normal for some families to eat together over Zoom, for example.

Given the dominance of digital media, it may be time to consider a reunion with material-based practice as a realignment instead. Digital storytellers can continue exploring approaches to

storytelling involving new technologies, such as how film artists overlapped negatives in the 1920s (Rush, 2005), and how Atchley III mixed software on the Apple computer in the 1990s. The debate about whether or not to work with Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies because they are "good," or "bad" is overly simplistic and lacks a critical lens. As history conveys, one can infer that artists and technologists are going to try working with AI despite, or because of these challenges. AI systems like "Dall:E" that translate words and sentences into images, have solidified concerns about representation, specifically of gender and race raised early in the advent of AI-based data visualization (Nicholas, 2022). I believe that it is necessary for women and non-binary people—especially racialized women—to begin to explore these technologies as a way of claiming this space and defining the ethical implications of AI.

As a cautionary note, a neoliberal perspective that storytelling in digital forms has gotten caught up in, as a tool to *write about* the other—to *give voice*, instead of working to elevate voice—is risky to pursue in a society that now values interdisciplinary, participatory, and collaborative research (Cunsolo-Willox…, 2012; Rolon-Dow, 2011). In situations where voices have been silenced, and where storytellers have resiliently emerged it can be empowering to a storyteller to reclaim their sense of individualism, by sharing *who* they are, versus *what* they are, as the "…unique existent…contrary to the individual invoked in modern and contemporary doctrines of individual rights—is in a constitutive relation with the other, with others" (Kottman, 2000, p. ix). Importantly, Kottman states,

> Philosophy's failure to name 'who' someone uniquely is…also signals a failure of traditional Western politics. As a result, the link between narration, and the revelation of 'who' someone is through that narration, offer—for Arendt, and for Cavarero—a new sense of politics, an alternative way of understanding human interaction, as the interaction of unique existents" (Kottman, 2000, p. ix).

Critically, by sharing *who* one is in narrative forms, such as a digital story, one realizes they are not *entirely* who they are called (Kottman, 2000). Kottman emphasizes, "What the life story contains…is "inessential" in-comparison to the relation between one's life and their (*sic)* life story, in terms of the desire that they have (*sic)* for that narration" (Kottman, 2000, p. xxii–xxiii). In support of this statement, Lenette, et al., (2015) cite Reismawa and Qunney's "…view that storytelling only constitutes one aspect of narrative, there is no "natural" or "correct way" for events to be sequenced and produce consequence" (Lenette, Cox, & Brough, 2015, p. 990).

From a technological point-of-view, the flexibility and structure that video editing software offers to filmmakers and digital storytellers facilitates the exploration and production of stories about *who* one is in-relation to others. Kottman (2000) believes that personal stories are always interwoven within the histories of other people, and they go on to say, "…each of us is narratable by the other, that is, we are dependent upon the other for the narration of our own life story, which begins from birth" (Kottman, 2000, p. ix).

In complement with representation of self, a core interest that arts-based storytellers and digital storytellers have is about the place of their individual story (Lambert & Hessler, 2018). Often stories are filled with discussions on what individuals have accomplished, or, in contrast, what they have lost in life. Though it is significant to know what people do, Frank (2011) states, "…what makes a good story is how the artfulness of the telling elaborates some truth…" and "…(W)hat makes a truthful story is its refusal of elaboration" (2012, Loc. 2011). I think that the process of storytelling—and digital storytelling—reveals more detail about who the storyteller is and their association with place. It is not necessarily the whole truth about the person that emerges in one digital story; rather, the method of digital storytelling draws out a transparency of personhood that is specific to the method (Fiddian-Green et al., 2019). It is vital that people create and share many stories about their experiences across their lifetime. In fact, it is dangerous to tell one story about oneself, and especially about another individual, or group. As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie stated in her 2009 TED speech, a single story occurs when you, "…show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become." Single stories are powerful in often disempowering ways, and they generate stereotypical perspectives that are limiting (Adichie, 2009). As Adichie (2009) stated at the end of her speech,

> Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

A single digital story is not the final digital story that one will create.

Youth Speak Out! digital storytelling workshops

In the Youth Speak Out! digital storytelling workshops in partnership with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and the Adoption Council of Canada (ACC), youth were

invited to tell their stories about being in care so that potential foster and adoptive parents, along with members of the child welfare and legal systems, could begin to understand what it is like to be in care. As an adoptee, witnessing the youth create and share their stories about adoption and foster care was enlightening, as they had so much to share and the confidence to recognize the similarities in and across each other's stories. Fiddian-Green et al., (2019) were one of the first research groups to unpack the impact of digital storytelling on storytellers and noted that an increase in self-efficacy and mastery of skill were the key drivers of transformative change through the digital storytelling process. The purpose of the workshops was for the youth to develop their own digital stories and other materials for advocacy that could be leveraged to generate social change. In all, 25 workshops took place across Canada, and over 200 digital stories were created (HeART Lab, 2020).[1] Dr. Allison Crawford, Director of Virtual Care and Clinician Scientist at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) is the project lead and invited me to co-facilitate three workshops.

After co-facilitating three workshops, I was left with many questions about who should see which stories and why. Through a discussion with my supervisory team, Dr. Sarah Flicker, and Dr. Allison Crawford, we came up with the research question, "What makes a great story?" This became the central query that I investigated.

1.1 Problem of Practice

As tools for advocacy and outreach, digital stories have enormous potential to reach and move audiences, possibly inspiring them to create and share their own stories, too. However, it is unclear why some stories successfully travel and inspire, whereas others are instantly forgotten. How digital stories are viewed and taken up by diverse audiences is under-studied. Arts, healthcare, and social service professionals represent three groups with access to transformational power. Understanding how these professionals engage with digital stories

[1] The workshops were co-organized by Dr. Allison Crawford at Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), The Executive Director of the Adoption Council of Canada (ACC), and freelance digital media producers.

created by youth in care may contribute to improving future digital storytelling workshop production experiences and dissemination efforts.

This dissertation refines the existing knowledge about digital storytelling by providing a model that describes the qualities of "What makes a great story?" from the perspectives of diverse professionals. Participants who watched the digital stories benefitted from thinking more deeply about experiences of foster care and digital storytelling practice in relation to their own work. The information learned in this study may also help people in the future create and share more compelling stories for advocacy purposes.

1.2 Challenge Statement

The challenge is that there are thousands of digital storytelling workshops taking place around the world and there is little published data about "What makes a great story?" With so many stories online, there is limited guidance on how to disseminate digital stories for maximal impact and how people working in multidisciplinary fields understand the value and potential of digital storytelling for mobilizing social change (Mitchell, et al., 2017).

1.3 Research Question and Purpose

In this study, I took up the opportunity to not only address the question, "What makes a great digital story?" but also delved into "What makes a great story?" to respond to this gap in the research. But how great is great?

In 1978, Bertram stressed the importance of being "cautious" when talking about good stories because "a criterion of goodness may tend to support mediocrity" (1978, p. 461). Attempts to measure stories by how *good* they are may also be reductive and may not capture the essential qualities of stories. A few authors have written about "What makes a good story?" and some of them have used children's stories as example cases (Bertram, 1978; McCabe, et al., 1984; Velleman, 2003; Baron & Bluck, 2011; Gubrium, 2015; O'Hara, 2017; and Hu et al., 2020). These studies reflect on how children's stories are written, structured, and employ common genres. The findings of their work include discussion about character development, story structure (Bertram, 1978; McCabe et al., 1984; Baron & Bluck, 2011; Gubrium, 2015), and

plot development (Bertram, 1978; Velleman, 2003; Baron & Bluck, 2011). Baron and Bluck (2011, p. 113) developed a Perceived Story Quality Index, which is a preliminary statistical tool that examines "…the relation between perceived story quality and the extent to which memory sharing serves psychosocial functions." The key difference between these studies and this dissertation is that the objectives of these studies were to find out about the perceptions of "What makes a good story?" for a general audience. By contrast, this dissertation involved an in-depth analysis about the perceptions of "What makes a great story?" for specific groupings of viewers.

In October 2018, YouGov completed a study to find out more about British citizens' sentiments on the question, "How good is good?" They "showed respondents a selection of adjectives from a list of 24 and asked them to score each on a scale from 0-10, with 0 being "very negative" and 10 being "very positive"" (Smith, 2018, para. 6). According to YouGov (Smith, 2018), "great" (average score= 7.76/10) is ranked higher on average than the word "good" (average score=6.92/10): a difference of 0.84 points (Smith, 2018).

When I first read the chart by YouGov (Smith, 2018), I thought about the impact of words on my feelings. I realized that I was thinking about and saying many of the lower ranked words that YouGov (Smith, 2018) reported on, rather than words or phrases like "very good," or "brilliant." When reflecting on the research question in my dissertation study, I was curious to hear what participants genuinely thought about the stories and I wanted to frame my question in a positive way. This was especially important to me given the difficult topic showcased in the stories that I was going to present to participants about experiences of aging out of foster care.

The focus and intention of this research was to understand how people working in multidisciplinary fields understand "What makes a great story?" along with their perceptions of the impact and value of digital storytelling. To discover the answer to this question, I reached out to 82 individuals and organizations. I was ultimately able to connect with and interview 35 participants in 11 countries over Skype. To complete my study I used a qualitative video elicitation method alongside semi-structured interviewing, and naturalistic observation techniques.

The findings from this study emerged from the interviews. Four core thematic attributes are discussed in-depth in Chapter 4:

Anticipation: Great digital stories convey evidence of forethought by the storyteller about the impact and value of the story with the audience.

Actualization: Clear and aesthetically pleasing visuals and sounds form great digital stories.

Affect: In response to hearing or viewing great digital stories, an audience feels a range of emotions that can compel them to change their outlook about a situation.

Authenticity: Great digital stories are authentic and honest and involve the sharing of personal experiences.

1.4 Chapter Descriptions

The first chapter of this dissertation is an introduction to the study overall. It offers an overview of what is to come. Chapter two provides a literature review about digital storytelling in the arts, healthcare, and social services. In chapter three, the methodological approach that I undertook to design, recruit, interview, and analyze the data is discussed. Chapter four explores the findings from the 35 interviews. Chapter five presents a discussion of the outcomes of multimodal reflexive practice and how they helped elucidate the four themes in this study. Chapter six includes a discussion about the findings. Chapter seven presents a conclusion and discussion of future recommendations.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter addresses how digital storytelling emerged and was taken up in the fields of the arts, healthcare, and education. While this chapter began during the proposal stage, it was completed after data collection ended as a way to inductively shape a new theory from the results (Charmaz, 2006). When approaching this body of literature, I identified three concerns that I have as an arts-based social science researcher: How are digital stories leveraged in each sector for social justice aims? What impact do the stories have? What might the future of digital storytelling look like in each sector?

Over the last 30 years, the practice of digital storytelling has reached diverse populations in the healthcare, fine arts, and social services sectors. Throughout this period, the staying power of digital storytelling has been constantly in flux due to the growth of digital technology. The research question that this dissertation addressed: "What makes a great story?" is inevitably affected by these changes. Hartley (2008, p. 201-202) asks, if, "…the digital storytelling form is better suited to (a) distribution via festival, broadcasting, or network, and whether the method can succeed without relying on the resources of education or community arts/ media organizations?" The latter question is important to consider now as digital storytelling proliferates in healthcare and educational settings. Resources for arts-based practitioners in these domains are scarce (Hartley, 2008). Indeed, many healthcare practitioners bring multidisciplinary skills to their roles, including arts-based and arts-informed techniques. At the same time, funding for the arts in most neoliberal economies is strained. Thus, there is a need for both increased and ongoing collaboration between the arts, healthcare, and education sectors to sustain arts-based practices such as digital storytelling.

As the method has grown, a few key texts have codified the practice. These include: The StoryCenter (Lambert, 2013; Lambert & Hessler, 2018), and "Story Circle," by John Hartley and Kelly McWilliam (Eds.) (2009), which emerged after the Capture Wales BBC digital storytelling work in the early 2000s. This chapter builds off these works and further elucidates the ways that digital storytelling is practiced in three domains: (1) the arts (2) healthcare; and (3) education. Though I have divided this chapter according to these three domains, there are many overlaps.

2.1 Literature Search Procedures

The literature search was collaborative and iterative: my doctoral supervisor (Dr. Sarah Flicker), and committee member (Dr. Allison Crawford) shared a bibliography of foundational arts and health texts on digital storytelling. From there, I searched on JStor, Taylor & Francis Inc., and ProQuest for terms such as "digital storytelling" and "arts", "digital storytelling" and "health", and "digital storytelling" and "education". I also used the "Tweepsmap" (https://tweepsmap.com) platform to receive a consolidated daily summary of the latest postings on Twitter related to the hashtag, "#digitalstorytelling." Through that daily email, I discovered many digital storytelling arts and education-based projects and grey literature that was published before and during the COVID-19 pandemic that I discuss in those sections.

Tweepsmap summaries before the COVID-19 pandemic often included scholarly papers or conference proceedings. After the COVID-19 pandemic, I discovered additional projects and online digital storytelling work, some of which extends beyond the scope of this literature review. Upon review, I discovered patterns and gaps that emerged in discussions about the future directions of digital storytelling and continued to search for those topics on OpenGrey.eu. There, I found examples of interactive digital storytelling projects and digital storytelling projects that involve gaming, which Miller (2020) indicated is the next wave of digital storytelling.

2.2 Digital Storytelling in the Arts

As mentioned, Digital storytelling emerged from an arts-based practice by Dana Winslow Atchley III. He enjoyed remixing and experimenting with software on the new Apple computer in 1992 (Pink, 2019). Many artists experiment with materials and they often work in a studio among other artists to collaborate and critique each other's work. In this review of the use of digital storytelling in the arts, I address how the method is presented in museums and in interactive online formats.

2.2.1 Digital Storytelling in Museums

Museums, which are often centered on memory making and public pedagogy, have increasingly been sites of experimental digital storytelling. Referencing the work of the late German Canadian

physicist Ursula Franklin (Order of Canada, Order of Ontario, Fellowship of the Royal Society of Canada), Watkins and Russo (2009) note, "We propose that one of its (digital storytelling) great strengths comes from the very fact that it is a *prescriptive* (emphasis added), even a restrictive co-creative format" (p. 271). In contrast to holistic, craft-based technologies like printmaking tools, prescriptive technologies such as a brush tool in photoshop are more efficient and become standardized (Franklin, 1989). Watkins and Russo's (2009) comment about the "restrictive" format of digital storytelling is intriguing, as it may help a storyteller with containing their final product during the creative process if there are restrictions on technologies used to create their story. At the same time, prescriptive technologies involved in producing digital stories, such as a digital camera and computer video editing software, can pose limits to creative expression. As they note, the post-production stage, in contrast to a holistic working model, is socially isolating (Watkins & Russo, 2009). With an interest in making the prescriptive process of digital storytelling interactive, Watkins and Russo (2009) collaborated with the Australia Museum to co-create digital stories with a "microdocumentary" approach (p. 278). Community digital media experts also saw the potential of the concept and helped the museum create "digital artifacts" of the materials in their collections (Watkins & Russo, 2008, p. 277).

In an "intergenerational atelier," participants in Ferri, Mangiatordi, and Pozzali's (2010) digital storytelling study, "…developed instruments and methodologies in order to help overcome the intergenerational divide" (p. 453). The digital storytelling project that Ferri, et al., (2010, p. 457) sought to facilitate, was to "recover the historical memory" between generations. They looked at artifacts and object-making, along with "how places change overtime" (Ferri, Mangiatordi, & Pozzali, 2010, p. 456). By bringing youth and older adults together in a digital storytelling workshop, participants identified and familiarized themselves with generational gaps in their knowledge. In a similar project involving virtual and augmented reality, Widiaty et al., (2018) completed a study involving digital storytelling for education about batiks that tells stories of cultural and historical people, places, and things. They use 3-D modeling to take the virtual reality (VR) experience a step further, and created figures based on tessellated batik designs and monument figures (Widiaty et al., 2018). Like Ferri et al.,'s (2010) work, Widiaty et al., (2018) made the storytelling process interactive, enabling participants to learn about the meaning and history of the monuments that they passed by every day.

In Rome, Italy, MeltingPro (2020) worked with museums to create digital storytelling workshops where they taught students about the artifacts in the museum (MeltingPro, 2020).[2] In the project, they,

> …aimed at bringing together a group of scientific museums and research centres committed to provide learning opportunities for adult people. Diamond aimed at implementing pilot activities within scientific museums addressed to socially disadvantaged adults, also using ICT, namely digital storytelling and focusing on the issue of impact measurement and evaluation. (para. 2).

In the MeltingPro workshops, students created digital stories about artifacts, and they learned how to make digital stories at the same time; facilitators also worked from the StoryCenter model. The digital storytelling workshops provided social connection for underrepresented adult participants.

At an online workshop on May 16, 2020, Karen Worcman, the lead founder of Museum of the Person in São Paulo Brazil, talked with Joe Lambert about the fact that they "were doing the same thing at the same time in the same moment with digital storytelling." (personal communication, Joe Lambert). Worcman said that the museum "started in 1991 as a virtual museum of life stories of everyone. A chain of life stories of everyone who wanted to tell their stories." Before working with Jewish immigrants in Rio, Worcman decided to expand to a museum to recognize the stories of all people. They showed stories on subways, platforms, kiosks, projects, with over 80,000 stories, physical exhibitions, and presentations in public schools. At the end of the workshop, Worcman talked about creating a diary for the future—a sort of "'What's going on that we can learn from later?' A 'video ask'." I thought that question was important to ask with a museology context during a pandemic, when there is a great opportunity to create and share videos with a specific focus to reach a specific audience.

Mexican artist Teresa Margolles (1963–), South African artist Candice Breitz (1972–), and German artist Julian Rosefeldt (1965–) exhibited their fine arts installations and pieces at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Each artist works with the techniques of digital

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[2] MeltingPro (https://meltingpro.org/en/) consists of a group of 10 women who wish to make digital storytelling available to people living in the environs of Rome, Italy, and across the country.

storytelling in their work, including the use of a personal perspective and storytelling in time-based video art.

Teresa Margolles' "Mundos" exhibition was a stirring, immersive experience that addressed the issue of violence experienced by women in Guatemala City (Zeppetelli & Garcia, 2017). In "Tela Bordada (embroidered fabric)," Margolles presents an embroidered cloth that was created by Indigenous activist women from Guatemala City. The piece hung beside a video monitor which showed a documentary of women embroidering the cloth in the traditional Mayan embroidery style (Zeppetelli & Garcia, 2017). In the gallery, viewers were drawn into the stories that the women told each other, and the stories told by the threads added to the aura of the cloth (Zeppetelli & Garcia, 2017). The cloth was originally used to "absorb the bodily fluids of a woman murdered in Guatemala City" (Zeppetelli & Garcia, 2017). Though intense, this piece provoked less of a visceral reaction for me in comparison to the other pieces in the exhibit that included: 1) water from a morgue that formed and coalesced into bubbles that floated onto an absorbent carpet below, 2) the ruins of houses where women were murdered that were demolished and reassembled into a long brick, and 3) a video of a water truck pouring out onto a road to wash away blood from women who were murdered there (Zeppetelli & Garcia, 2017). Margolles' work is provocative and challenges the way people think about stories that are told, in contrast to stories that often go unheard.

In a darkened room with freestanding, life-sized video screens arranged in the shape of a circle, curators Zeppetelli and Shiffman (2018) presented Candice Breitz' "I'm your man (A portrait of Leonard Cohen), 2017". In the round, you see and hear video footage of a group of individuals standing, sitting, and dancing while singing "I'm your Man," a song by Leonard Cohen (Zeppetelli & Shiffman, 2018). In the videos, each individual is dressed up and dressed down to express their affinity to Cohen (Zeppetelli & Shiffman, 2018). It is a fun and creative piece that illustrates the power and influence of Cohen's song with people across generations, and the power of song, song writing, and the stories that connect the performers to the songs.

In the fall of 2019, "Manifesto" by Berlin-based artist, Julian Rosefeldt was presented at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Thirteen oversized screens were presented in a large gallery and mounted onto stands with speakers. The piece by Rosefeldt features 13 video-based

stories with Australian actress Cate Blanchett performing in 13 roles, for example: a factory worker, a news anchor, a person who is homeless, a teacher who points to a whiteboard and recites the message that says, "Nothing is original." Curators, LeTourneux and Johnstone (2018, para. 2) state,

> All of the monologues spoken—actually, the only words spoken in the piece—are formed out of various artists' manifestos published over the last 150 years or so. Rosefeldt offers us thirteen collages, drawing on the writings of Futurists, Dadaists, Fluxus artists, Suprematists, Situationists, Dogme 95, and the musings of artists, architects, dancers and filmmakers such as Claes Oldenburg, Yvonne Rainer, Kazimir Malevich, André Breton, Elaine Sturtevant, Sol LeWitt and Jim Jarmusch.

The cinematic effect of the large screens was effective and Blanchett, a natural storyteller, was in character for each role. For movie fans who are familiar with Blanchett's work, this piece by Rosenfeldt departs from any expectation and makes a viewer consider acting on the statements within each manifesto. It demonstrates the transformative effect of the story and the "suspension of disbelief" (Frye, 1964) that occurs when a story is so enjoyable that the audience becomes immersed in the narrative. However, like the movies, Blanchett appeared slightly bigger than reality on the screens.

In each of the exhibits described above, the space of the art gallery makes the digital story immersive and embodied, with visceral, unsettling responses, dancing, singing, and laughing. Each piece provokes the viewer to think differently about past and present experiences, and to shift their outlook on their future—perhaps to become inspired to change the way that they previously thought about situations in everyday life. They are also all curated in particular ways and spaces to add multi-sensory dimensions that might amplify their messages in ways that are not experienced on smaller screen-based media such as a mobile phone or computer.

2.2.2 Web-Based & Interactive Digital Storytelling (IDS)

As approaches to digital storytelling become more interactive, storytellers are exploring the use of web-based platforms to tell stories about memories of past and present experiences (Miller, 2020). This form often overlaps with the technique of "Story Mapping," which involves geolocating stories on a map. For example, in "Parle Lavage" http://parlelavage.com/ by Miller, Hilts, Levy, Miller, Mehran, and Rioux (2018) the stories by people who frequent various laundromats in Montréal are located on specific areas of an interactive map (Miller et al., 2018).

As a tourist, one might explore all areas to learn about what the locals have to say, and as a local, one can gather new information or listen to the gossip. The web-based and interactive digital storytelling projects discussed in this section challenge the viewer to think about the "on-line" environment, and if they are actually "in-line"—as the projects are immersive and storied. One often loses track of time and space while engaging with the platforms.

Early in my doctoral program at York University, I investigated the subject of digital curation, as I was working part-time as an Assistant Curator with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in their digital exhibition called, "The Body Electric/Le Corps Électrique" (https://thebodyelectric-lecorpselectrique.com). In the inaugural year of the exhibit, Dr. Max Montalvo, an Emergency Physician by night and artist by day, exhibited his web based digital story artwork, "161! Factorial". The web-based story exists in two forms: a film and a randomized version of the film. In the Press kit, Montalvo (2013) notes,

> When showing a colleague the randomized version of the film, he suggested randomizing the 161 scenes each time the film plays. The mathematical calculation for the total number of versions of the film is 161! That number is 7.59102816 which is larger than all the atoms in the observable universe. (Montalvo, 2013, p. 8).

Each time the website is refreshed, the film appears as a new film. As a viewer you are left with repeating the pattern of constructing a story and trying to find a plot; it is an almost infinite play with the suspension of disbelief. Due to the many possible ways that the story can be viewed, it piques your curiosity about what you might see next.

Web-based storytelling can reach a multidisciplinary audience; it has the potential to be used as an activist platform to engage the public in taking a stand against discriminatory policies. At the annual Computer-Human Interaction (CHI) conference in Montréal in April 2018, Michie, Balaam, McCarthy, Osadchiy, and Morrissey (2018) used digital storytelling in a study addressing the issue of anti-abortion sentiment in Ireland. The study objectives were to support women with having "critical conversations around the use of sensitive abortion narratives" (Michie et al., 2018, p. 357). Their activist design strategy involved workshops with participants in Ireland to develop a "protosite" (prototype website) that used abortion narratives to advocate for pro-choice reproductive rights (Michie et al., 2018). They used the "protosite" and research as a platform to activate social change in the design community specifically (Michie et al., 2018).

There are many important web-based storytelling projects and platforms that discuss the Holocaust. Three high-level examples are discussed in this section: “Stories of the Holocaust” on Google Arts & Culture, https://artsandculture.google.com/project/the-holocaust; the “Last Chance Testimony Collection”, https://sfi.usc.edu/news/2019/07/24761-usc-shoah-foundation-redoubles-efforts-collect-testimonies-holocaust-survivors-it and “The Anne Frank House Secret Annex” interactive web story, https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/secret-annex/landing/. Aside from the latter example, these web-based storytelling projects present “life stories” in a digital format, which gives an international audience the opportunity to listen to the testimonial stories online and learn about the effects of the Holocaust from the voices of survivors.

“Stories of the Holocaust” on the Google Cultural Institute (2021) sheds light on the atrocities that Jewish people and people of other races experienced during WWII. An educational platform, the web-based storytelling experience is interactive and stories are organized chronologically, by topic, and in sections to highlight specific stories, for example, “Personal accounts of suffering and survival” and “Stories that should never be forgotten” (Google Cultural Institute, 2021). Indeed, stories of Holocaust survivors should never be forgotten. The “Stories of the Holocaust” page on the Google Cultural Institute provides an in-depth, video-based overview for youth and teenage groups, along with adults to learn about the Holocaust, Anne Frank, “Art and the Holocaust”, and about Jewish life before and after the Holocaust (2021).

The “Last Chance Testimony Collection” produced by the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation: The Institute for Visual History and Education includes a collection of more than 50,000 life stories of survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust (Kuznia, 2019; USC Shoah Foundation, 2021). The project was founded by American film director Steven Spielberg in 1994 with the objective of documenting and preserving the stories, given the older age of many survivors (USC Shoah Foundation, 2021). To create the stories, there is a 360-degree green screen curtain with multiple cameras that record the speaker who sits comfortably in the middle (CBS Interactive Inc., 2020). The result is a single video and hologram of the speaker who is telling their story, and the hologram can be presented on stage in an auditorium as if the speaker were there (CBS Interactive Inc., 2020). Significantly, audience members can ask questions to the speaker, and the speaker will respond using natural language processing (a form

of artificial reality) to process the question and respond to it based on what is asked (CBS Interactive Inc., 2020).

From the "Stories of the Holocaust" on the Google Cultural Institute, Google Arts & Culture, there is a section called, "A virtual tour of Anne Frank's Home," and on that page, there is a link to the home website, which includes an interactive web-based story about Anne Frank's Secret Annex: https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/secret-annex/landing/. Upon entering the 3-D rendering of the Secret Annex, you see the bookcase and a play button (Google Cultural Institute, 2021). After clicking the button, the first of many stories about the Secret Annex is displayed on the site (Google Cultural Institute, 2021). When you close that section, you can continue exploring the Annex and watching more stories (Google Cultural Institute, 2021). After a while of looking around and listening to the stories, one might forget about the online space and become immersed in the stories and Annex. Though the virtual tour does not replace the actual Annex, it is well curated and sensitively explains how Anne and her family tried to stay safe, up until they were taken to Auschwitz in August 1944.

What these three projects show is that there is a need to share stories of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses of the atrocities that took place during the second World War for those who may never have an opportunity to visit or who may not have a chance to meet a survivor in person. The digital format of the stories does not replace the experience of sitting with a survivor as they share their story or visiting the Annex where the Frank family was hiding. However, there are a wide range of advanced technologies including augmented and virtual reality, immersive video technologies, and artificial reality that are used in innovative ways to create digital life stories to document the stories of survivors for generations to come so that we never forget what happened.

2.2.3 Story Mapping

Story mapping is a form of content curation using a variety of geographic information system (GIS) technologies. The stories that are presented on the map(s) are chosen by the story mapper and/or facilitator (MacFarlane, Hardinge, & Mina, 2018; StoryCenter Geolocation Projects, n.d.). As MacFarlane et al., (2018, para. 3) express, before cartography became known as a scientific

approach, it was “an art that mingled knowledge and supposition, that told stories about places, and in which astonishment, love, memory and fear were part of its projections.” Story maps are (for the most part) representational (MacFarlane et al., 2018), and like a digital storytelling video, stories that are not shared are not seen. There are many story mapping projects that involve the personal telling and sharing of stories. What is interesting about story mapping is the generalizability of the method, the pedagogical potential, and ability to share and disseminate stories on a global scale.

It is notable that StoryCenter Founder, Joe Lambert has facilitated story mapping workshops using Mapbuilder.net since co-developing the digital storytelling method in the early 2000s (See http://www.story-mapping.org/projects.html). In February 2021, Lambert and team relaunched a story mapping project, http://wp.story-mapping.org/ that focuses on place-making again, and the original stories are archived on their new site. The story maps are about walking tours, shorelines, and childhood memory place mapping. The “Stories in Motion” workshop during the pandemic offered participants an opportunity to reflect on the changes to their local surroundings as many stores closed, others opened, and nature flourished due in part to a reduction in emissions from cars and trucks as people worked from home.

Since the early story mapping work in the early 2000s, the technologies involved in story mapping have enhanced the practice, with the incorporation of audio, video, and interactive maps. For example, National Geographic’s “Out of Eden Walk” (2013) features American journalist, Paul Salopek who is walking the path of the Silk Road for ten years. Salopek talks with people that he meets along the walk in Eastern and Northeastern Asia, and he documents the changing environment and the effect of climate change, with a methodology that he calls “slow journalism”. It is a 10-year walk that features stories that are presented in chapters to make it accessible to view online (National Geographic, 2013).

A mobile story mapping project called “Talking Statues” http://www.talkingstatues.com/ was launched in Copenhagen and has expanded across Europe and the United States of America (Fox, 2013). In the Talking Statues project, there is a website to promote the project and a mobile application for visitors to listen to the stories as they encounter the statues. The mobile application includes walking tours that people can take to learn about the histories and life stories

of statues that honour important figures from the past (Fox, 2013). Like the augmented and virtual reality project by Widiaty et al., (2018), the "Talking Statues" interaction is simple: scan a QR code on a plaque below a sculpture in a park and hear audio-recorded stories about the sculptures, as if the sculptures are *talking* through the mobile application (Fox, 2013). On the "Talking Statues" website, Fox describes how he thought of the concept:

> One day, the idea of letting the statues talk with their own voices came to me. The idea seemed simple and straightforward, and I knew right away that I had found the right concept. I had been looking for something that was different and would attract attention and, through this method, the statues would now bring their stories to life. (Fox, 2013, para. 4).

Each story is told as a monologue as if the statue is telling the story, and it is up to the listener to use their imagination to think about what it would be like if the statue actually talked (Fox, 2013). Recently, American celebrity actors and performers Viola Davis, Meryl Streep, and Rita Moreno recorded monologues for key historical figures that are commemorated as statues in Central Park, New York, including Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, respectively (Fox, 2013). As many monuments and statues are being removed for good reasons, the "Talking Statues" project uses digital storytelling in a creative way to teach people about important historical figures.

In the "Mapping Blackness" project, Dr. Carla LynDale Bishop of Denton University plans to map and archive Black communities in the USA (Mapping Blackness, 2021; See https://blackpublicmedia.org/360projects/mapping-blackness/). Prior to this initiative, Bishop collaborated on "The Freedman Town 2.0 project", which was a project that mapped a settlement of freed slaves in Denton, Texas (UNT News Service, 2018; See https://news.unt.edu/freedmanapp/). The "On the Square Exhibition" involved augmented reality with an application called "Aurasma." The mobile application responds to a photograph and then "…a video pops up that tells the history of that particular image" (University of North Texas News Releases, 2018, para. 3). This story mapping project will bring the stories closer to exhibit visitors as they view the photographs.

The story mapping examples featured here engage with personal, interpersonal, and geopolitical issues including climate change, culture, and Black history. An evolving method, the story map platforms are used as persuasive platforms to sway political leaders towards social change. As it says on the StoryCenter Story Mapping website, "story mapping is meant as a call

to action" (StoryCenter Geolocation Projects, n.d., para. 1). In comparison to stories experienced in an art gallery, story mapping provokes deeper thought about what there is in the world, what is missing, who is left out as the subjects or participants of the story maps, and who is included, or excluded, and why. With the evidence of where the location of stories are on a map and where they are not, story maps challenge viewers to consider "What can be done in response to witnessing a story map in order to create meaningful social change?"

As expressed in this review, the arts employ a wide range of tools and techniques to tell great stories at museums and in web-based and interactive formats. The experimental and experiential qualities of artistic approaches to digital storytelling reflect the creative zeal that Atchley applied in the early '90s to develop digital storytelling (Pink, 2019). Arts-based approaches to digital storytelling challenge the idea that the "final" piece must be presented in a binary movie file format on a computer monitor or widescreen.

The examples discussed in this section show that the ways that digital stories are presented or curated is as important as the stories themselves. The projects and examples in this review include digital stories presented in multidimensional and multimodal formats to engage an audience in specific and serendipitous ways. In some examples, the method known as digital storytelling is not centred in the work, but the work would not exist without the underlying process of digital storytelling by the artist, see for example in "Tela Bordada (embroidered fabric)" by Teresa Margolles (Zeppetelli & Garcia, 2017). Whereas in web-based and interactive projects, such as Parle Lavage (2019), the Talking Statues project (Fox, 2013), and EarthSpeakr (Eliasson, 2021), it is evident that digital storytelling is a way of gathering knowledge from multiple perspectives. In the arts, great stories are interactive, immersive, and actively engage an audience in a critical reflection about the historical and current state of the world.

2.3 Digital Storytelling in Healthcare

In "*What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review*" (Fancourt & Finn, 2019) reviewed over 3,000 studies and found that, "photography and digital storytelling can enhance the understanding of complex health issues" among community healthcare workers (p. 27). By understanding patient experiences through listening and viewing

their stories, healthcare workers can become more empathetic. In surgery and invasive procedures, digital storytelling has helped reduce anxiety (Fancourt & Finn, 2019). In a semi-experimental study that Fancourt and Finn (2019) mentioned by Moghimian et al., (2019), patients awaiting open heart surgery who viewed digital stories created by other patients experienced less anxiety than patients in the non-intervention control group.

Digital storytelling (DST) has also allowed youth to reclaim their voice in healthcare systems that have traditionally silenced youth due to their age or social status. In a study by Gubrium et al., (2016), participants expressed an interest in telling their own stories, "versus being someone that stories are told about" (p. 159). Participants experienced catharsis when telling, and listening to stories (Gubrium et al., 2016). Importantly, the authors note that "this is one of the first studies to assess the benefits of the DST process for workshop participants" (Gubrium et al., 2016, p. 159).

Gubrium et al., (2016) have identified that the "process of constructing a coherent narrative through individual expressive writing gives participants a sense of control over their health or experience and can help to create goals for the future, resulting in improved overall health" (p. 161). This is a case of "easier said than done"; writing a personal story for the purposes of sharing it in a digital story is not easy to do. Interestingly, Maunder and Hunter (2015) describe how narrative coherence relates to adult attachment behaviour. Their research found that one's ability to tell a coherent story illustrates a secure attachment pattern (Maunder & Hunter, 2015).[i]

In Stenhouse, Tait, Hardy, and Sumner's study on creating digital stories with people diagnosed with early-stage dementia (2013), participants initially had trouble with writing coherent stories. By the end of the workshop, participants expressed greater confidence with the stories they produced. In addition to constructing a coherent story, participants experienced enhanced self-efficacy and mastery of skill when creating digital stories together (Stenhouse, Tait, Hardy, & Sumner, 2013). For people with dementia who are often excluded from research, this study reaffirms the benefits of trying something new, taking risks, sharing stories with a supportive audience, and feeling confident and self-sufficient (Stenhouse, Tait, Hardy, & Sumner, 2013).

In a scoping review of the use of digital storytelling for mental health in 15 studies, De Vecchi, Kenny, Dickson-Swift, and Kidd (2016, p. 185) found that the benefits of digital storytelling include: stress reduction, understanding interpersonal relationship dynamics, and aiding in suicide prevention. When healthcare providers created digital stories with "consumers" they learned about the experiences more deeply and empathized with them (De Vecchi, Kenny, Dickson-Swift, & Kidd, 2016).

One of the "key findings/issues" that De Vecchi, et al., (2016, p. 186) highlight from Goodman and Newman (2014), is a "[R]eduction in all measures (of stress, anxiety, depression, and anger in young women) from participation in the process of both storytelling groups". I was inspired to investigate this finding as Goodman and Newman (2014) found that adolescent girls have high levels of stressors due to social pressures at school, and online; yet they reported that engagement in storytelling (oral, or digital) reduced their stress, anxiety, and depression. Many papers included in this review described the digital storytelling process as "…therapeutic, healing, and transformational" (De Vecchi et al., 2016, p. 190). Despite these compelling findings, there is currently not much literature available on the use of digital storytelling in mental healthcare (De Vecchi et al., 2016). This need is addressed in the scoping review by Fancourt and Finn (2019) as well. As De Vecchi et al. (2016) also found, few studies report on the benefits of interprofessional education and reflexivity when hosting digital storytelling workshops in healthcare settings.

In a digital storytelling project by Bunnell, et al. (2017), U.S. Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) share digital stories about surviving combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Digital storytelling was employed to help people work through the stigma associated with living with PTSD as a Veteran of War (Bunnell, et al., 2017). Like the findings by De Vecchi et al., (2016) and Fancourt and Finn (2019), Bunnell et al., (2017) found that "when compared to basic technology-mitigated education, digital storytelling leads to better achievement, critical thinking, and learning motivation," (p. 2). This result can be used to market digital storytelling workshops

in almost any domain, but with Veterans living with PTSD, the effects of a workshop are clearly transformative to their health and well-being.[3]

In a study with rural youth experiencing first-episode psychosis, Boydell, et al. (2018) used digital storytelling to help youth feel less isolated by their experiences. After creating a digital story, the youth felt like they accomplished a goal and were free to be creative in a more deliberate way than before—like a door had opened (Boydell, et al., 2018).

At the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), four youth ambassadors share their stories on a website, "Our Voice Matters", https://ourvoicematters.net to reclaim their voice, destigmatize youth mental health, and provide resources for other youth to access quality care (Our Voice Matters, 2020). The four stories feature youth who have lived experience of mental illness (Our Voice Matters, 2020). Facing the camera throughout most of their stories, each story ends with the youth ambassador talking about what they are doing now as ambassadors at CAMH (Our Voice Matters, 2020). On the website, each story comes with additional text-based information about the youth ambassador, and the programs that they work with at CAMH (Our Voice Matters, 2020). It is unclear if they created the stories themselves, or if the stories were created about them with their input. Nonetheless, the digital stories encourage visitors to the website to witness the person behind the text-based story.

After Anderson and Mack (2019) facilitated digital storytelling with "African American youth residing in low-income, urban areas" (p. 43), participants reported feeling more attuned to their stories and lives in-general and having "a sense of control and responsibility over their lives…" (p. 50). Anderson and Mack (2019) report that they dissuaded youth from re-telling stories about past negative experiences; instead, they encouraged the youth to express how they felt now, noting that doing so would support the youth with feeling more in-control of their

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[3] In a relatively new therapeutic intervention called, "Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Relations and Narrative Storytelling" (STAIR/NST) (Herman, 2015, p. 270), the participant/patient is instructed to re-tell a story about a traumatic experience while focusing on "self-care, emotion regulation, and relationships in the present". It has helped participants experience a reduction in symptoms of PTSD (Herman, 2015). I am not aware of STAIR/NST being used in a digital storytelling context, but it seems that Bunnell et al., (2017) have achieved this effect with the method of digital storytelling.

experiences and hopeful for the future. Anderson and Mack (2019) likely used a model of trauma-informed care that Herman (2015) recommends, which involves present-focused discussions in the first stage of trauma recovery.

One of the important goals of health communications is to present techniques to empower people to lead healthy, active lives despite experiencing illness (Schiavo, 2014). In "The renewal of generosity" (Frank, 2004, Loc. 93), the technique of "thinking with stories" is offered as an approach to storytelling in a healthcare setting. The idea is for healthcare practitioners to tell stories in coherent ways by thinking with the story in-mind, rather than thinking of a string of events, for example, 'this happened, and then that happened'. Similarly, Rita Charon (2006) wrote about the concept of "narrative competence", which is the ability to effectively write and share a story about one's life experiences (Charon, 2006). This can be challenging when stories are difficult to tell. Furthermore, drawing from Taub-Pervizpour (2009), it can be hard to listen to difficult stories too. They note:

> While much of what we do focused on helping these youth tell their stories, we must also begin to consider what happens to us as we listen to our young collaborators' stories. Listen deeply, the Centre for Digital Storytelling website commands. And then, once we have listened deeply, what are we to do?… [W]e need a critical engagement that requires us to do business with our responsibilities to these young people now that their voices have been raised. (Taub-Pervizpour, 2009, p. 251).

On the one hand, youth participants who have important stories to share need to share the stories in ways that are meaningful to them, rather than to continue creating stories for an organizational objective (Taub-Pervizpour, 2009). On the other hand, facilitators may not have the resources to support storytellers with the fallout of sharing difficult stories. From my perspective, I think it is risky for digital storytelling facilitators to encourage or discourage storytellers to share difficult stories. From an ethical and healthcare standpoint, this facilitation approach must be made with great care.

In this section, almost all the examples that I reviewed involve digital storytelling with participants. Indeed, there are a lot of publications that centre participant narratives. As Fiddian-Green et al., (2019) and Flicker et al., (2020) noted, participants also learn from listening to each other's stories at the end of a workshop in a digital storytelling screening. In their study, which "focuses on individual outcomes from participation in a group-based process" (Fiddian-Green et al., 2019, p. 511), Fiddian-Green et al., (2019) supported participants with techniques of

listening, dialogue, and "building group critical consciousness" (p. 507), with reference to Freire. In contrast, Flicker et al., (2020) noticed the benefits along with "feelings of anxiety and vulnerability" that participants can feel when they are invited to share their stories (p. 806). At a group-based digital storytelling workshop, Fiddian-Green et al., (2019) emphasized the need for expertise in "navigating group dynamics" and good facilitation (p. 510). In healthcare, there are many opportunities for providers to report on clients/patients, but in Fiddian-Green et al.'s (2019) and Flicker et al.'s (2020) workshops, participants developed a sense of mastery and agency through telling their own stories. Many examples in this section illustrate the benefits of digital storytelling on health and well-being overall. Great stories do not necessarily emerge from positive health outcomes, but through the completion of coherent narratives, creative expression of challenging circumstances that a patient overcame, and the personal and honest effort to portray life experiences that may affect anyone in a community.

2.4 Digital Storytelling in Education

The following sections discuss how digital storytelling is applied in educational settings, specifically in science education for climate action and social justice, and how it is taught to facilitators.

2.4.1 Digital Storytelling in Science Education

In science education, digital storytelling is an accessible and practical method to give students a way to apply what they are learning in order to translate it into an engaging presentation. With online learning now, students like Maryam Tsegaye are using the method (perhaps without knowing that it is a method) to explain their own innovative approaches to science-based learning. In educational settings, Lowenthal (2009) notes that students often express a reluctance to share emotion in their digital storytelling work; however, Lowenthal (2009) believes that the benefits of digital storytelling in school settings are to elevate the storyteller's voice and allow students to be creative in a context that traditionally does not give space for the expression of personal emotional experiences.

Unsurprisingly, there are a wide range of scholarly articles on digital storytelling in science education. Science educators are often seeking novel ways to teach challenging concepts to students. For example, Yilmaz et al., 2018 used digital storytelling to make learning mathematical fractions more accessible to students. Lowenthal (2009) notes that, "[D]igital storytelling is quickly capturing the hearts and imaginations of educators because it combines traditional storytelling with modern-day pop culture and technology" (p. 253). To focus on a specific area, I looked at seven studies in scholarly articles and conference proceedings that involve qualitative and quantitative data about the efficacy of digital storytelling in a classroom.

Digital storytelling is well suited to a synchronous in-person or on-line classroom environment because there are specific stages involved in the process (Lambert & Hessler, 2018). In mathematics, the structure that digital storytelling provides can be useful for students who are learning about fractions. In Turkey, Yilmaz et al., (2018) sought to use digital storytelling to reduce the misconceptions about challenges of learning about fractions. They pre-created the digital story as a teaching tool and showed the digital story to youth to teach them about the correct way to write fractions (Yilmaz et al., 2018). After viewing the digital story, youth wrote out the fractions correctly in comparison to before when they flipped the base number with the top number (Yilmaz et al., 2018). As a video elicitation (Sayre, 2001) study, this approach to using the principles of digital storytelling to create a teaching video is an effective novel contribution to the hybrid application of the methods of video elicitation and digital storytelling in the literature.

After noticing the challenges of using pre-existing video production software to create digital stories, Multisita, Niemi, and Hamilton (2017) created a digital storytelling tool, "MoVIE" for three purposes: to create digital stories to share around the world, to create digital stories to learn about the method, and to connect schools in other countries that worked with the authors on a research partnership. Compared to a video production program, MoVIE "enables users to record video clips using their mobile devices, upload the clips to the MoViE website, and to create video stories using the clips that they and their collaborators have recorded" (Multisita et al., 2017, p. 695). After exploring the MoVIE application, students posed in-depth research questions that aligned with the course design (Multisita et al., 2017). As a pilot study, the authors

noted that students experienced difficulties with the interface, but this is a common challenge in application design (Multisita et al., 2017).

In September 2020, Maryam Tsegaye became the first student in Canada to win a $500,000 international science competition (Breakthrough, 2020; Malbeuf, 2020). While in lockdown and studying from home, Tsegaye took a chance to submit to the annual Breakthrough Junior Challenge, which "asks students from around the world to create a video that explains a scientific principle to the public" (Malbeuf, 2020, para. 3; Breakthrough, 2020). In Tsegaye's video, she tells a three-minute story about how quantum tunnelling works (Malbeuf, 2020). Tsegaye's three-minute video is reasonably understandable to a layperson and features Tsegaye explaining the concepts clearly with some of her own hand-drawn illustrations. Tsegaye's notebook shows a storyboard and sketches of her creative process (Malbeuf, 2020).

Tsegaye is among a generation of youth who are creating stories for display on social media platforms, and they seem to have an advanced awareness that they have a limited amount of time in a media-rich world to capture the attention of a specific audience. With the influx of social media video stories, I think that this phenomenon is worthwhile to consider when thinking about the sustainability of the method and its technoscientific (Ihde, 2009) trajectory into interactive storytelling (Miller, 2020). In an educational setting, I think it is important that educators provide students with the structure of the digital storytelling method and that students can explore and contribute to the method in novel ways like Tsegaye has.

2.4.2 Digital Storytelling for Climate Action & Social Justice

In the brilliant article "Language of Appeasement" published in "Inside Higher Ed," Dafina-Lazarus Stewart explains that equity and justice must be the "yardstick by which leaders measure progress instead of merely diversity and inclusion" which often encompasses the inclusion of some, not all equally or equitably (2017, para. 27). Two ways that digital storytelling is being used to advance social justice initiatives is in climate action and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following Greta Thunberg's stirring call to action via video for an international strike against slow climate change policies on September 16, 2018, youth climate action took off around the

world. In the summer of 2020, Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967) launched the “Earth Speakr” artwork and digital storytelling application for mobile devices that is free to download and use by anyone. It is an example of what Designer Bruce Mau calls “design for universality” (2020), because the key objective of Earth Speakr is to invite children and youth, and adults as well, to share “ideas about the wellbeing of our planet” (Eliasson, 2021, para. 3).

The EarthSpeakr application is marketed to children and youth whose stories and requests to protect wildlife, water, air, and plants for example, can potentially have a major impact on policymakers at the state or provincial, and federal levels of government. For the most part, the stories involve children and youth who share messages about protecting nature. While browsing some of the stories, I was unsurprised to learn that many other forms of information sharing occur with this user-generated platform, for example there was a story obviously created by at least two adults that was not about issues related to climate change.

Compared to the crowd-sourced EarthSpeakr platform where videos can be reported after they are posted through the application or online, Mark Terry (York University) created a “Geo-Doc” system to give people a platform to share documentary-style videos (Visconti, 2021). Terry’s Geo-Doc is “a multilinear, interactive, database documentary film project presented on a platform of a Geographic Information System (GIS) map of the world” (Visconti, 2021, para. 6). The “Youth Climate Report” documentary film project was recognized with a United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Action Award and "showcases more than 525 videos from youth filmmakers geo-located on an interactive map, providing policymakers with a wealth of visible evidence of climate research, impacts and solutions from around the world in one easily accessible digital space" (Visconti, 2021, para. 3). Like Eliasson, Terry’s map of stories about climate action provides a personal outlook on serious issues that climate policymakers cannot risk overlooking.

Liguori and Rappaport worked with District of Columbia educators and the Smithsonian Learning Lab to create a digital storytelling workshop (LearningLab, 2020). The online presentation links to many digital storytelling workshops that were held on themes about African American history and culture, Latinx history and culture, social inclusion, place and belonging (Liguori & Rappoport, 2020). The stories are stored on a YouTube channel and embedded on the

interactive Smithsonian Learning platform (Liguori & Rappoport, 2020). While browsing the platform, I was immersed in the Encarta-like presentation platform and stories, and I watched the stories on the platform instead of leaving to view them on YouTube, which is an option.

In March 2020, the StoryCenter created a digital storytelling project called, “Stories from the Global COVID-19 Pandemic”. Written stories and photographs are exhibited on their website, https://www.storycenter.org/covid-stories. The stories talk about experiences of living with COVID-19, experiences of lockdown, realities of the pandemic, grief, loss, and finding hope in a difficult time. It is important to share these stories to create a sense of community and connection at a time that feels disconnected and isolating.

A similar project, “My COVID Story” emerged as a way to empower Ontario residents to share their stories about the COVID-19 pandemic (McKerlie et al., 2021). The primary purpose of “My COVID Story” is for Ontario residents to share short written stories about their concerns and complaints about how the Ontario Government has been handling the pandemic (McKerlie et al., 2021). The stories, which are linked to the first three digits of the author’s postal code, discuss topics about: living with COVID-19, dealing with grief and loss, and frustrations related to lengthy lockdowns and school closures (McKerlie et al., 2021). Given that each story is published with a postal code, it would be possible to present an interactive map of the stories, but that is not currently available on the site (McKerlie et al., 2021).

In both examples of stories about COVID-19, the written stories are impactful, and the Story Center project is pitched as a *digital storytelling* project; however, the lack of video-based media in each project makes me wonder if a digital *video* story might be more impactful as a social justice initiative, compared to the way that the stories are presented on each platform now. Or is the move towards interactive storytelling (Miller, 2020) shifting the inherent power from a single-channel video to a more democratic and powerful interactive platform that can be accessed by anyone around the world with internet access?

2.4.3 Digital Storytelling Facilitator Education

Since the COVID-19 pandemic was first acknowledged by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, the StoryCenter began offering digital storytelling facilitator training

online. Before that, the StoryCenter offered workshops in person for over 20 years (Lambert & Hessler, 2018). Some workshops were offered online for facilitators who were not able to attend in person.

Many workshop participants who are new to digital storytelling are also new to digital video production software and technologies. Access to affordable technology that can produce and edit digital video is still a financial barrier for many people. In a three to five-day digital storytelling workshop focused on writing and sharing one's story, it can be discouraging to participants who are new to digital video production technologies to also have to learn how to use the technology and software, and to create video effects that clearly illustrate the concepts that they are trying to communicate in their stories. But there are many factors that go together to create a great story that may actually not be achieved if minimal media is used to create it.

To solve this dilemma, Wales-based Digital Storytelling Facilitator Daniel Meadows (2016) developed a digital story specifically to show participants how to execute video and editing techniques. To date, I have not found literature or web-based examples of another digital storytelling facilitator who has created a digital story specifically to teach digital storytelling techniques like Meadows (2016) has. This contribution to the practice is noteworthy because digital storytelling facilitators often incorporate digital video production tutorials in their workshops. A digital story created by a facilitator that includes focused examples of filmic techniques, such as the story by Meadows (2016), saves the facilitator a few hours of in-situ workshop training.

At a workshop in September 2019, Facilitator Rob Kershaw noted that facilitators might curate a few examples of digital stories with filmic techniques that are suitable for beginner to advanced workshop participants (Personal communication, September 24, 2019). This curated approach differs from the many instructional videos on YouTube because a facilitator can curate a collection of a few tutorial videos at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels to show as examples of techniques that participants can explore. They can show stories that use post-production techniques that the facilitator is able to assist with and that are created about the themes that a workshop is focused on.

Carolyn Handler Miller's (2020) book, "Digital Storytelling" includes a final chapter about working as a digital storytelling facilitator. The chapter describes the possible career trajectories for full-time and part-time work as a digital storyteller, writer, game developer, and interactive storyteller. Miller (2020) also provides a sample non-disclosure agreement (NDA) template which she suggests that freelance interactive and digital storytellers use when working with clients given the legal concerns that may arise when operating an independent creative business, such as the non-use of original artistic media by other parties, for example.

Digital storytelling was a suitable method that educators could employ at the start of the pandemic, and many teachers used WeVideo Inc. (Dutt, 2020). Multisita et al., (2018) also mention EdVisto (https://edvisto.com/), which is designed as a digital storytelling platform for online learning. Despite the difficulties of transitioning to online learning and research practice, it is remarkable that facilitators, researchers, and digital storytellers continue to practice digital storytelling from home. This effort demonstrates the democratizing effect that digital storytelling offers (Lambert, 2013) and the fact that technologies are part of everyday life (Ihde, 2009).

2.5 Chapter Summary & Recommendations

Since its inception in 1992, digital storytelling has rapidly grown into the online, web-based world that it now inhabits, which its co-founder, Joe Lambert (2013) predicted, with web-based training and workshops offered at the StoryCenter, among other places. Now, it is up to researchers to work across academic disciplines in the arts, social work, education, computer science, and so on, to critically consider the effects of the growth of digital storytelling, and the implications of the use of this arts-based research method with predominantly marginalized populations (de Jager, et al., 2017) that continue to face economic barriers when accessing the digital storytelling production technology.

Harley and McWilliam (2009, pgs. 14-15) identified four core misgivings of digital storytelling work which have evolved since their publication in 2009, and which I will unpack with examples:

Form

> "…it is too sentimental, individualistic, and naively unselfconscious".

Digital storytelling work is often sentimental and focused on the story of an individual, but as reported in the sections on digital storytelling in the arts and education, many new approaches to digital storytelling involve group-based storytelling and story mapping, which highlights the stories of people around the world. For example, in their health promotion study involving digital storytelling, Briant, et al., (2016) discussed having someone living in Italy see the story created by one of the participants in their study, and they reached out to the participant to share their story. It is evident through this exchange that digital storytelling has a powerful impact and the practice can be leveraged to connect a diverse global audience (Briant, et al., 2016).

Practice

> "…the means of delivery are too teacher-centric, too caught up in institutional powers and structures".

Many digital storytelling workshops are connected to institutions, and many are not. With online workshops, digital storytelling is not inherently teacher centric. Individuals and group-based storytellers are creating stories for the world to see and sharing them instantly online.

Movement

> "…its propagation and dissemination strategies are hopeless—most digital stories persist only as unused archive; and it has a very low profile on the Net, making little use of interactivity and social networking".

Since the launch of YouTube, the world's second highest used search engine according to Jeff (Digital Storytelling Facilitator, USA), there are more means to share, track the "likes" or "dislikes," and as Daniel noted, "I can see when people have watched the stories (on Vimeo), but most importantly if they have finished watching the stories from start to end (of the video clip)." Having said this, a wide reach may not always be the goal of digital storytelling. Sometimes a story can be a success just for being made (or finished); in other words, the process is what matters. In other contexts, perhaps a key audience is friends, family, teachers or principles. Maybe an audience of three is all a story needs to create ripples of change!

Textual system

> "…the potential for "serious" work is underdeveloped—there is too much attention to self-expression; not enough to the growth of knowledge".

This assumption about digital storytelling is superficial. For example, as with the use of digital storytelling in science education, we see that Maryam Esegaye's winning digital story was focused on sharing knowledge about a novel way to share science education, and on her own initiative that came naturally to her.

With the accessibility of web-based programs such as Klynt, Vimeo and YouTube channels, and ArcGis ESRI ® Story Maps, these dynamics are changing, and digital stories are being created, presented, and shared entirely online (Dutt, 2020). Still, the impact of digital storytelling outside of their disciplines in the arts, healthcare, and social services is largely unknown. As new forms of video technologies emerge, for example, doorbell video surveillance, little is known of the impact on society and policy work.

In other cases, video surveillance can have transformative effects for a victim of crime who may be perceived to be culpable but is innocent. For example, while standing outside of Cup Foods on May 25, 2020, with a group of pedestrians in shock and disbelief of what was happening to a man on the ground before them, 17-year-old Darniella Frazier recorded the murder of George Floyd on her cellphone for nine minutes and 29 seconds without knowing the impact of the footage on Floyd, his family, or the criminal trial of Derek Chauvin nearly a year later (Bogel-Burroughs & Fazio, 2021). Multiple witness testimonies at the trial, which resulted in a guilty verdict on all three charges for Chauvin on April 20, 2021, credited the video footage recorded by Frazier (Bogel-Burroughs & Fazio, 2021).

Frazier is the exception to the norm—she is a hero and incredibly brave. Not many people would be able to record such a scene for so long. As Paul Salopek (National Geographic, 2013) noted, there is so much media but not enough time to consider the effects of it. In an interview with Phil Coombes of BBC News, Daniel Meadows discussed the issue of the lack of digital literacy in social media spheres in particular (Coombes, 2011). Meadows and Coombes (2011) emphasize that there is not a strong foundation in education about how to make quality video, how to interpret quality video, and how to market and distribute quality media.

Indeed, digital literacy and media literacy are issues to address in education specifically. But I wonder, is a lack of digital literacy actually an issue in the sustainability of the digital storytelling method, or, is it inevitable that people will use technologies to create and share

media without knowing how connected or disconnected their approaches are from critical digital media? As an artist “scratches” (Tharp, 2018) and creates rough drafts before a final piece, is it part of the process to create a great story, to create many stories along the way, and to share many stories to get to the final great story?

As I have learned while writing this review, digital storytelling can be used with many different populations and for many different purposes (de Jager et al., 2017). Many artists use digital storytelling techniques, such as personal video, to tell stories about their experiences or of those in their community. As Margolles (Zeppetelli & Garcia, 2017), Breitz (Zeppetelli & Shiffman, 2018), and Rosenfeldt (LeTourneux & Johnstone, 2018) show, artists apply digital storytelling techniques with mixed media materials, various presentation scales, and technologies to share stories with a curious audience of gallery attendees. It has tremendous salutary potential for diverse and vulnerable populations in healthcare settings. In education, digital storytelling can help instructors align with student-centered teaching, and engage students to learn from personal and collective perspectives (Multisita et al., 2018). Taken together, this review demonstrates the flexibility and potential of this method to impact change across sectors.

As this review shows, what makes a good story differs somewhat by sector. In the arts, excellent stories are ones that grab attention and engage the viewers in immersive experiences. In museums and online exhibits, they have been used as forms of popular history and memorializing efforts. It seems there is much more fluidity in approach and outcome as opposed to the other fields reviewed.

In contrast, the measure of a good story in healthcare and education settings seem to be much more instrumental—they tend to get objectively measured for their impact on particular health (e.g., biomedical/biomarker) or educational outcomes. These are often examined in relation to both producers and audience members. These fields seem to follow far more rigid practices of production. As a general rule, they seem more concerned with how the process impacts storytellers and have taken the time to assess impacts on outcomes as far reaching as stress, anxiety, pain, and self-esteem. Moreover, they have also measured the impacts of watching stories. Consequently, a story's worth seems to be evaluated more on what it can do rather than what it is.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This qualitative study involved 34 video elicitation semi-structured interviews, conducted via videoconferencing (Skype) with 35 key informants working in the arts, healthcare, social services, and digital storytelling facilitation sectors (See Figure 2).[4] Participants are from 11 different countries. Each interview began with a video elicitation screening where three digital stories created by youth who "aged out" of foster care were shared. Each of the digital stories used as part of this elicitation were created by youth as part of a workshop series held by the ACC in locations across Canada prior to the onset of my study. Following the screening, I interviewed participants with a semi-structured interview guide (See 0) that I co-designed with my supervisor, to gauge participants' responses to and perspectives on the digital stories. Two methodological frameworks were applied to the data collection and analysis: Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) (Charmaz, 2006, 2014) and critical arts-based inquiry (CABI) (Finley, 2017).

3.1 Constructivist Grounded Theory

The Grounded Theory method emerged in 1967 by two American sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Cresswell, 2006). Following their work, Kathy Charmaz, also an American sociologist, set out to develop a creative, interpretive, and reflexive form of grounded theory called "Constructivist Grounded Theory" (CGT) (Charmaz, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2014). Cresswell notes that Charmaz (2006, 2014) and Adele Clarke (2005) sought "to reclaim it from its 'positivist underpinnings'" (2006, p. xxiii). As Bryant (2009, p. 6) notes, "The constructivist form engaged with the problematic issue of data and the active role of the researcher in the process of conceptual development." For this reason, the Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology is appealing to arts-based researchers. According to Charmaz (2001, p. 6396):

> The distinctive features of the grounded theory method include: (a) simultaneous data collection and analysis, (b) reliance on comparative methods, (c) early development of categories, (d) intermediate analytic writing between coding data and writing the first draft, (e) sampling for developing ideas, (f) delay of the literature review, and (g) a thrust toward developing theory.

[4] One interview was with two participants.

The Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) approach involves two core stages of analysis: initial and focused coding (Rieger, 2018; Kenny & Fourie, 2015). In the initial coding stage, researchers also continue recruitment and conduct interviews until data is saturated (Charmaz, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2014).

According to Glaser and Strauss, data saturation is determined by the quality of data and when there are no additional codes (Lal et al., 2012), but as Malterud et al., (2015) report, quality of data is one component of five in determining data saturation. As Lal et al., (2012, p. 10) note, "sample sizes in grounded theory typically range from 10-60" (participants); however, this varies depending on the study design. In section 3.4.3 I discuss how I applied Malterud et al.,'s (2015) approach to information power to determine data saturation in this dissertation study.

There are three dominant approaches to grounded theory: Classical Glaserian Grounded Theory (CGGT), Straussian Grounded Theory (SGT) and Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) (Rieger, 2018; Kenny & Fourie, 2015). The approach that a researcher chooses to pursue depends on their axiological worldview and the parameters of their study (O'Connor, Carpenter, & Coughlan, 2018). Cresswell (2006, p. 63) suggests that

> …social "situations" (addressed by Adele Clarke (2005)) should form our unit of analysis in grounded theory and that three sociological modes can be useful in analyzing these situations—situational, social world/arenas, and positional cartographic maps for collecting and analyzing qualitative data.

The social constructivist perspective that Charmaz "advocates for", as noted by Cresswell (2006, p. 65) "includes diverse local worlds, views, and actions". Though Cresswell and Charmaz position Constructivist Grounded Theory "squarely within the interpretive approach" (Cresswell, 2006, p. 65), Charmaz (2006) and Cresswell (2006, p. 65) have noted these boundaries are "flexible". Though Constructivist Grounded Theory involves fewer stages of analysis compared to Glaserian or Straussian approaches to Grounded Theory (Rieger, 2018), a collective of doctoral researchers, Nagel et al., (2015) sought to clarify the components of this approach as they found that not many doctoral researchers use it.

The following four aspects of CGT are described by Nagel et al. (2015):

> 1) There are multiple perspectives on reality; 2) phenomena are co-constructed; 3) Strauss and Corbin's (1990) analytical frameworks from classical grounded theory are maintained; and 4) unique to CGT is the acknowledgement of researcher and participant "flexibility" in the construction of reality.

Compared to other approaches to grounded theory, the *flexible* reflexive component to Constructivist Grounded Theory is not well-described by Charmaz (2006). The multimodal reflexive approaches applied to data analysis in this study and the approach to analyzing the outputs that resulted in this work are described in section 3.6.

3.2 Study Design

Figure 2 references synergic design principles originally developed by Leonardo DaVinci (Doczi, 1981). Inside the leaf, dotted lines frame the stages of this research study to show how the stages of research are often fluid and overlapping. At the same time, there are specific stages that transpire sequentially; for example, the Proposal Approval stage (1) preceded the Research Ethics Board (REB) Approval stage (4). While data from some groups is collected, other groups were invited to participate. To avoid selection bias, a stakeholder consultation group (See Figure 2, Group I) was planned to select the videos to be used for elicitation as part of the interviews; unfortunately, there was low interest from this group and only two out of a potential nine participants completed the task. Instead, I selected digital stories based on alternative criteria described in section 3.4.2.1.

3.2.1 Stakeholder Consultation Group

At the research design phase, a stakeholder consultation group (See Figure 2) was planned to include the voices of facilitators who were directly involved with facilitating the digital storytelling workshops with the ACC in Toronto, Moncton, and Winnipeg. The purpose of this stakeholder consultation group was to have a collaborative approach to selecting the videos. The poll was hosted on a private Google Drive folder and asked the stakeholder consultation group to select three of their favourite digital stories from a group of eligible digital stories (i.e., stories by youth who had given appropriate consent and were older than 16 years of age). After they selected the videos, I planned to show the three digital stories that they selected to my participants during semi-structured interviews.

Unfortunately, there was a low response from the stakeholder consultation group as only two out of nine participants responded to the call. It was difficult to determine the reason for low interest however many expressed they were too busy to participate. After several attempts at

engagement over two months, I developed an alternative method of selection. I selected the three videos myself and the selection criteria are described in section 3.4.2.1.

3.3 Research Ethics

This study received formal approval from the York University Office of Research Ethics (ORE) Human Participants Review Sub-Committee. As part of this process, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining my use of the digital stories for video elicitation in my interviews, including data management protocols, authorship guidelines and expectations, and the roles and responsibilities of all researchers, partners and collaborators was signed. Each of the three youth digital storytellers whose videos were shared as part of this video elicitation were over 16 years of age and provided written consent to the ACC, allowing their digital story to be shown publicly and to be used in conference presentations, on public websites, and in research.

This study posed minimal risk to participants. All participants in the semi-structured interviews gave informed consent to share their thoughts about the digital stories and to respond to my research question, “What makes a great story?” During transcription and coding, all participants were identified by an ID number only. For the purpose of publication, participants voluntarily disclosed their first names/alternative names and their preferred gender pronouns.

Most participants voluntarily completed a demographic information form (~91%) that asked for the following information: first name and last initial/alternative names, gender pronouns, age range, race/ethnicity, highest level of education, and professional affiliation. The key reasons for collecting demographic data in this study were to illustrate who is familiar with digital storytelling, what they know about it, and why. Participants who decided not to complete the form (n=3), declined for unreported reasons.

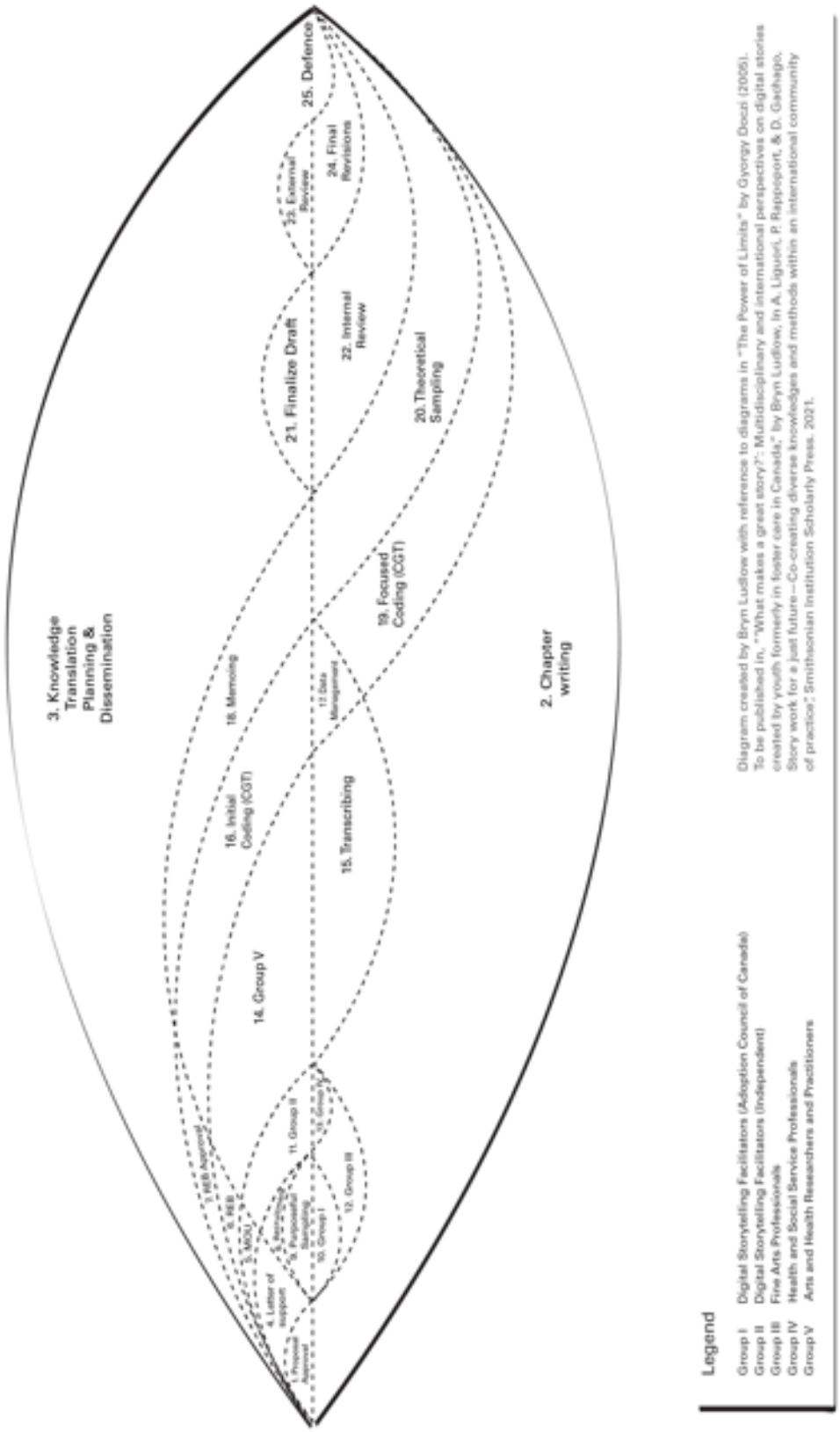

Figure 2: Study Design Diagram

3.3.1 Commitment to Sharing Power in Interviews

Before I started this study, there was a lot that I did not know about interviewing people on Skype. [Note: data collection began pre-pandemic, about a year before the world would move online and technology-mediated interviews would become the new normal]. Participants who were often also new to using Skype for longer interviews seemed to feel more at ease when I admitted this. Expressing a non-expert stance about the use of Skype as an interview platform facilitated reflexive conversations between us. This outcome aligned well with my methodological approach of Constructivist Grounded Theory, which involves researcher and participant reflexivity (Charmaz, 2006). At the outset of each interview, I told participants that they were free to ask questions at any time.

Participants in this study chose where and when to participate. The medium of Skype relinquished many controls that I held as an interviewer. For example, participants could leave at any time simply by hanging up the call. Lo Iacono, Symonds, and Brown (2016, p. 6) stated that with Skype interviewing, "…power is reconfigured, whereby the participant can turn off, tune out or disengage, choosing to seamlessly reinstate their desired distance and space." In contrast with other studies, I was not focused on establishing a strong personal connection with participants (Adams-Hutcheson & Longhurst, 2016). It was important that participants felt comfortable and safe to speak with me, and my sole interest was to find out as much as possible about what participants thought makes a great story. In each interview, I spent a lot of time listening, and following up on what participants said with additional questions or prompts to encourage them to elaborate. Significantly, Pope and Mays (2006, p. 46) note that "careful listening involves thinking about what is *not* said as well as what *is* said." I think that rapport is built through active listening and connecting through body language as much as talking.

3.3.2 Centrality of Confidentiality

The purpose of gathering informed consent before conducting a research study is so participants know the risks, potential benefits, how data is stored, and that they are free to withdraw at any time without any penalty. Confidentiality of the data was monitored across three stages that are identified by Kaiser (2009): when participants were invited to the study, at the time of receiving

informed consent, and after informed consent was received. Importantly, (Kaiser, 2009, p. 5) notes:

> Deductive disclosure, also known as internal confidentiality (Tolich, 2004), occurs when the traits of individuals or groups make them identifiable in research reports (Sieber, 1992).

It is the responsibility of researchers to *avoid* deductive disclosure, but Kaiser (2009) notes that research methodology texts do not adequately describe the options available for ensuring that deductive disclosure does not take place.

Kaiser (2009) acknowledges that there are two approaches to data confidentiality: the dominant approach and the alternative approach. The dominant approach to data confidentiality presumes that all participants want their data to be de-identified, while the alternative approach allows participants the option to be identified by their given name. According to Kaiser, the dominant approach is "…paternalistic" and aims to control participant data before it is shared (Kaiser, 2009, p. 9). Kaiser (2009) reminds researchers that the core purpose of the Belmont Report is to ensure respect for persons and to acknowledge participant's voice in the research. The alternative approach to data confidentiality is also an attempt to be inclusive to the needs of participants.

Nevertheless, each approach named by Kaiser (2009) depends on the level of risk involved in a study. In a minimal risk study, researchers might consider offering participants the opportunity to use their given name, and to reconsider the level of confidentiality that they agreed to at the beginning of the study at the end of the study on what Kaiser (2009, p. 13) calls the "Post-interview confidentiality form." In my dissertation study, the section, "Confidentiality", on the informed consent form states:

> Unless you specifically indicate your consent, identifying information about you (e.g., your name, nickname, physical description, clues to your location or place of work/study) will not be shared in any presentations, or publications of the data.

This statement illustrates what Kaiser calls, the "dominant approach" (2009, p. 4). However, participants in this dissertation were given the option to share their name or to use an alternative name that they suggested, or that I selected. Due to time constraints, I opted not to use Kaiser's (2009) post-interview confidentiality form.

Many participants returned the informed consent form before the interviews took place. If they did not, it was because they still had some questions about the study and in this case, I read through each section of the informed consent form with them and responded to their questions before the interview took place. After this, if they agreed to continue, they signed the form and returned a digital copy of the form to me immediately after the interview.

3.3.3 Audio-recording & Transcribing of Interviews

With participants' consent, I recorded the audio on our Skype calls so that I could transcribe it. After transcribing, I deleted all audio files. To record the audio through Skype, I used the *ECamm* call recorder plugin for Skype, which exports a high quality and clear audio file if the volume is above mid-range for all participants (ECamm, 2019). In the plugin settings, the recording options can be modified to record audio only and I selected this option before collecting data in this study.

The first 13 interviews were manually transcribed in Microsoft Word. The web-based program called, "Descript" auto-transcribed the remaining interviews (Descript, 2020). After transcription was complete, all transcripts were double-checked for accuracy and then analyzed with NVivo12.

3.4 Procedures

Shortly after the research ethics application was submitted, recruitment planning began in September 2018 and continued until the research ethics application was accepted on November 12, 2018.

3.4.1 Recruitment

Participants were recruited on Instagram (n=7; See

Figure 3), and through email (n=27). To prepare for recruitment, I created an e-flyer (See

Figure 3) that I could share on Instagram and Twitter with my contacts, along with another version that committee members could send to their contacts (See

Figure 4). Though Facebook is a popular event-based sharing platform, I do not have an account. Nonetheless, I opted not to post the flyer on Facebook due to the issues with data protection, misinformation, and youth bullying in particular. Unfortunately, there were no responses to my Tweet.

Figure 3: E-Flyer (Researcher)

Figure 4: E-Flyer (External)

The e-flyer was created before I obtained research ethics and before I decided to select three digital stories myself. The first bullet point on each e-flyer says "Watch 3 short videos made by youth who are adopted or in foster care," because I did not know at the time if I would be screening only stories by adopted youth, youth in foster care, youth formerly in foster care, or a combination.

As soon as this study was approved by the REB, I shared an e-flyer on an Instagram story (See

Figure 3). By the next morning, the story received 54 views. This was much higher than my average daily viewership of approximately 15. Hashtags including *#digitalStorytelling* and *#researchStudy* drew a variety of Instagram users to my story, and a couple "influencers" shared

the story too. After creating the Instagram story and sharing it, it was visible for 24-hours. As a result, I was able to share my story with my contacts on Instagram in a direct message, and I could re-share their story in my stories (See Figure 5). Surprisingly, it took less than a week to generate a list of 15 potential participants from Instagram. Seven participants from this list of 15 completed the study.

After participants wrote me a DM with interest to participate in the study, I responded to share my university email address and asked that they email me if they were still interested to participate.[5] Once I received an email from the participant, I followed up to their email with the study forms, email invitation template, and a link to a Doodle Poll showing possible interview times. Four out of the seven participants that completed the study were acquaintance based contacts that I connected with on Instagram before the study began (See Table 5). Overall, it was very effective to use Instagram for recruitment and I will continue to do so in future research studies.

To find independent digital storytelling facilitators, I searched on Google with a variety of search terms such as “digital storytelling projects,” “digital storytelling and Canada,” “digital storytelling and foster care,” and so on (See Table 4 and Table 5). The terms “digital storytelling projects” resulted in the most diverse list of projects and people to contact (n=36). A standard email invitation template was used to invite participants and the (Researcher) e-flyer was attached to the message (See

Figure 3).

Members of my dissertation committee shared the email invitation template and (External) e-flyer (See

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[5] A “DM” refers to a Direct Message on Instagram (See

Figure 3).

Figure 4), and they opted to copy me on their email so that participants could respond directly to me if they had an interest to participate. Four interviews resulted from snowball samples (See Table 5).

Figure 5: Instagram "Stories" with the Recruitment Flyer

3.4.2 Sampling

The following section will describe: how the digital stories were selected for use as video elicitation as part of my interviews and how participants were sampled for interviews in my study.

3.4.2.1 Selection of Digital Stories for Video Elicitation

Following the research ethics approval at York University, partners at the ACC selected possible digital stories for secondary use within this research project based upon the following criteria:

- Youth who made the digital story were between the ages of 16–26 years; and
- Youth had provided written consent for their story to be used in a public exhibition *and* for use in research.

This selection process resulted in a list of 14 eligible digital stories to be used as video elicitations. The ACC provided access to these 14 videos on an encrypted Google Drive link. After reviewing these 14 videos, I chose three videos from among them to show to participants in my dissertation study.

When selecting the digital stories, I *purposefully* sampled from the 14 eligible digital stories (Patton, 1990). One of the eligible videos included video footage of a minor, who is a central figure in the story, and thus, it was inappropriate to edit them out of the video. I eliminated it from the pool. Importantly, the storylines in many of the 13 remaining videos addressed a sense of personal transformation from a difficult life experience, but in my opinion, the storytellers did not directly name the issues that relate to youth who have been adopted, to youth in foster care, or to youth formerly in foster care. With a multidisciplinary adult audience, I thought it would be important for the digital stories that I selected to clearly showcase the experiences and triumphs of youth who aged out of foster care specifically.

In the final three stories that I chose, each participant had aged out of foster care by the time they created their digital story. At three workshops in Toronto, Moncton, and Winnipeg, I also worked one-on-one with the youth digital storytellers who: acted in the scenes, created their own

voiceover narratives, shared archival images (personal photographs), and used minimal to no clip art or dominant use of found imagery from the internet. Their stories address the important issue of the gaps in care and issues that youth who are aging out of care consistently experience, such as: child abuse, neglect, and issues with a sense of personhood and identity (Collins, 2015).

One of the main reasons that I selected the three videos by Robyn, Jonathan, and Brigitte[6] is because I worked one-on-one with them at the workshops. By doing so, I understood their process of writing, assembling, and creating their digital stories. Lambert (2013) asserts that facilitation is critical for producing a digital story. As a digital storytelling facilitator of these three digital stories, I thought that the video elicitation and semi-structured interviews could also shed light on facilitation techniques that I could use for my own improvement in this area.

3.4.2.2 Selection of Participants for Interviews

As this study involved video elicitation interviewing over Skype, part of my approach was to interview participants from a wide demographic range. Purposive and simple convenience sampling (snowball sampling) (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006) techniques were used to recruit 35 participants. To find independent digital storytelling facilitators, I searched on Google with a variety of search terms (See Table 4).[7] As I searched for candidates to interview in this group, I realized that Google's top search results stacks the most visited project websites on the first few results pages. This biased the search results as digital storytelling projects from Western and Northern European countries appeared on the first few pages. There are many wonderful digital storytelling projects that are based in other countries and geographical regions. When I realized that this is what was happening, I expanded my search to include cities on each continent.

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[6] Original first names of workshop participants included with permission from the youth.

[7] Out of a quirky personal interest, I searched for a few specific locations. My mother was born in Michigan, my friend is living in Berlin now, and my paternal grandparents immigrated from Cape Town, South Africa in 1965 so I searched for these places to see what I might find. Part of my recruitment approaches were to stay involved and connected to the places that participants might enroll from so I could engage with their stories and backgrounds too.

The less specific search term of "digital storytelling projects" resulted in the most diverse list of projects and people to contact around the world (See Table 4). From this list, I found digital storytelling organizations, centres, and projects that were based in England, India, Brazil, Australia, and South Africa. With the search terms, ""digital storytelling" and "foster care,"" I contacted two organizations and connected with two participants. One was unable to participate due to scheduling, and the other participant enrolled. While searching, I was also interviewing participants and checking the information power (Malterud et al., 2016), which helped gauge how many invitations I needed to send (See Figure 6).

A small sample resulted from a simple convenience sample. Until the 20th interview, digital storytelling facilitators provided the most in-depth responses to my research questions, so I purposively sampled from independent digital storytelling facilitators (See Table 4). Furthermore, as I checked the information power (Malterud et al., 2016) of the interviews from the first to the 20th interview, the interviews with participants working in digital storytelling facilitation resulted in higher information power, which illustrates how information power (Malterud et al., 2016) confirms the approach of *a priori* purposive sampling technique in a qualitative study (Sim, et al., 2018).

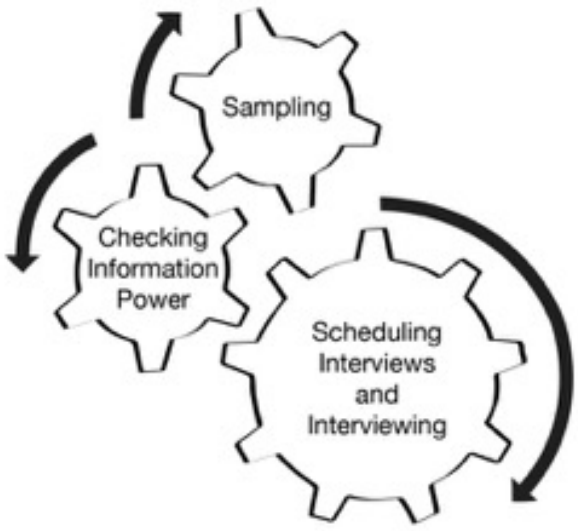

Figure 6: Data Collection Cogs

3.4.2.3 Final Sample Description

From their perspectives in the arts, healthcare, and social services sectors and as digital storytelling facilitators, many participants had stories to tell about "What makes a great story?" There are a few stories that I remember vividly, for example, Trinley (physiotherapist) told a story using a metaphor about the "unstable machines" that people need to rely on in order to sustain their lives: the Left Ventricular Assistive Device (LVAD) for the heart and the foster care *machine*. Jeff (Digital Storytelling Facilitator, USA) talked about how he is using digital storytelling to help Japanese Americans tell their stories about being interned in concentration camps after the bombing of Pearl Harbour. Antonia (Digital Storytelling Facilitator) talked about her parent's pizzeria in Rome. Nariman (film producer) talked about the similarities between aging out of foster care and immigrating to Canada. Daniel (Digital Storytelling Facilitator, UK) talked about the importance of creativity, but how creativity was "drummed out of us at school," to the point that he reflected on not talking about creativity at all at workshops. Marcus (fine arts student) spoke about the similarities between hyperrealist painting and digital storytelling, and the act of constructing a digital story is like creating a hyperrealist painting, which results in a representation of a moment in time. These collections of memories remind me about the encounters with each participant, who they are as individuals, and their comments that followed after each story that they shared.

Many participants expressed a sense of concern for the youth who aged out of care, and this sense of concern was evident on their facial expressions too. Reflecting on Jon's story, Shusuke asked about what it would be like to be living a lie. Jacqueline (Digital Storytelling Facilitator) talked about the importance of having a lunchtime catering program for new immigrant youth participants that included food from their homelands rather than "mac and cheese". Steve (Child and Youth Worker) told many stories about working with youth in care. He expressed that digital storytelling can be meaningful for youth because it gives them a chance to reflect on what they experienced, and it can be empowering to realize that they "…have the agency to create change in their lives." All of these stories about stories were unexpected and seemed to be side-tracks from our interviews, but storytelling is a natural way for people to talk about challenging topics (Miller, 2020). For some people, telling stories after viewing stories was a way to get into

conversation about the stories that the youth told, and to create connection in our video elicitation interviews.

Skype was familiar to all participants who had used it at work or with family or friends before we met. All but one participant used video while speaking with me. On average, the Skype connections were generally clear and reliable; 11/34 interviews enjoyed single connections (one call from the start until the end of the interview) (See Table 1). The reasons for interference on the calls that became disconnected were due to participants using the Skype app on their cellphone when we first connected (n=4/34), or issues with headphones (not working, not plugged in, or not connected to Bluetooth) (n=4/34). These issues are not as significant as the 14/34 interviews that were disconnected due to an issue with bandwidth. Out of this group, seven were based in Canada. Despite my location in Toronto, at least two calls on average were disconnected with participants in Toronto, and 11 out of 34 interviews with participants in Toronto were disconnected (See Table 1).

In 2020, Ontario expanded its internet service to 5G for 18 cities and towns, including Toronto (GlobeNewswire, 2020). If the interviews took place today, the data in Table 1 would likely look quite different; however, many places across Ontario and Canada still do not have equitable access to stable internet. Though there are many assumptions about the stability of videoconference technology, it was an unexpected finding of this study to learn about broadband issues around the world.

3.4.3 Data Saturation

The data was determined as "saturated" by monitoring "information power" (Malterud, et al., 2015) across each interview. Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora (2015) explore the value of applying measures of "information power" to determine data saturation during the recruitment and interviewing stages of research in their article, "Sample size in qualitative interview studies: Guided by Information Power". But what is "data saturation" and what does it mean when data is saturated in a qualitative study?

Aldiabat and Le Navenec (2018, p. 254) regard data saturation as "the mysterious step in grounded theory method," and they note, "the most difficult question for the novice grounded

theorist is when they are asked to provide a substantive example from their research work on how they had reached the data saturation". Suter (2012, p. 350) provides a general definition of "saturation": "In qualitative research, it is the point in continuous data collection that signals little need to continue because additional data will serve only to confirm an emerging understanding". To some degree, all forms of research seek to do this, and Creswell and Creswell (2017, p. 68) point out that when seeking to determine data saturation at the *end* of the theoretical sampling and memoing stages in constructivist grounded theory, "…the researcher faces the difficulty of determining when categories are saturated or when the theory is sufficiently detailed". Malterud, et al., (2015) challenge this claim, by seeking to increase the level of rigour in qualitative research analysis without diminishing the benefits of its exploratory nature. They note that information power builds on previous discussions of data saturation, for example by Patton (2015) on the "concept of "trade-offs" between breadth and depth in a study", and "Spradley's (1979) notion of "good informants" which describes the concept of *adequacy* of data" (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2015, p. 6).

In my dissertation study involving Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT), theory is developed inductively and a cross-case analysis is required. With information power, there are five categories that Malterud et al., (2015) propose for researchers to measure it: Aims, Specificity, Theory, Dialogue, and Analysis. I explored a creative way to use Malterud et al.'s approach by applying only three out of the five categories that are relevant for CGT: Aims, Specificity, and Dialogue (Malterud et al., 2015; See Figure 7). I acknowledge that this application of data saturation is a departure from how the term is often used in qualitative work.

As recruitment continued, I could not find a method for assessing information power in Malterud, et al.'s (2015) discussion. For example, the two criteria to determine the category of "dialogue" are "strong" or "weak" but in my view, all interviews involved strong dialogue. As the research question exists to determine the efficacy of a study and its purpose of investigation (Maxwell, 2012), I centered my assessment of information power around participants' verbal responsiveness to my research question "What makes a great story?"

No. Connections & Reconnections	No issues	Bandwidth	Cellphone	Headphones
1	Victoria, BC, Canada; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; Monmouth, Wales, UK; Vancouver, BC; Sydney, Australia; Marina del Rey, Los Angeles, California; North Texas, USA; Rome, Italy (2); Pau, France; York, UK			
2		**Toronto, Ontario, Canada (5)**; Beppu-Shi, Japan; Rome, Italy; Cape Town, South Africa; Sao Paulo, Brazil	**Toronto, Ontario, Canada (2)**	
3		Grey County, Ontario, Canada; London, Ontario, Canada	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA	Waterloo, Ontario, Canada; Klaukkala, Finland; **Toronto, Ontario, Canada**
4		**Toronto, Ontario, Canada (3)**	Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada	
5			Sydney, Australia	Grimsby, Ontario, Canada

Table 1: Connection Issues on Skype Across 34 Interviews

To assess the three remaining categories of information power proposed by Malterud et al., (2015): Aims, Specificity, and Dialogue, I asked questions across each interview about the categories and recorded participant's responses in Microsoft Excel (See Table 2). According to Malterud et al., (2015), the quality of interview dialogue depends on the interviewer's skills at interviewing, the engagement of the participant, and the rapport built during the interview. Similar suggestions are implied by Sayre (2001) and Henry and Fetters (2012) during video elicitation interviewing. If participants are not answering questions in-depth, then interviewers either need to spend more time interviewing participants, or they need to increase their sample size to achieve higher information power (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2015).

To assess quality of interview, I looked at the length of words in each interview and compared these values to the median number of words on each transcript overall (n=6985). To

select interviews that had *strong* dialogue, I hypothesized that they would be equal to or approximately one quarter (n=1746.25 words) greater than or less than the median interview length. In contrast, interviews that were significantly greater or less than the median interview length were deemed to be "weak" (Malterud, et al., 2015, p. 4) because these interviews ended much earlier or later than the others.

3.4.3.1 Indicators of Information Power

Alongside the initial coding stage in the Constructivist Grounded Theory analysis, I completed an information power (Malterud et al., 2015) assessment (IPA). To analyze the results of the IPA, I created a pivot table in Google Data Studio (See Table 3). The interactive pivot table on Google Data Studio displays all of the anonymous results from the IPA, and it groups them into categories based on participant responses. As one hovers over the categories, the data "pivots" to show a researcher various patterns across participant data.

On the pivot table, four distinctive participant cohorts emerged by evaluating the six sub-categories by Malterud et al., (2015): narrow, broad; dense, sparse; strong, weak (See Table 3). Following this step, I reviewed the responses by each profession to the number of participant records and from there I could generalize about the characteristics of the cohorts. For example, to find out which participant cohort provided strong, saturated interviews, which participant cohort was new to the topic and still provided strong interviews, and which participant cohort did not do as well (See "record count" on Table 3). Since I interviewed participants in groups based on their professions: fine arts, social services, healthcare, arts and health researchers, and digital storytelling facilitators, this cohort analysis aligned with the data collection approach as well, and it is evident in Table 3 that participants working in digital storytelling and social services sectors benefitted the most from participating in a study about digital storytelling and former youth in foster care.

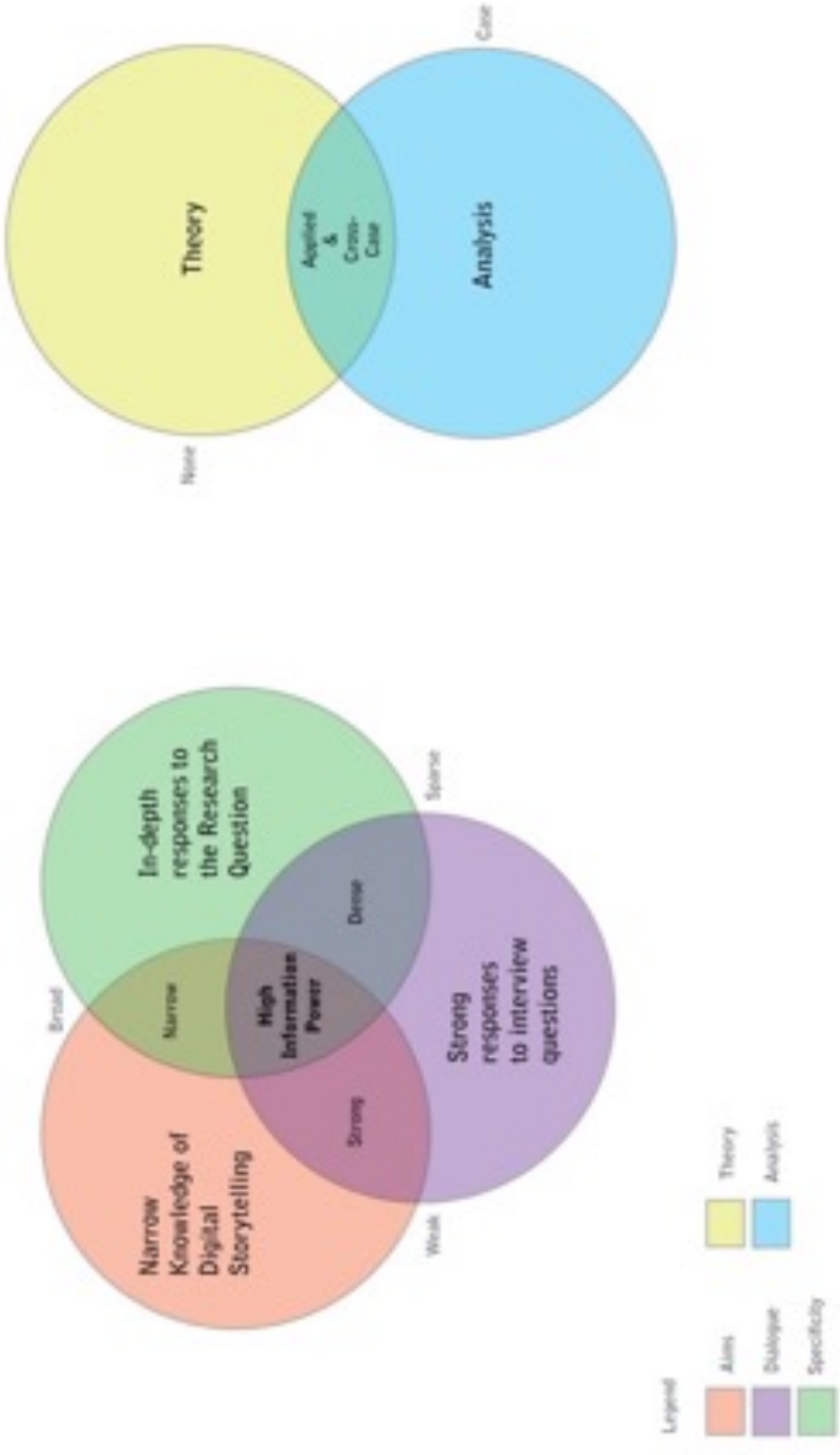

Figure 7: An Approach to Assessment of Information Power

Category	Question	Approach to Assessment
Study Aims	Did participants have prior knowledge of the research methodology (digital storytelling) before the study	Yes= 1 No= 0
Sample Specificity	Did participants provide an in-depth answer to my research question, "What makes a great story?	Yes= 1 If there were >4 responses out of 9 criteria about “What makes a great story?” No= 0 or <4
Quality of Dialogue	How strong was the dialogue (the participant’s dialogue and my own)?	Yes= 1 If interview length ≈ or ¼ > or < x̃ interview length, the interview is strong) No= 0

Note: “Quality of Dialogue” was measured by reviewing the length of words in each interview compared to the median (x̃) number of words on each transcript overall (n=6985). In contrast, interviews that were significantly greater, or less than the median interview length were deemed to be “weak” (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016, p. 4) because these interviews ended much earlier, or later than the others.[ii]

Table 2: Approach to Information Power Assessment

3.4.3.2 Description of Cohorts

The first and second cohorts include participants that provided the most saturated interviews overall (See Table 3 and Figure 8). They knew about DST before the interview began, they provided an in-depth response to my research question, and the quality of the dialogue was strong (See Table 3 and Figure 8). In the second cohort, participants were aware of DST, their responses to my research question were in-depth, but the quality of dialogue was weak (See Table 3 and Figure 8). Some participants in this cohort had prior knowledge of DST, but their responses to my research question were considered “sparse” according to the criteria by Malterud et al., (2015).

Cohorts three and four include participants who did not know about digital storytelling before they were invited to the interview and naturally, no digital storytelling facilitators are included in these cohorts (See Table 3 and Figure 8). The third cohort includes participants who responded comprehensively to my research question and the dialogue was strong (See Table 3

and Figure 8). Some responses were dense with weak dialogue, and some participants had broad knowledge of digital storytelling, provided sparse responses to my research question, and the dialogue was strong (See Table 3 and Figure 8). In contrast to the third cohort, the fourth cohort includes participants who did not know about digital storytelling before the interview, they provided sparse responses to my research question, and the dialogue was weak (See Table 3 and Figure 8).

The findings in Table 3 show that purposive sampling during the recruitment phase of this study was an effective approach as participants working in digital storytelling, social services, the arts, and healthcare provided the most in-depth interview responses. To find diverse responses to my research question, I sought responses from a multidisciplinary audience. As my information power assessment revealed indicators for higher information power within digital storytelling facilitators specifically, I purposively sampled from that group after the 20th interview when it was clear that group provided the strongest dialogue in the interviews (See Table 3 and Figure 8).

This data also shows that participants who are interested in a topic but do not have experience with it may provide strong responses to questions in an interview (See cohorts one and two in Table 3). The data also shows that participants who have little to no knowledge of a method may experience frustration or may express a lack of confidence in providing a sufficient response to the interview questions (See cohorts three and four in Table 3).

These results show that although purposive sampling from a specific population of participants is effective, it is relatively unknown at the time of recruitment if a participant with little knowledge of a method may provide very strong responses during the interview. Similarly, and significantly, a key finding from this analysis shows that with this approach to an information power assessment a researcher can increase data saturation while diversifying their recruitment strategy.[8]

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[8] Many variables impact the possible outcomes, such as participant's confidence with Skype and/or video conferencing technology, their environment, the weather, their current health state (e.g., if they slept well, drank enough water, and so on). This approach to an information power assessment could include a more in-depth assessment of those variables and others depending on the study design and objectives.

Cohort	Study Aim	Sample Specificity	Quality of Dialogue	Profession	Record Count
1	Narrow	Dense	Strong	Arts & Health Researchers	2
				Digital Storytelling Facilitators	4
				Social Services Professionals	2
				Total	8
			Weak	Arts & Health Researchers	1
				Digital Storytelling Facilitators	2
				Health Services Professionals	1
				Total	4
			Total		12
2		Sparse	Strong	Artists	1
				Arts & Health Researchers	1
				Digital Storytelling Facilitators	3
				Total	5
			Weak	Digital Storytelling Facilitators	4
				Health Services Professionals	1
				Total	5
			Total		10
		Total			22
3	Broad	Dense	Strong	Artists	1
				Health Services Professionals	1
				Total	2
			Weak	Artists	1
				Health Services Professionals	1
				Total	2
			Total		4
4		Sparse	Strong	Artists	1
				Health Services Professionals	2
				Social Services Professionals	1
				Total	4
			Weak	Artists	2
				Health Services Professionals	2
				Total	4
			Total		8
		Total			12
	Grand Total				34

Table 3: Pivot Table Displaying Results from an Information Power Assessment (IPA)

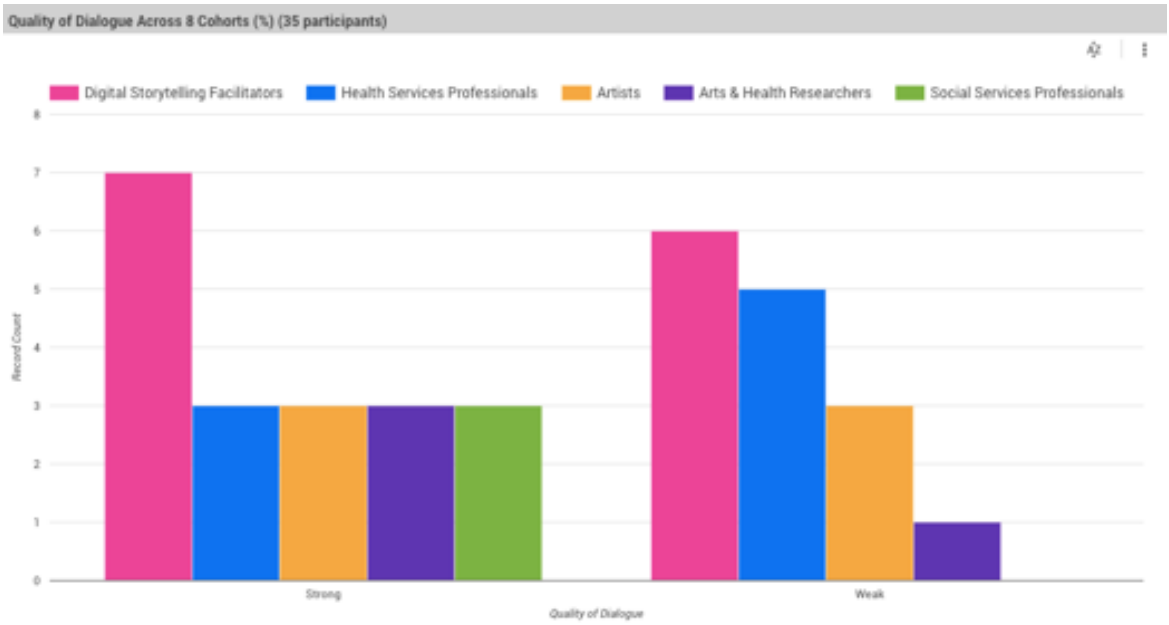

Figure 8: Quality of Dialogue

When the total number of strong interviews (*n=18*) reached more than half of the number of participants overall (*n=35*), along with an assessment of the other categories of study aims, and sample specificity (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2015), the data was sufficiently saturated to begin analysis and I could stop recruitment. Having said this, the subjective nuances in interviews that exceeded or did not meet the criteria for a strong interview are elucidated in the constructivist grounded analysis of the interviews.

3.4.4 Interview Setting & Location

All interviews took place online with the Microsoft web-based videoconferencing application Skype. Lo Iacono, Symonds, and Brown (2016) are proponents of Skype, noting its democratizing effects of instant connection, communication through voice, video, and text, and the ability to connect with people around the world in different time zones for free. I chose to interview all participants on Skype because of the flexibility it afforded given work schedules and time constraints (no travel time necessary), financial limits to travel internationally, and most importantly, an interest in conducting a study with a low-carbon footprint.

The interviews took place between 7AM-10:30PM EDT at my home in Toronto via Skype. From January–May 2019, I scheduled two to four interviews per week. Before each interview

began, I set up my desk with a notebook, Apple EarPods (headphones) plugged in, and desktop computer turned on with Skype launched. Before adding participants as new contacts and welcoming them to the call, I made sure to test the Skype video camera angle and call volume so I would be seen and heard clearly. It was helpful to have a glass of water or a cup of tea or coffee nearby.

Participants in this study chose where to participate and when as they could leave at any time simply by hanging up the call (Lo Iacono, Symonds, & Brown, 2016). In each interview, I spent a lot of time listening and following up on what participants said with additional questions and prompts to encourage them to elaborate on intriguing things they said.

3.5 Methods

This study involved two qualitative methods: video elicitation and semi-structured interviewing. In the following subsections I will describe what the methods are, the ethics and significance of using these methods in future studies about audience responses to digital stories, and how they were used in this study.

3.5.1 Video Elicitation

Video elicitation is a method of data collection like *photo elicitation,* which aims to elicit an in-depth response from a participant after they watch a video (Rose, 2016; Lorenz, 2011; Harper, 2003; and Collier, 1957). Rose (2016) notes that video elicitation is "deployed with the aim of generating evidence about the ways in which social positions and relations are both produced by and produce distinct…experiences (*sic*)" (p. 308). Photo elicitation and video elicitation are methods that are designed to encourage participants to interpret a visual medium.

3.5.1.1 What is video elicitation?

A "projective technique" (Sayre, 2001, p. 2), video elicitation participants view a video and then discuss it with a researcher. During the process of video elicitation, participants interpret the content and express what they see, hear, and sense in the video (Henry & Fetters, 2012). Video

elicitation is an effective method for working with an interdisciplinary population that may include "reluctant subjects" (Sayre, 2001, p. 4) who:

> …simply feel uncomfortable disclosing information that might damage their self-esteem or compromise their privacy. People who feel they have something to lose by sharing information also fall into this category. Or they may simply not trust the interviewer. (Sayre, 2011, p. 4).

Sayre (2001) and colleague developed a video elicitation technique in response to the need to tell stories while maintaining participant privacy when responding to politically tenuous issues. Henry and Fetters (2012) identified 13 studies involving video and audio elicitation before the Sayre (2001) report. Arborelius (1990, as cited by Henry & Fetters, 2012, p. 119) completed one of the first studies with video elicitation with physicians and O'Brien et al., (2008, as cited by Henry & Fetters, 2012, p. 119) were the first group to use video elicitation with patient participants.

In 1991, Sayre and his colleague were victims of the Oakland, California firestorm (USFA, 1991). The tunnel fire devastated the land and Sayre (2001) and colleague were interested in gathering witness testimony from survivors. The development of this technique occurred before the invention of the internet (Sayre, 2001). Together, they developed the "video elicitation technique" that they used to "elicit honest and detailed information from victims without invading their privacy" (Sayre, 2001, p. 12). Since then, many other researchers have taken up this approach as a method in marketing and healthcare settings specifically, which are fields that both involve human participant observation.

Henry and Fetters (2012) completed an extensive review about the video elicitation method. In "*Video Elicitation Interviews: A Qualitative Research Method for Investigating Physician-Patient Interactions*," Henry and Fetters (2012) describe how to conceptualize a study involving video elicitation and they provide a list of research questions that researchers can consider, which are published in video elicitation studies. Interestingly, in Table 3, page 121 of their article, the questions commonly begin with the predicates, "How do…?" and "What do…?" (Henry & Fetters, 2012). As a research method that aims to encourage participants to reflect on *how* and *what* they observed in the video, these ways of framing a research question for a video elicitation study can be more effective than questions that aim to uncover "Why" an outcome occurred, or "Who" was involved, and so on.

3.5.1.2 Ethics & Significance

With a broad research question, "What makes a great story?" and a specific set of digital stories created by former youth in foster care in Canada, I anticipated that some participants might have felt reluctant to discuss some aspects of the digital stories. For example, if they felt like they held a non-expert stance, some participants would begin by stating, "I'm not a psychologist or social worker, but…". Interestingly, Sayre (2001) found that in some studies involving "sensitive questions,"

> …projective methods yield much richer data closer in nature to self-disclosure than do questionnaires, randomized response surveys, depth interviews, and phone interviews. Reluctant respondents favor methods that maintain privacy; projective techniques offer this option without jeopardizing the richness of intimate disclosure. (p. 4).

The original method involved six steps: survey to construct questions; in-depth interviews; video production with actors in 14 scenarios; eliciting responses (to videos) through distribution of tapes and audio cassette player; and, results that are "rich in description and emotion" (Sayre, 2001, p. 12).

In the literature, video elicitation also exists in two forms: as a participatory visual research method (Mitchell, De Lange, & Moletsane, 2017), and as "video elicitation interviewing" (Henry and Fetters, 2012; Henry, Forman, & Fetters, 2011; Sayre, 2001). In the former, participants are involved in the creation of the videos, and in the latter example, participants can be involved in creating the videos or only watch them. In this dissertation study, unlike the studies by Henry and Fetters (2012) and Henry et al., (2011), interview participants were not involved in creating the videos. Though Sayre (2011) called video elicitation a *technique*, Henry and Fetters (2012) used video elicitation interviewing as a qualitative method to "…interview patients or physicians about a recent clinical interaction using a video recording of that interaction as an elicitation tool" (Henry & Fetters, 2012, p. 118).

3.5.1.3 Application of the Video Elicitation Method

The three digital story videos that I shared with participants in this study are between two to four and a half minutes each. Once participants were ready to proceed with the interview, I shared the videos through an encrypted "channel" folder on Vimeo.com. While this platform allowed participants ease of use, such as to play and pause the videos during our interviews, it also

allowed me to maintain the security of the videos. The password for each story was changed immediately after each interview so participants could not access the videos after the interview. Participants also were not able to download the videos from the Vimeo website.

To build on the video elicitation method, I included a semi-structured interview guide with a set of 14 questions, including my research question (See 0). By pausing to ask about each digital story, I also had time to ask if participants were comfortable with proceeding to watch the remaining digital stories and to check in with them about how they were feeling after watching them.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviewing

Following the video elicitation of each story, the remainder of each interview was focused on asking participants "What makes a great story?" along with questions about the participant's experience of viewing the stories, what they liked or disliked, what they learned, the aesthetics and methods employed by the youth, and their perceptions of the stories told by youth formerly in foster care.

During the interviews, it was essential to record notes of my interactions with participants. At the start of my dissertation, I documented my ideas, mind mapped my research question, and created concept maps of my study design in a wire bound sketchbook. Field notes and observations about the format, process, and content during the interviews aided in producing in-depth written and visual memos that aligned with what participants shared with me during the analysis (O'Connor, et al., 2018; Charmaz, 2003). During, and immediately after each interview, I took note of repeated words and phrases and body language patterns that were significant so I could reflect and compare these notes with my codes and theoretical sample.

3.6 Analysis

There are three stages of coding in Constructivist Grounded Theory: initial, focused, and theoretical (O'Connor, Carpenter, & Coughlan, 2018). Rieger (2018, p. 8) notes, "[I]nitial coding involves labeling data with codes. Focused coding uses initial codes that reappear frequently, and are the most relevant, to code and categorize larger portions of data." Following a memo writing

stage, other reflexive approaches to analysis, and constant comparison of initial codes, "conceptual categories are constructed" and compared across other theoretical categories with the objective of arriving at a grounded theory (Charmaz, 2001, p. 6397). Importantly, Rieger (2018, p. 9) argues that "CGT is clearly based on constructivist ideas about reality and knowledge development." Thus, Constructivist Grounded Theory aligns well with a social constructivist perspective (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). In this section, I will discuss how Constructivist Grounded Theory was applied to the analysis of the data in this study.

3.6.1 Constructivist Grounded Theory Analysis

In the following sections, I describe the four stages of Constructivist Grounded Theory in more depth with examples of how I have applied this approach in my research (See Figure 9).

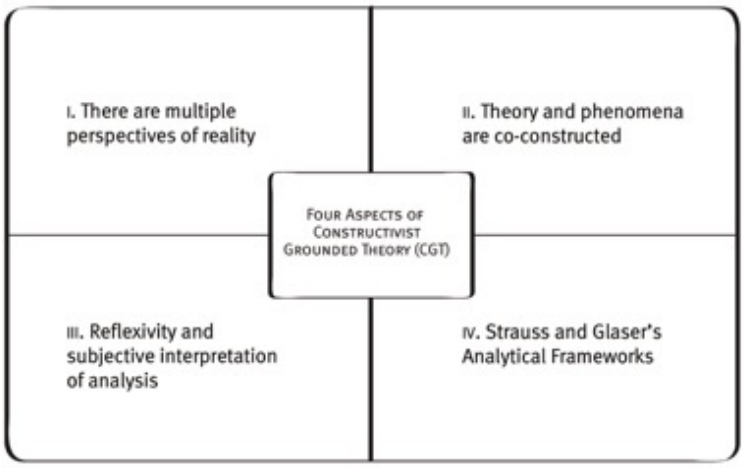

Figure 9: Four aspects of Constructivist Grounded Theory (Nagel et al., 2015)

Constructivist Grounded Theory acknowledges that there are multiple perspectives on reality. In this dissertation study, I approached the interviews with the theoretical perspective that reality is socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This perspective is aligned with Nagel et al.'s (2015) view on the Constructivist Grounded Theory method—that researchers and participants have independent perspectives on reality and through reflexivity and subjective interpretation of analysis, a researcher learns about the participant's view on reality and the topic of the study. Having said this, Andrews (2012, p. 8) asserts that it is "incompatible with the idea of social constructionism" for researchers to establish their axiological, ontological, *and*

epistemological perspectives at the outset of a study. Supporting this assertion, Andrews states, "Social constructionism accepts that there is an objective reality. It is concerned with how knowledge is constructed and understood. It has therefore an epistemological not an ontological perspective" (2012, p. 8). Likewise, in a Constructivist Grounded Theory interview, researchers do not make assumptions about what participants will be concerned about because those assumptions are unknown at that stage (Charmaz, 2003). While it is somewhat important to hold a specific theoretical perspective as a doctoral candidate, I maintained a flexible stance on the assumptions I held prior to the interviews in order to learn from the diverse perspectives of participants.

Constructivist Grounded Theorists acknowledge that theory and phenomena are co-constructed (Charmaz, 2006, 2014). Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 46) note that everyday life experiences are often taken for granted and that knowledge can be personal, public, and "socially distributed" to those for whom it is relevant. Before I created my first digital story in September 2019 at a Story Center workshop in Toronto, the experiences that I had in video-based production were centered around creating stories about other people, places, or things; by contrast digital storytelling helped me (and other producers) understand that my story is relevant, valuable, and important to share too.

The co-constructive element of Constructivist Grounded Theory acknowledges that the axiological assumptions or values (Mason, 2002) that a researcher holds, stem from a core interest to discover what other people think about a concept through a process of objective *and* subjective reflexivity (Andrews, 2012).

Given that objective and subjective reflexivity will yield in unknown, but actual representations of experience (James, 2000/1909), it is important to address the distinction between interpretivist and pragmatic theoretical perspectives on Constructivist Grounded Theory. Bryant (2009) explores the pragmatist underpinnings of the CGT method. In contrast with a pragmatic theoretical perspective, an interpretivist paradigm aligns with the approach to *Straussian* Grounded Theory (SGT) (Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Rieger, 2018).

Medical Sociologist, Arthur Frank (2006, p. 114) states, "interpretive phenomenology, in research as in applied clinical practice, enables new interpretations, which in turn enable new

possibilities of action." Due to this distinction, I agree with Bryant (2009) that Constructivist Grounded Theory is a pragmatic paradigm, not an interpretivist paradigm. This distinction also reflects the trajectory of grounded theory approaches developed since its inception in 1967, as CGT followed SGT (Bryant, 2009). Or, perhaps it emerged as a new, hybrid form of Constructivist Grounded Theory and Straussian Grounded Theory (SGT), as Charmaz (2006, p. 140) asks, "How can we reconcile the creative process of developing grounded theories with their objectivist presentations in theoretical reports?" The social experiences such as viewing digital stories over Skype offered participants an opportunity to share personal experiences that can be expressed as new forms of knowledge. The knowledge that one participant shared would inform and connected with the knowledge shared by others.

At the end of their book, "Participatory Visual Methodologies: Social Change, Community and Policy," Mitchell, De Lange, and Moletsane (2017) call for a "need for stronger 'meta' work in the area of studying impact and social change" (p. 192). One way that this work can occur is through reflexive approaches to analysis. According to Mitchell et al. (2017), researchers might produce reflexive responses to the data, participants might collaborate in shaping how data is disseminated, and the audience might respond to the data in interactive ways. This study involved an exploratory approach to reflexivity for the purpose of understanding more about what Charmaz (2006) meant by the flexible nature of reflexivity in Constructivist Grounded Theory. To Charmaz (2006, p. 132) it is important to be reflexive about the data, as it prevents researchers from making assumptions and raising their "interpretations to 'objective' data."

Initially, I sought to produce outputs for dissemination of findings. As I produced responses to the data, I noticed distinct differences in the types of outputs that were produced: my web-based mapping involved participants, other reflexive responses were created on my own, and other reflexive responses were created for the purpose of dissemination to an external audience; for example, data visualization of the demographic information (See Figure 13). These multimodal, reflexive responses to the data combine Mitchell et al.'s (2017) researcher, participant, and audience reflexivity into what Tuominen (2018), Jacobs and Dolmage (2012), and Kwastek (2010) call, "multimodal reflexivity" (See Figure 10). Aside from these three sources, there is currently no definition of "multimodal reflexivity."

In “Archaeology and the choreographic method,” Suvi Tuominen (2018) describes multimodal reflexivity as an engagement with materials and “historical and tacit dimensions of the body” (p. 72). Kwastek (2010, p. 592) writes about multimodal reflexivity as “mutual exposition and reflection of both visual and acoustic information…in the interaction process” of interactive art. In critique of a comic, “Stitches” by David Small (2009, as cited in Jacobs & Dolmage, 2012), Jacobs and Dolmage (2012) describe the use of multiple reflexive methodologies to study how language is “not the only resource available, and always interacts multimodally with visual, gestural, spatial, and audio systems” (p, 85). In contrast with the singular form of “reflexivity,” multimodal reflexivity involves a combination of methodologies to analyze a data set. Compared to the use of “mixed modalities,” which involves the use of multiple techniques (Dindler et al., 2010), multimodal reflexivity involves multiple reflexive approaches to data analysis.

In this dissertation study, I apply the term “multimodal reflexivity” to discuss the approaches and outcomes from three forms of reflexive acts: researcher, participant, and audience reflexivity, as described by Mitchell et al., (2017) (See Figure 10). As a researcher, I expanded on the definition of visual memoing in Constructivist Grounded Theory, and I created visual memos about the data. With participants, I reflected on the maps and created web-based maps to illustrate where they are located in the world. To disseminate preliminary findings, I participated in a research conference and published a book chapter. During the interviews, participants suggested that there needs to be more support for youth who are aging out of foster care. Upon reflection of their comments, I wrote a proposal for a program at my high school that will support youth who are aging out of foster care and graduating high school. The issue with this situation of transitioning from care at the same time as graduating high school is that youth will have fewer social supports including teaching staff who they have known for at least four years.

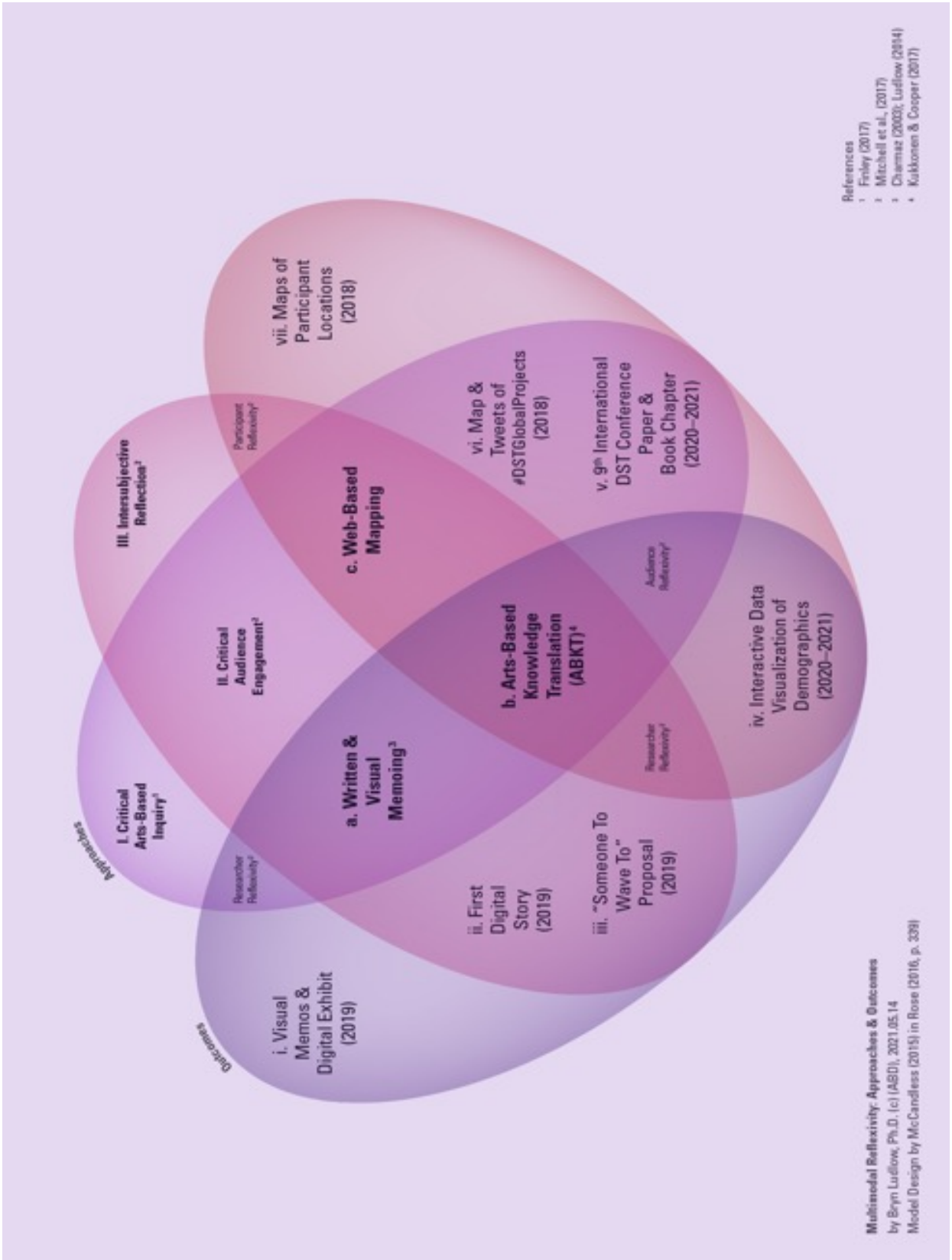

Figure 10: Multimodal Reflexivity

For more about multimodal reflexivity, refer to Figure 10 which illustrates the approaches and outcomes. The methodological approaches, I–III and a,b,c are described in this section. The seven outcomes: i–vii are described in Chapter 5 (See Figure 10).

Critical Arts-Based Inquiry (I)

In qualitative research, video elicitation is an *arts-based* rather than an arts-informed method of inquiry. Often the terms are used interchangeably but they have different definitions. I will elaborate on them here and will include a discussion of Critical Arts-Based Inquiry, which I undertook in this study.

On arts-based inquiry, Finley (2008) states,

> Arts-based inquiry is uniquely positioned as a methodology for radical, ethical, and revolutionary research that is futuristic, socially responsible, and useful in addressing social inequities. By its integration of multiple methodologies used in the arts with the postmodern ethics of participative, action-oriented, and politically situated perspectives for human social inquiry, arts-based inquiry has the potential to facilitate critical race, Indigenous (*sic*), queer, feminist, and border theories and research methodologies. As a form of performance pedagogy, arts-based inquiry can be used to advance a subversive political agenda that addresses issues of social inequity. Such work exposes oppression, targets sites of resistance, and outlines possibilities for transformative praxis. From this perspective, arts-based inquiry can explore multiple, new, and diverse ways of understanding and living in the world. (p. 71).

As this description indicates, arts-based inquiry *involves* versus *represents* participants (Finley, 2008), whereas arts-informed inquiry is a way to *represent* everyday experiences in artistic ways that a research article cannot. In comparison to arts-based inquiry, Cole and Knowles (2008) describe "arts-informed inquiry" as:

> …a mode and form of qualitative research in the social sciences that is influenced by, but not based in, the arts broadly conceived. The central purposes of arts-informed research are to enhance understanding of the human condition through alternative (to conventional) processes and representational forms of inquiry, and to reach multiple audiences by making scholarship more accessible. The methodology infuses the languages, processes, and forms of literary, visual, and performing arts with the expansive possibilities of scholarly inquiry for purposes of advancing knowledge (p. 59).

In arts-informed inquiry, the arts inform the research and vice-versa, in some cases. For example, artists who are applying arts-based techniques and methods to their artistic research—some, without knowing it— are using arts-based inquiry; and researchers who are applying arts-based techniques and methods as forms of data collection are using arts-based inquiry. Finley

(2008) states, “arts-based inquiry creates and inhabits contested, liminal spaces. It takes form in the hyphen between art and social science research” (p. 72).

Since the 2012 scoping review by Boydell et al., arts-based knowledge translation has grown in the literature. The movement to online, video-based, virtual, and augmented reality practices and exhibitions has accelerated global and multidisciplinary connections that one might have only dreamt of experiencing and witnessing before the pandemic. Researchers and artists share their work through both similar and different dissemination practices. Rieger and Schultz (2014) summarize this variation of knowledge dissemination by describing how academic researchers often rely more on written publications to disseminate their work whereas artists often employ audiovisual media. The ways that information is shared from different disciplines are conventional and inform a strategy to take up arts-informed or arts-based research practice.

Video elicitation (a research method) stands out as a critical arts-based research method that has contributed to the social justice approach that critical arts-based inquiry facilitates. As a practice and a way of theorizing about the everyday, video elicitation research is a form of “transformative praxis” (Finley, 2008, p. 71). The video elicitation method is complementary to studying digital storytelling as it involves a constant witnessing of stories about stories: in a video elicitation interview, participants tell a story about what they observed, and a researcher listens to a story about the video-based story (Sayre, 2001).

Written & Visual Memoing (a)

Charmaz’s (2003) “memo-writing” involves writing about how categories are connected to the data. Likewise, visual memoing is a visual response about how categories are connected to the data. During the semi-structured interviews, I noticed that participants often responded in similar ways to certain digital stories or themes within them. At times, I felt compelled to respond to what they said in a visual rather than a written way. In this section, I present a working definition of “visual memoing,” which I describe in past research (Ludlow, 2012, 2014, 2019). Drawing upon Charmaz’s (2003) discussion of “memo-writing,” in this section, I place visual memoing as a reflexive act within Constructivist Grounded Theory analysis.

What is "Visual Memoing"?

Visual memoing is an intentional, expressive, and critical arts-based approach to reflexivity (Ludlow, 2014). It is an investigation of emerging and *visual* ideas about the data (Charmaz, 2003). While visual memoing, arts-based researchers "render" the data visually, and "in comparison" across participant responses (Charmaz, 2003, p. 512–513). Visual memoing can capture the observations about the data that are hard to put into words and can provide clarity about how to describe data in a written form by visualizing it first.

Since 2010, I have created visual memos in response to the data in my qualitative research. The process involves creating visual images of themes and emerging theoretical categories to help shape an emerging substantive theory. Charmaz (2001, p. 6399) stated, "the emerging theory determines whether seemingly disparate groups make relevant sources to sample for theoretical comparison". In my Master of Arts thesis study, I created visual memos about body maps created by older adults receiving daily haemodialysis therapy for end-stage renal disease (Ludlow, 2012). In "Witnessing: Creating Visual Research Memos About Patient Experiences of Body Mapping in a Dialysis Unit," visual memoing was a way for me to reflect on the interactions I had with patients who shared difficult experiences about their illness. The watercolour paintings about body maps were created with watercolour crayons that the patients had used in the study. Memo-writing is well described in the work of Kathy Charmaz (2003, 2006, 2014) and in articles about Constructivist Grounded Theory (Rieger, 2018), but visual memoing is a newer contribution. On memo-writing, Charmaz (2003, p. 513) stated,

> Memo-writing leads directly to theoretical sampling, i.e., collecting more data to clarify your ideas and to plan how to fit them together. Here you go back and sample for the purpose of developing your emerging theory, not for increasing the generalizability of your results.

As I wrote in "'Visual memoing' as a critical self-reflective practice" (2019),

> …the process of visual memoing has become a way for me to think critically, and reflexively about the people I meet as a researcher. As a qualitative researcher, written memos are critical for keeping track of thoughts and ideas after an encounter with a participant. Yet, based on my experience, and positionality as an artist and a social scientist, I would advocate that visual memos become a part of visual methods and an engaged critical reflexive practice.

Visual memos sit between a sketch and a completed piece. They can be created with a multitude of artistic materials, techniques, or mediums. In my experience of creating visual memos, they are created with media that enables a high degree of expression in response to the

data in a short amount of time. Materials such as watercolour pencils, tempera or acrylic paint, and brush markers for example, support this form of expression. Additionally, visual memos may be created with advanced digital technologies that involve sound.

The questions that an artistic researcher might ask themselves when creating a visual memo about their data are similar to those that Mitchell et al. (2017, pp. 12–13) suggest that researchers may be informed by in reflexive research:

> … what am I trying to do? What do I want to say and to whom? What will move this audience to questions that guide the viewer or audience? What is it about these images and captions that are so provocative? What do I take away from this screening or exhibition?

The product is not as important as the information that results from creating a visual response to emerging categories in the data. Having said this, documentation of the process is necessary to show evidence of the influence of the visual memoing stage.

Reflexivity vs. Visual Memoing

Visual memoing is a form of researcher-driven reflexivity, and is best described by Finlay (2002, as cited in Mitchell et al., 2017, p. 13) as "reflexivity as introspection." Constructivist Grounded Theory involves creative approaches to reflexivity, but Charmaz (2006, 2014) does not describe how to disseminate the reflexive acts that result as outputs. Likewise, reflexivity is included as a stage in Constructivist Grounded Theory but its definition is somewhat unclear (Nagle et al., 2015). Charmaz (2006) notes that "constructivism fosters researchers' reflexivity about their own interpretations as well as those of their research participants" (p. 146). Self-, subjective, and intersubjective reflexivity about the process, format, and data in a study often occurs while generating research data outputs (Rose, 2016), yet there are few studies that link these acts. The only element missing from Arts-Based Knowledge Translation (ABKT) in the directions provided by Charmaz (2003) in Constructivist Grounded Theory about the reflexivity stage is knowledge dissemination. But not all reflexive acts necessitate public dissemination (Kukkonen & Cooper, 2017). For example, one might take a feminist perspective to reflexive acts by "…seeking new knowledge and, in the longer term, contributing to social change" (Palaganas et al., 2017, p. 432).\

Ethical Considerations and Significance of Visual Memoing

Compared to a reflexive act, a visual memo differs in that it is not about a researcher—it is about the data that a researcher collects. Given this, there are ethical considerations involved in visual memoing in studies that involve human participants specifically, so that the visual memo does not result in an objective visual representation of a participant. A visual memo may be about participants and constructed in a way that is unidentifiable, thus meeting the definition of creative practice in research with human participants. In the painting that I produced (See Figure 15), two participants are represented in the image in non-identifying ways. Likewise, the youth-figures are unidentifiable. As I painted the piece, I reflected on my position as a researcher who was listening to the stories about the stories, and I placed myself at the edge of the piece, listening at a distance, which Palaganas et al., (2017, p. 432) regard as "academic distance": when a researcher makes an effort to distance themselves from the data to avoid experiencing emotional distress.

Despite this active pursuit of visual and textual reflection and dissemination at the analysis stage of my study, Rose (2016) states that "[T]here is no discussion of *how* the researcher's social position might affect a digital methods analysis" (p. 303, *emphasis added*). The borders between self-reflexivity in studies involving Constructivist Grounded Theory are obscure. As an artistic researcher, it is important if not essential to define your place in the research. As Charmaz (2006, p. 504) states, "[Y]ou must become self-aware about why and how you gather your data." Like participatory reflexivity, Mitchell et al., (2017, p. 14) stated "radical self-reflective consciousness is sought where the self in-relation to others becomes both the aim and object of focus." As an early career researcher this process of self-discovery is an opportunity to become anchored in one's purpose and foci in research practice. As I hope is evident, visual memoing, like memo-writing, is integrated with the analytical process (Charmaz, 2003).

In arts-based research and participatory arts-based research, participants create products in response to researcher prompts, for example, the photovoice method (Mitchell et al., 2017). In a Constructivist Grounded Theory analysis, visual memos can be considered as a reflexive act: a researcher-created, arts-based research practice that shapes a Constructivist Grounded Theory analysis. Visual memoing occurs at the analysis stage, forming a bridge between the arts-based

outputs created by participants, and the outputs created in response to the data at the end of a study.

In this dissertation study, it was essential to take note of interactions with participants. Their observations about the format, process, and content during the interviews aided in producing "written memos" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 511) that aligned with what participants shared with me during the analysis (O'Connor, Carpentier, & Coughlan, 2018). During the digital video elicitation and semi-structured interviews, I applied techniques of critical self-reflexivity, including listening for comments about the process and format of the interview (Mitchell et al., 2017). By considering my reflexive response to the data in this study using multimodal approaches to reflection, I feel confident that the results are represented accurately. Though many forms of reflexivity become visual, some may be expressed verbally between participants and researchers, or from a researcher's thoughts about a theme. Thus, visual memoing, like written memoing (Charmaz, 2003) is also a reflexive act.

Critical Audience Engagement (II)

Critical audience engagement combines "audience engagement, political listening, and reflexivity", which leads to "community and policy dialogue" (Mitchell et al., 2017, p. 7). Drawing from Gillian Rose's "Framework for a critical visual methodology," Mitchell et al., (2017, p. 7) note, "…the populations who typically are involved in participatory visual research occupy a marginal position and so their visual productions may also be marginalized". As is common in artistic practice "participatory work can both disrupt the idea of who is an artist, film maker, or photographer but also who and how audiences are meant to view the work" (Mitchell et al., 2017, p. 8). Mitchell et al., (2017) also consider the position of the researcher in critical audience engagement and ask "Where are we in the picture?" (p. 8). This is an important question to consider and one that I have asked is where is the "site" of my outputs? Given that they exist in digital formats and online, it is easy to assume that the audience is global when in fact the audience consists of those who have access to the internet.

Self-reflexivity is central to facilitation of participatory visual methods that involve critical exploration into difficult but transformative issues (Rose, 2016). However often researcher reflexivity dominates (Mitchell et al., 2017). At the same time, the outputs a researcher can produce often insufficiently represent the transformative issues shared by participants, in-

comparison to a more collaborative approach (Mitchell et al., 2017). Despite the time commitments involved in reflexivity (Palaganas et al., 2017), when researcher reflexivity dominates knowledge dissemination an adverse outcome may be that outputs are not seen or heard, and the voices of participants from underrepresented communities specifically can be silenced again (Mitchell et al., 2017).

Finally, Mitchell et al., (2017) note that there is currently a lack of audience research in participatory visual research. In "a critique of social inequities" Mitchell et al. (2017, p. 11) note that often images are difficult to process. The acts of political listening that occurred in this dissertation study were primarily addressing the lack of representation of participants in the global south, the effect of Brexit on the global economy, and the impact of immigration and what stories need to be told but are not. As a researcher, practicing intersubjective reflexivity (Mitchell et al. (2017) was essential to ensure that these emerging themes were captured accurately. Positioning researchers as audience members too, Mitchell et al. (2017, p. 13) state, "Often, as researchers we are one of the first audiences alongside the participants to produce, watch, and respond".

As Collins (2015, p. 98) stated, "[M]ore recently, as problem definitions have emphasized a lack of adult connections, more attention has been focused on solutions based on permanency and mentoring." The Adoption Council of Ontario's (2022) "Never Too Late for Family" program is one of a few programs in Canada that address the need for youth to find a permanent home after aging out of care. Despite being seen as a "band-aid solution," a peer mentorship program can empower youth. In this dissertation research, participants constantly discussed the need for more interventions with youth leaving care, and they spoke of the lack of awareness of the issues that youth leaving care are facing. In contrast to the issues prevalent to working to engage policy stakeholders in social change, "Community-Based Participatory Research" (CBPR) involves the community as collaborators in the research, and in "…identifying and/or developing strategies for social change" (Mitchell et al., 2017, p. 15). As Collins (2015, p. 138) stated "youth empowerment is achieved through youth participation and partnerships." The responsibility of mentorship may seem daunting, but often only "instrumental support (helping with practical tasks related to accommodation, employment, or education)" is valued highly, and "youths in foster care who have at least one positive significant naturally occurring mentoring

relationship tend to fare better in the transition to adulthood (Ahrens et al., 2008; Greeson, Usher, & Grinstein-Weiss, 2010; Osterling & Hines, 2006)" as cited by Collins (2015, p. 145).

Mentors with experience as former youth in care offer an empathetic lens (Collins, 2015), and there are a few programs that offer peer mentorship for youth in care and youth formerly in care, for example, Youth Empowering Youth (YEY) lead by Michelle Bains (2020) and the CHEERS program, which was developed by Rosimay Venancio (Boisvert, 2017). As a former youth in care, Venacio created the "Creating Hope and Ensuring Excellent Roads to Success" (CHEERS) program to support youth who are transitioning from foster care (Boisvert, 2017). Venancio experienced depression and survived a suicide attempt before she turned her life around to create the CHEERS program so that no youth leaving care would experience the difficulties that she did (Boisvert, 2017).

A community-based participatory research proposal that I co-developed with my high school, Central Technical School seeks to provide peer mentorship for youth in foster care and youth leaving care at the time of high school graduation, given that the rate of graduating high school and attending a postsecondary institution are abysmal at less than 10% (Collins, 2015). This outcome is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

(Integrated) Arts-Based Knowledge Translation (iABKT) (b)

At the outset of this study, I chose to generate and disseminate arts-based knowledge translation (ABKT) outputs about preliminary results rather than wait to share results after the study (Kukkonen & Cooper, 2017). Arts-based knowledge translation differs from general artistic production in its focus on responding to research findings (Kukkonen & Cooper, 2017). Integrated knowledge translation (iKT), compared to an End-Of-Grant strategy, involves the production of knowledge outcomes across the duration of a study, rather than after a study is complete (Jensen & Johnny, 2020).

"Knowledge" exists in a variety of written and audiovisual formats; as an artistic researcher, I am equally interested in studying artistic and research practice, and their effects on vulnerable and underrepresented populations during the creative process. Enders' (2005) point that for research to have impact knowledge needs to be disseminated, inspired me to take a proactive approach to producing outputs during the data collection stage rather than after the study was

complete. Presently, there is no available scholarly literature on "Integrated Arts-Based Knowledge Translation" (iABKT).

Given this gap in the literature and the efficacy of this practice in my dissertation study, I propose a merging of the work of Jensen and Johnny (2020) on integrated knowledge translation with Kukkonen and Cooper's (2017) work on arts-based knowledge translation towards a new, integrated approach entitled "integrated Arts-Based Knowledge Translation" (iABKT). This model involves and invites the exploration and planned production of integrated arts-based knowledge translation outputs that can be disseminated for the purposes of engaging a broader audience in the sociocultural, economic, and political issues addressed in the research.

iABKT is well-suited to Constructivist Grounded Theory research and other inductive exploratory methods that involve reflexivity. The rewards of exploring iABKT in a Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006, 2014) analysis, for example, in this study, are that emerging theoretical categories were elucidated in multimodal ways through audiovisual and textual forms. For artistic researchers who are responding to the outcomes of their research studies with arts-based methods, an integrated approach is more in-line with arts-based practice as-usual, where pieces are created, exhibited, and sold in some cases. However, an iABKT approach encourages artists who are interested in qualitative research to apply an integrated knowledge translation framework (Jensen & Johnny, 2020) to their artistic practice.

Intersubjective Reflection (III)

As I engaged in critical self-reflection and shared thoughts about the process during interviews with participants, they also sometimes reflected on the process independently and with me. For example, fellow PhD students, Anik, Malaika, and Chloe were interested to learn about my methodology and study design. Together, a few of us also discussed what it meant to be talking over Skype together in real time and across different time zones in some cases. Mitchell et al. (2017, p. 14) reference the work of Finlay (2002) who calls this process "intersubjective reflection." The process involves a reflection on the meaning of the research encounter between the researcher, participant, and audience, and ultimately the results of that encounter, which is the data.

Web-Based Mapping (c)

The three web-based map outputs that I created were produced in-response to participant's interests in seeing the geographic locations of all participants in this study. The participatory visual method (Mitchell et al., 2017) of web-based mapping emerged unexpectedly and involved gathering participant and audience feedback about the maps. As the interviews took place over Skype, it felt natural for me to create a map online that could be shared by sending a link to participants in the Skype chat window. The three map-based outputs that I created use existing web-based mapping software to present information about: locations of participants, locations of digital storytelling projects, and responses to my research question by participants around the world. After creating and sharing the first map, I became interested to think about how and where digital storytelling work takes and the topic of "digital literacy" around the world (Martínez-Bravo, Sádaba-Chalezquer, & Serrano-Puche, 2020).

3.6.1.1 IV. Strauss & Glaser's Analytical Frameworks

Charmaz (2003) notes that her constructivist approach seeks to move away from the positivist approach to grounded theory, which Strauss and Glaser pursued (1967, in Charmaz, 2003). Instead, CGT researchers make humanistic statements about participants' experiences at the selective coding stage. Charmaz (2003, p. 516) states:

> Unlike most other grounded theorists, I prefer to present many detailed interview quotes and examples in the body of my work. I do so to keep the human story in the forefront of the reader's mind and to make the conceptual analysis more accessible to a wider audience.

After completing the initial coding stage, I realized that there was a flaw with the CGT method: the initial coding stage yielded preliminary themes that lacked context (who said what, for example). Though they were compelling, analyzing participants' responses to my research question involved coding to the actions in each transcript, rather than coding about what individuals or groups said generally, which can create biases in the results at those early stages. However, the preliminary themes aided in developing a mind map of those emerging themes so that I could review the transcripts to find examples of compelling statements about the themes. This work helped with two important aspects of this dissertation: to determine the preliminary themes and to signal which questions and/or probes needed to be asked earlier in the interview.

Instead of looking at a list of all transcripts, I grouped participants into folders in NVivo12, based on their profession. Next, I used the “Query” feature to search for keywords from the primary themes to see how many participants from each group talked about those keywords. After that, I read through responses from participants in each group that talked about those keywords (and who didn't, and why). With this systematic approach to the Constructivist Grounded Theory analysis, I was able to "elevate" as Charmaz says, the main categories, and started to draft the findings chapter.

After creating a condensed version of the theoretical categories, I returned to the process of focused coding and condensed the document further to isolate one to three statements that were the most compelling responses related to the research question per group. Following this, if there was a theme or branch of a theme that I thought was significant after the mind mapping stage—but in-comparison to other themes at this stage of analysis it was not as compelling—I decided to archive that theme or branch for later study.

Mind mapping

Using mind mapping, I translated recurring themes and statements into what Charmaz (2006, p. 115) calls “significant events as turning points”. This is what is done in the formal coding stage too, where recurring codes, significant codes, and phrases are “elevated” to theoretical categories (Kenny & Fourie, 2015). First, I created a hand-drawn diagram of all the initial codes (See Figure 11). I created the bubbles by looking at coding and memoing across each transcript. Following this, to achieve a set of thematic codes I translated the hand-drawn map into a mind mapping program called Inspiration 9 (See Figure 12).

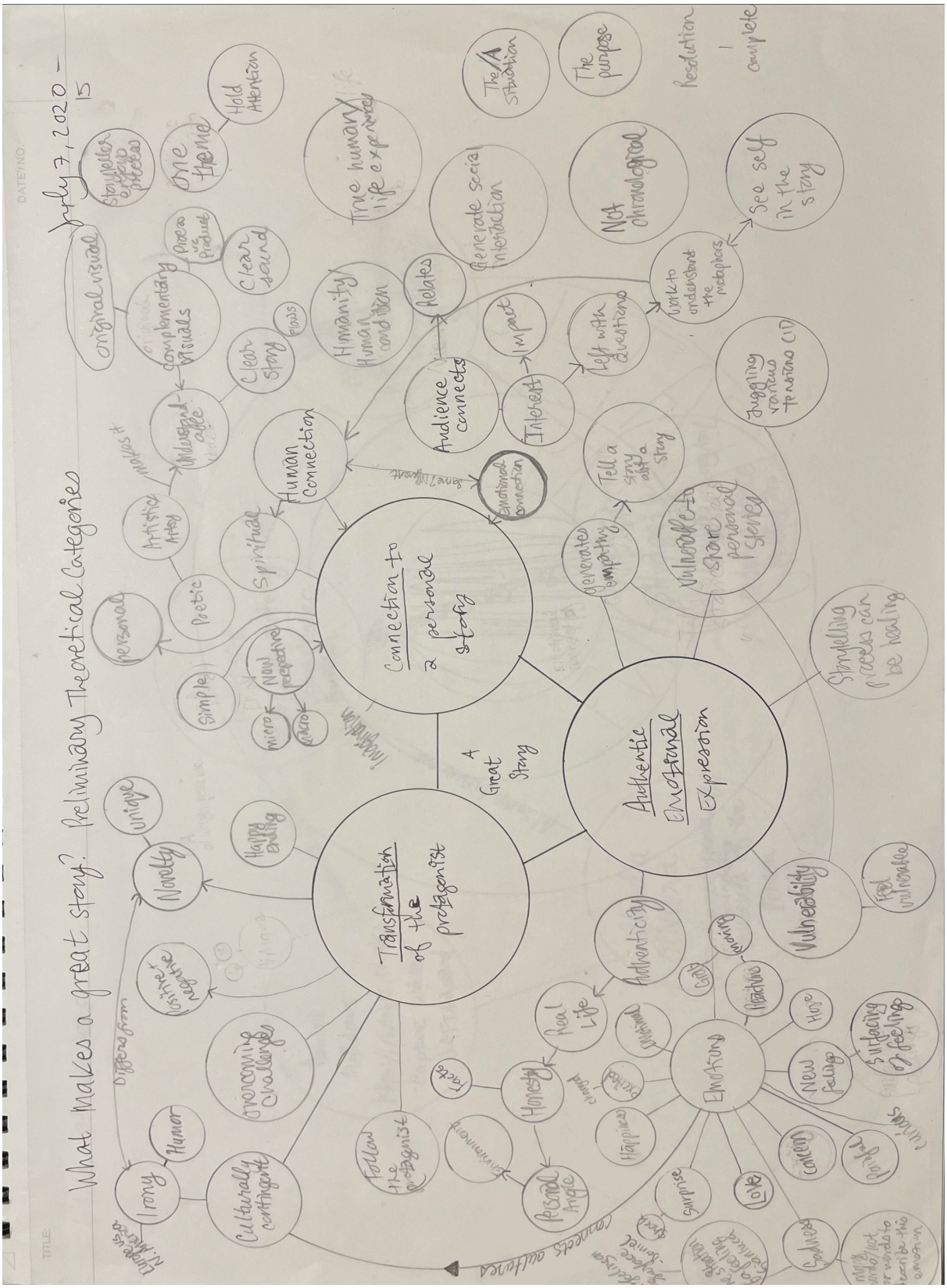

Figure 11: Hand-Drawn Mind Map of Initial Codes

The benefits of using Inspiration 9 to create a digital mind map is that I could flip between the diagram and mind map, weed out erroneous items, and add notes in between each arrow on the diagram to explain how the items are connected.

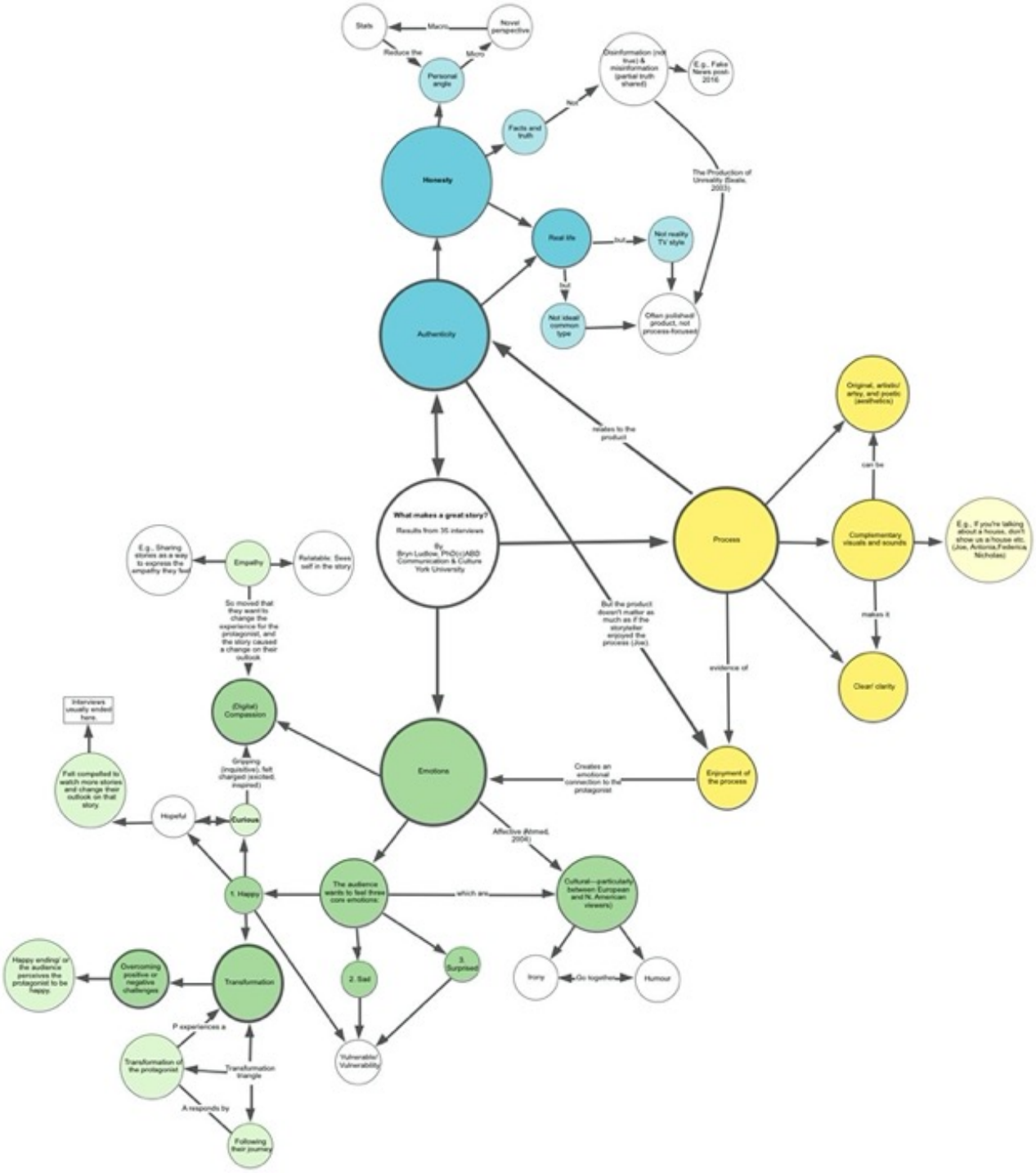

Figure 12: Digital Mind Map of Focused Codes

Following a discussion of the preliminary categories on the computer-generated mind map with my supervisor, I rearranged and elevated some categories, clarified the wording on others, and eliminated categories that seemed to be repetitive or redundant. As Charmaz (2006, p. 117) notes, “[T]he advantage of diagrams is that they provide a visual representation of categories and their relationships”, and to this I would add that diagrams and mind maps also reveal gaps in knowledge and make evident the possible connections between categories.

At this stage of theoretical category development, I was engaged with reading and analyzing the transcripts almost every day, for approximately two years. At the focused coding stage, some of the results read to me as if they were obvious—so I questioned the significance of those results in relation to the overall study. This experience felt discouraging; I wondered about all the effort involved in undertaking this level of analysis in order to get to such seemingly simplistic results. Some of this thinking is a result of the nature of storytelling and its universality. Some of this thinking is due to having been engaged with this project for a long time and second guessing the significance of my contributions as a researcher. However, I think that most of these thoughts about the findings are not a matter of *second guessing* my analysis but rather, analyzing the argument that I arrived at in this study. After reading the findings in Chapter 4, I hope that readers agree that it is a significant contribution to have gone through this process of interviewing 35 participants with the same questions, deeply considering their responses, and coming to a set of results that determine “What makes a great story?”

3.7 Chapter Summary

Palaganas et al., (2017) identified that reflexive acts involve an investment of time, energy, and resources that researchers may or may not have adequate access to. For example, I could have created many more paintings or digital stories, and the time and resources to do so within the timeframe of this dissertation program are finite. In my approach to reflexivity and knowledge dissemination in this dissertation, I sought to engage with materials and techniques in the arts *and* social sciences which took the form of multimodal reflexive outputs. The resources to produce high quality visual and text-based reflexive responses to the study are limited for most doctoral students, including myself.

Artistic researchers are engaged in a visual process of recording, responding, and monitoring situations of everyday life. A sketch or drawing may be dismissed as an insignificant reflection in a research study when it may in fact be relevant to a theoretical category. Likewise, an artistic piece may be created that subconsciously responds to a theoretical category in a research study, thus making the analysis thicker and richer in reflection by being able to point to and provide an analysis of a figure in the findings or discussion of a study. Artistic researchers who create artworks on the side would benefit from keeping track of and consider including their work in the analysis of a Constructivist Grounded Theory study.

3.8 Synopses of the Digital Stories

To provide context for the next chapter that discusses the findings of this study, I have written brief synopses of the three digital stories. Each synopsis is presented in the order that I showed them in the video elicitation interviews.

3.8.1 Robyn's Story

Robyn entered foster care at an early age. As she walks along a path in a wooded area, she speaks of her early memories of life at home in Eastern Canada and spending quality time with her family. A memory that Robyn had from her childhood was of climbing icebergs and watching them float by the coast. Later, when she is in care, she describes feeling like an iceberg herself: floating by and feeling like she "had to hide who (she) really was" while she was in care. She expressed frustration with not knowing why she was put into care, and at the same time she said, "no one could see what was underneath the surface of me"—of how she really felt. This feeling is common for a developing child that is forming their identity (Maunder & Hunter, 2015). But this sense of frustration can be amplified for a child that experiences loss early in life (Maunder & Hunter, 2015), and Robyn effectively illustrates the experience she feels by showing a blue-toned and translucent image of herself, overlaid on an image of a solitary iceberg. Later, Robyn said that she reconnected with half of her family, and she speaks with them every day. At this point in her story, workshop participants stand in a row on a grassy open field, to represent the feeling Robyn had of family coming together. At the end of Robyn's story,

she looks out along a babbling brook and then faces the camera as she says, “I have a purpose. I have a family.”

3.8.2 Jon’s Story

In a life changing moment, Jon was placed into care. After he opened up about his childhood experiences with a worker and told his story, he realized that he was being lied to about his family and eventually he reunited with them. When he was old enough, he started living on his own, working, and graduated from high school where he won a major award. As he narrates, he shows images of his award and ceremony in the digital story. Then, he talks about “taking a chance” to go to college. At this point in his story, the video is cropped to a square surrounded by a black screen. As Jon tells his story, the square pans across the stage with a close-up of Jon wearing his graduation gown and running to the stage to grab his diploma all by himself. Sadly, he said that he graduated on his own with no one to wave to. At the end of the story, Jon shows a sunset—or maybe it is a sunrise—and a city scene, and he talks about “knowing” that life will go on.

3.8.3 Brigitte’s Story

In an original, poetic, and artistic story that talks about the embodied experiences of transitioning from foster care, Brigitte literally and metaphorically reconnects with her story by using body mapping (de Jager et al., 2016), voiceover narration, and an original score of piano music. At the beginning of Brigitte’s story, she is seen disappearing while walking down a hallway. This segment is in black and white, to emphasize her lost sense of selfhood. She talks about walking through doors to new group homes, where she said she is “trying to regain a sense of “Who am I?” and a sense also, “Am I just a statistic, or is there something maybe more to me and my story?” In the second half of her story, we see two people who are holding the frame of Brigitte’s body map that shows seven missing pieces. Brigitte is standing in a garden, looking for the missing pieces, and holding them up to her actual body to show that she found them. Like Robyn and Jon, Brigitte realizes that she has the capacity to find her identity herself through telling her story. Through looking for her missing pieces, she shares that she developed a deeper awareness of the effect of loss on other people that she sees through looking at their expressions of pain and

anger. As she places the missing pieces into the body map, she talks about how much she has learned from losing, then finding her missing pieces. The final piece that she places is a drawing of her heart. Though the story was staged, she actually lost this piece during the filmmaking process. As she places the heart in the body map, the story fades out and we see Brigitte walking towards the camera with her arms in the air, expressing a sense of relief and maybe hesitation, but also hope that she has made it to this point in her journey to independence. She leaves us with a signpost-like message at the end, and she smiles as a message appears on the screen: "–To all youth, and survivors in foster care. –Brigitte."

• • •

Across all stories, youth engage with themes of identity, belonging, and an interest to persevere despite experiencing neglect, loss, and trauma. As a facilitator, I felt supported by other facilitators in the team to listen to the youth as they shared their stories with me and the group. The facilitator debriefing sessions were a necessary component of the workshops as they provided a way for us to talk about the impact of witnessing the stories.

As a researcher, revisiting the stories was challenging. But I think that by having the time and space between the last workshop that I co-facilitated in 2017 and when I interviewed participants two years later, I became inspired to write and produce my own digital story in September 2019 a few months after I completed the interviews (See section 5.2). Producing this story, along with other reflexive outputs helped me to grow as a researcher and person. As an artist and researcher who engages with research with underrepresented and vulnerable populations, including youth and the elderly, I have learned to intentionally integrate practices of self- and intersubjective reflexivity (Mitchell et al., 2017) as a necessary component of my process of research investigation, and see this as a strength that I can offer in my future work.

Chapter 4 Findings

In the following sections 4.1 to 4.3, I discuss findings from the self-reported sociodemographic characteristics along with the core findings from the initial and focused coding stages.

4.1 Findings from Self-Reported Demographic Characteristics

Table 6 represents voluntary, self-reported demographic characteristics of all participants; participants could complete all or part of the questionnaire voluntarily.

Almost half of all participants are between 25 to 44 years of age (48.6%). Over half of all participants (57.1%) identified with female pronouns she/her/hers. Participants self-reported in great detail about their race and ethnicities when prompted with the question, “If you would like to, please tell me what ethnicity/ethnicities you identify with?” Four participants (11.4%) self-reported as “white,” 10 participants (28.6%) self-reported as “Caucasian”. Almost half (n=15) of all participants indicated their specific racial identities (e.g., African American, Yoruba, Scandinavian etc.) and some participants also indicated that they had mixed racial identities and ethnicities. Despite the open-ended questionnaire, six participants (17.1%) chose not to disclose their race/ethnicity(ies). 18 participants (51.4%) are based in Canada, of which 14 participants are from Ontario, and 11 are in Toronto.

An interactive data visualization that displays all of the same data in a clear format and draws comparisons between a couple of variables to illustrate the significance of each question on the questionnaire was translated from the list of data in Table 6 (See Figure 13).

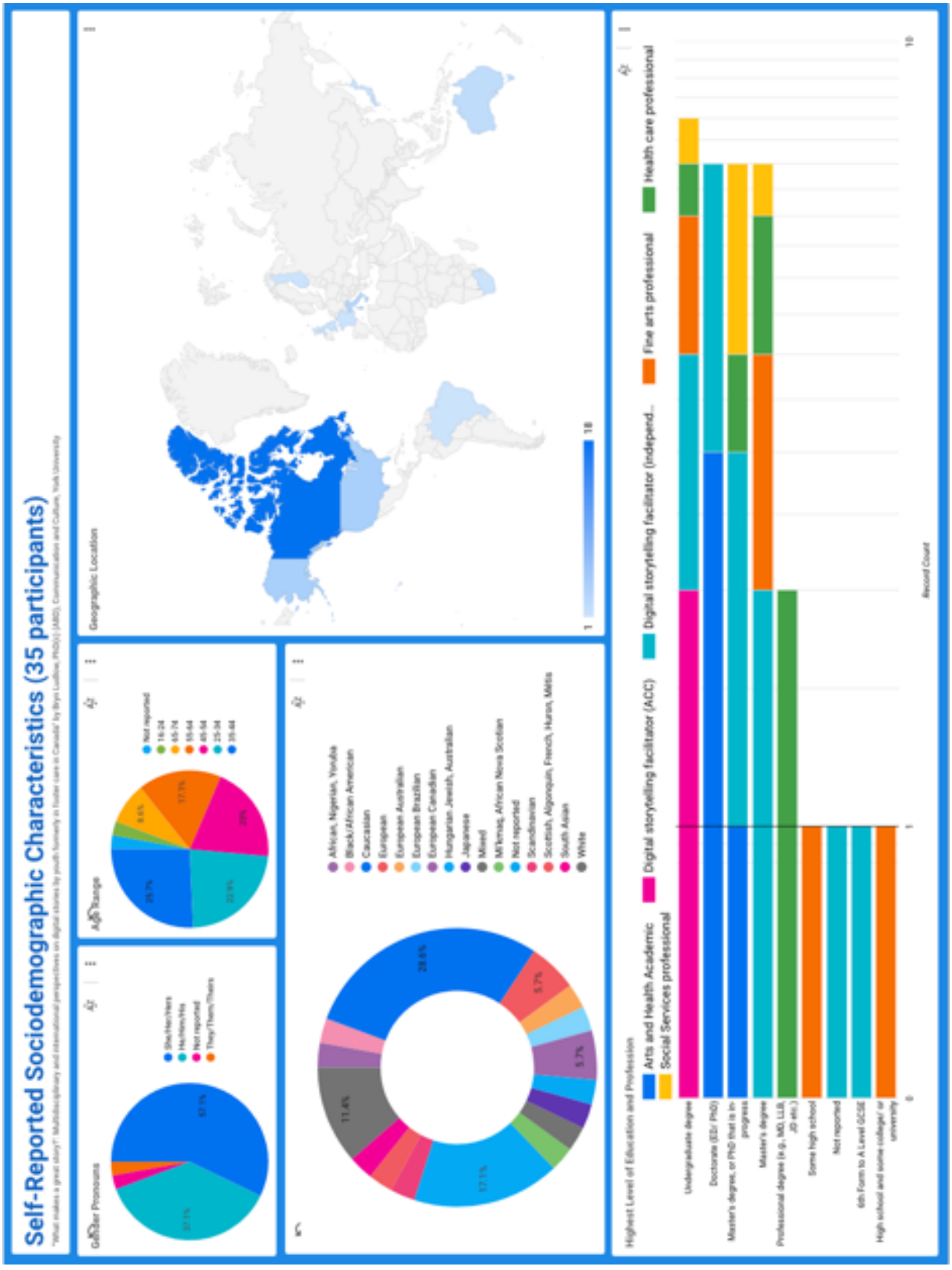

Figure 13: Self-Reported Sociodemographic Characteristics (35 participants): https://datastudio.google.com/s/pZ5eOj9-Yco

4.2 Core Findings

The core findings of this dissertation illuminate criteria for creating a great story. Following the focused coding stage (Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Rieger, 2018) four themes were identified during analysis. Together, they comprise the structure of an emerging grounded theory that responds to the question, "What makes a great (digital) story?":

1. Anticipation: Great digital stories convey evidence of forethought by the storyteller about the impact and value of the story with the audience.
2. Actualization: Clear and aesthetically pleasing visuals and sounds form the foundation of great digital stories.
3. Affect: In response to hearing or viewing great digital stories, an audience feels a range of emotions that can compel them to change their outlook about a situation.
4. Authenticity: Great digital stories are authentic and honest, and they involve the sharing of personal experiences.

These four themes are discussed with supporting evidence from the interviews in sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.4 of this chapter.

Findings

Bryn Ludlow, PhD (Candidate), York University

Authenticity

Great stories are authentic and honest, and they involve the sharing of personal experiences.

Anticipation

Great stories convey evidence of forethought about the impact and value of the story with the audience.

Affect

In response to hearing or viewing great stories, an audience feels a range of emotions that can compel them to change their outlook about a situation.

Actualization

Clear and aesthetically-pleasing visuals and sounds form great stories.

Figure 14: Findings

4.2.1 Anticipation

Great stories convey evidence of forethought about the impact and value of the story with the audience.

A recurrent theme in the interviews was a sense amongst interviewees that the storyteller attended to the storytelling production process. Interviewees felt that to make great stories, people need a reason to create them in the first place. Given this finding, I believe that there is an important and under-studied stage of the digital storytelling production process which I call the "anticipation" stage.

The Cambridge English Dictionary (Cambridge University Press, 2020) defines forethought as "the good judgment to consider the near future in your present actions". In this stage, participants critically consider the potential impact and value of their story for a specific audience. Storytellers also reflect on how and if the story should be shared, and the potential of their story to create social change.

The initial "Own your insight" stage, as Joe (Digital Storytelling Facilitator, USA) said, is

> …more of an organizing principle than it is an assessment principle, meaning... really, in the end, did you feel like it helped you to do this story?

Insight provides clarity about the voice of the story (Lambert & Hessler, 2018), and, critically, as digital storytelling facilitators Barrie (Digital Storytelling Facilitator, UK) and Joe noted, insight can be bidirectional for facilitators, who observe and listen to storytellers. For example, Barrie said:

> Yes, I think it gave me an insight into how people really feel; something that is probably not quantified in statistics, such as: this many people went into care, these people left and found somewhere to live, these people left and went into a life of crime, these people left and ended up addicted to drugs or alcohol, and whatever—that doesn't tell the story.

In contrast to insight, the definition of a similar word, "foresight" is "the ability to judge correctly what is going to happen in the future and plan your actions based on this knowledge" (Cambridge University Press, 2020). It is a form of future-casting to have foresight while developing a story. An insight-driven approach to story development does not necessarily mean

that a foresight driven (predictive process) will follow. Many domains benefit from predictive storytelling or future forecasting, for example, a story about the effect of our actions today on climate change. In digital storytelling, there is the potential for facilitators to invite participants to explore a preliminary stage of story production called “anticipation” that forms a bridge between the initial stage of insight (Lambert & Hessler, 2018) with hindsight-based stories that diverge from honest portrayals of everyday life— the result of producing “too many unconsidered narratives” as Daniel (Digital Storytelling Facilitator, UK) noted.

In this section, I distinguish the stage that I call “anticipation” with the first of six of the “Seven Steps of Digital Storytelling”, “Owning your insights” described by Lambert and Hessler (2018). As Lambert and Hessler (2018) state, in the first stage, “Owning your insights” (Lambert & Hessler, 2018, p. 68) is about “clarifying your story’s insight…” and in particular,

> Insight is related to many other questions that can arise for the storyteller. Even if you address the core insight and unique voice for the story, you may still feel you need to shape the story for a specific audience, or a specific purpose. You may also feel the story may need more context to be understood. (p. 55).

The purpose of including a new stage in the digital storytelling creation process called “anticipation” that precedes the stage, “owning your Insight” (Lambert & Hessler, 2018), is that participants—specifically digital storytelling facilitators—spoke to the need to encourage storytellers to *think* about the impact of their story in the future, and to nurture thought about the value and impact of the story on a specific audience, rather than trying to *predict* what the process and outcome will be like at some point in the early stages of the workshop (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

4.2.1.1 Impact

Joe responded to the differences in writing for digital storytelling and how the stories in this collection that I shared with him fit with narrative and testimonial writing, given that they have a sort of broad storyline. Joe said,

I mean, you've been in my workshops, you know, even with these young people, we would have said, well, “what does that really look like?”

As a facilitator, asking questions during the writing stage, story circle, and after listening to the story can help storytellers present the story that they wish to tell, and more importantly in my opinion, the story that they are willing to share.

As a facilitator with experience in working with youth in foster care, Jacqueline (Digital Storytelling Facilitator, USA) spoke about the choices participants make when storytelling. I asked her about recognizing the sense of self-compassion in Jon's story:

> JACQUELINE: I think sometimes not knowing, like having that just like, how they'd chosen to share I think can be a really great tool for empathy because it leaves you curious, and knowing that it was really serious, but not having to know the nitty-gritty details of their trauma.
>
> BRYN: That's true, I've been thinking about empathy in relation to these videos and it's definitely the first emotional response to the videos.
>
> JACQUELINE: I think that's something I've noticed too is that you know that they've experienced trauma, but there's still that longing for their family. They still often… they're very protective of their family, even if their family has hurt them intentionally or unintentionally… like they're having a balance like, "this was bad, but I love these people or I still long for like a reconciliation" and like you see that kind of I think in these as well this kind of. …You see this protection of your family.
>
> BRYN: Yeah, it's not like you just forget about your birth parents or, or even if you've had multiple foster homes. You see different adult figures and they don't forget about them, but they don't make them the centre of their stories.
>
> JACQUELINE: Yeah, I think all of them centre themselves in their story for sure, which is great.

As Jacqueline stated, participants may be interested to create a story about a difficult personal experience, often from the past, but they may not fully appreciate how the process of creation (and possibly sharing) might impact themselves and others in the workshop. As a facilitator, Jacqueline talked about noticing when youth have experienced trauma, and not having to "know the nitty-gritty details"; I related to this experience, and it was refreshing to hear another digital storytelling facilitator speak about the need to have this professional boundary, given that we are not trained in trauma therapy. At the same time, we both identified the strengths and resiliency that youth in care have while creating their stories that are often about traumatic memories.

Following this exchange, we talked about the concern we shared with balancing facilitator influence while monitoring workshop participant's affect and interest to share difficult stories when we might not be equipped as facilitators to support them, and Jacqueline said:

> Yeah, yeah, there [isn't?] anything wrong asking about the past but we never do because we're working with students and we're not equipped to like, we're not trying… this is not therapy, you know, like we're not trying to like trigger anything.

Jacqueline's interest in delineating digital storytelling from therapy was important to convey to participants so that they could both understand the limits of the facilitation team and the goals of dissemination. It is notable that these findings highlight how the need to assist participants with containing the difficult stories may prevent a digital storyteller from telling their authentic story.

Similarly, Joe's response resonated with the tensions that Jacqueline described about facilitator influence. Joe was curious to know how the storytellers created the stories and what role facilitators played. He asked,

> How are you influencing the choices and, and what happens when you give the influence in a certain way to the, the, the tightness of the film?

He went on to say,

> But that's—a lot of our work is that, you know, always kind of like help the person get it, just so.

As an organizing principle, gathering the storyteller's insights into what story they need to tell is worthwhile. However, some storytellers might not be able to form "a clear, deep, and sometimes sudden understanding of a complicated problem or situation," as the definition of insight says (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). When a storyteller is clear about who their audience is, it is often easier to let go during the process, enjoy the challenges of creative work, and have fun. For example, as Daniel stated:

> …the third part of what makes a good story would be that the person making it in is in one way or another enjoys the creative process. I think enjoying the creative process is a really important part of it being fun. …I always want people to have fun. I don't mean to be silly and run about but have the kind of fun that comes from really throwing yourself into the problems of making something.

Similarly, as Jeff (Digital Storytelling Facilitator, USA) said,

> There's structure and it is an immersive activity. Um that kids also could have a sense of pride in something they created, they have ownership over. That's a good confidence builder, too. So, I think there's a lot of upside potential for digital storytelling.

These "upside potentials" of digital storytelling, and storytelling, are not constructed as Joe noted:

> What do I think makes a great story? You know, and this is why you hear me almost analyzing the process more than the product. And seeing the way they were constructed. And I'm seeing the comfort in which the, the storytellers felt on camera as well as in their voice.
>
> …in her voice, there's some degree of confidence. Yeah. I mean, I would be curious how they felt about the screening. Usually, people just can't stand the screening, meaning of their own peace. They're just like, no, don't show me that. But you know, usually after it's over there, you know, they're like, you see him in there like, "I'm a filmmaker, you know?" I mean, you know, they, they have some degree of pride of authorship and that, that's cool.

This "pride of authorship" that Joe is taking about can result from going through the creative process to make a digital story, seeing the final product, sharing it at a screening, and seeing its impact on others. In my experience, on the first day of the workshops during the introductions, many youth storytellers stated their excitement with having the opportunity to "make a movie". To me, this comment conveyed that they were interested in working with facilitators and their peers to produce their story. As movies are experienced socially, they were already anticipating the experience of sharing and observing other people watch and listen to their *movie*.

Daniel shared a story about how they used to screen stories, which reminded me of the story screenings that I observed with the youth at the workshops I attended:

> …we used to get people on the last day which was usually a Friday. Yeah. We have a screening at about four o'clock…. People's families—brothers and sisters, moms, dads, all come and watch the film. You've maybe had 10 people in the workshop, but now you suddenly got 40 people in the room watching the films. Yeah, we used to serve... yeah, orange juice, or there was always a bottle of cheap fizzy wine there if you wanted to have what was it called, you know you put champagne into orange juice. Then we'd have things to eat and stuff and have a proper screening and people would stand up and talk about their film and show it and answer questions and yeah, and it was always the best part, you know. Nobody wanted to leave… A very very important part is the sort of community thing.

The screenings were impactful for the storytellers and as Daniel noted, for their friends and family who came to see and hear their stories for the first time, in some cases.

4.2.1.2 Value

The confidence that is expressed in a digital story results from a thought about "What is valuable to an audience, and how will my story impact them?" as Robert (Healthcare Professional, Canada) said:

> So, there are different kinds of value, right. I think the clearest kind of value is that these are valuable for the person that makes the story. Right, that this is an expression of themselves and trying to convey something that's important to them in a way that's coherent enough that somebody else is going to get it. At the same time that they're kind of exercising their creativity like those are… that's that's a very important like that's… that's therapy, right? That's their very important kind of impact. So, so for the person who is making it for sure.

After thinking about the value of the story on an audience, as Robert said, the combination of authentic self-expression and creativity can also be therapeutic for a storyteller.

Karl (Arts and Health Researcher, UK) felt strongly that it is important for youth to continue to create, share, and engage with other people's stories. He noted that with so many issues of mistrust in the media, misinformation, and disinformation, there is a hesitancy to share real stories. He said,

> I think telling your story and, and sharing your story with other people (is important) because you can then start to question other people's stories.

However, Karl felt that it was important for youth to share their stories so that they would have the agency to critique other stories. When youth can create and share their stories and critique stories by others, they express and demonstrate the agency that they have, and they become leaders who can create and influence social change.

Chloe (Arts and Health Researcher, Australia) talked about the value of the stories for people working in social services with youth in care and youth about to leave care. She stated,

> I can see how they would have a value in that role, in-terms of people working in the sector to stop and think, perhaps more about the lives—the broader scale as well— the children that they're

> working with. I think seeing the children as adults might also be a way about thinking of the implications for a life, as opposed to the person the way they are now, who I need to "deal with".

This thought was common among participants who are not working in child welfare services. For instance, Pam (Digital Storytelling Facilitator, South Africa) and I talked about how important it is for child welfare workers to see stories created by youth in care and youth formally in care:

> PAM: So again, it is nice watching the way other people deal with that constraint as facilitators. And also again, it was interesting to see how powerful I thought the stories could be as feedback from people in the system to the people running the system.
>
> BRYN: Do you mean, for people running the system to watch these, yeah?
>
> PAM: Yeah, social workers should watch these stories.
>
> BRYN: I showed them to a few.
>
> PAM: And how did they respond?
>
> BRYN: I think… I think shock… and a sense of guilt in a way.
>
> PAM: Huh…interesting.
>
> BRYN: Yeah, but they also have a job to do, right?
>
> PAM: Yeah, they do have a job to do. I guess what is so valuable about it is it makes the cases back into people.
>
> BRYN: Yeah, that's the primary thing.

The act of creating stories that convey a sense of self expression and creativity in a coherent way for an audience involves anticipation about how to go about that in an original way.

As Robert stated, it can be therapeutic to do this, or cathartic. Then, "owning one's insights" (Lambert & Hessler, 2018) by presenting a story that is clear, personal, and understandable will launch a storyteller into the process of developing, presenting, and sharing a potentially authentic, honest, and emotionally compelling story; a story that may compel an audience to change their outlook.

4.2.2 Actualization

Clear and aesthetically pleasing visuals and sounds form great stories.

From their experiences of watching stories on television, in the theatre, or online, many participants understand that great stories are clear and understandable, and they include aesthetically pleasing visuals and sounds that complement each other.

4.2.2.1 Clarity

As a social worker, Malaika (Social Services Professional, USA) spoke to the gaps in care, and subsequent gaps in the stories that the youth shared in this study. The experience of viewing the stories and noticing these gaps was worrisome and troubling for Malaika, as she was often left wanting to know more about the youth's stories and the reasons why the youth were in the situations that they were in. Malaika's contributions to the study are invaluable in this regard, as I came to the workshops as a co-facilitator with minimal experience of working with vulnerable youth. She offered a lot of interesting questions, talked about the stories and how the youth felt using many narrative-style examples, and she shared new information with me about the current state of foster care in the US. Our discussion about the need for authentic, unpolished stories revealed a gap in my research about the production of unrealistic stories *about*—not *with*—youth in care, and youth formally in care.

In this excerpt, Malaika stresses the importance of focusing on one theme so that the story is clear. Her response was always focused on the youth perspective, and the need to know exactly what the youth need. Gradually, Malaika shared ideas for techniques that the youth and other digital storytellers can use to convey these needs with clarity, and here is one example:

> MALAIKA: I think what makes a great or compelling story is finding one theme and going with the theme. Because you know if you go with the theme and you have these short blurbs of you know 2-4 minutes, I'd say you know, talk about the one thing. You know, maybe that's why I liked Jon's because he was like you know, "I had this abuse in my family, I got dropped off at the hospital", it was you know tighter. With Brigitte's story, … I don't think I found anything out about her. It was just you know, "You can put the pieces together, you can find them, you can figure it out" and then Robyn's story seemed to me like a little, also a little unclear. So maybe, I guess maybe I like stories that seem to have a resolution. Yeah, because even if it's only a small piece, being able to tell a story that gives some form of resolution, or some place to kind of look forward to. So, I would say that is what makes a good story.
>
> BRYN: Yeah, and it has to be a clear story?

> MALAIKA: Yeah, I think so. Because otherwise it becomes… "I guess I'm not sure what you're talking about…" you know what I mean, yeah. Make it clear and just say…yeah, one thing, and if there is more than one theme, make sure there is room to explain the different pieces.

Malaika emphasizes the need to tell clear stories a few times in this discussion and by doing so, she realizes that the stories that she finds the most compelling "…have a resolution" as she said. Some of her responses in the excerpt above may seem direct. But, by thinking about the synopses of the stories, Malaika demonstrated how to get to the root of the meaning in the stories. Once she described the stories, it was also evident to me that closure and a resolution in a story can make it clear enough to know about the core issues and how they can be addressed one-by-one if that was the storyteller's objective.

Another attribute of clarity is when the visuals and audio components are unified. In response to the question about what was meaningful about his favourite story, Lewis (Fine Arts Professional, Canada) said that "the visuals matched the story very well." For him, this matching provided narrative coherence. Similarly, while commenting on Brigitte's story, Chloe stated:

> I thought the way that her visuals and her narrative relate, you could see how there were ways that they were really relating, the words and visuals… it was a nice analogy between the two."

Federica and Antonia (Digital Storytelling Facilitators, Italy) also spoke about the effect of unifying sounds, visuals, and the story without being didactic:

> FEDERICA: It was really well thought out the way she was treating let's say the images together with the words and even though she um, she used a lot of the videos until to working through and then coming back and the music. I mean, it's a really well well-done piece. Let's say and but it's more like thoughts… our thoughts going more than a story. This is the impression that I have.

The vacuous effect that Brigitte was able to convey by walking down the hallway symbolized that feeling and brought viewers like Federica into their thoughts. Antonia spoke about the adage to talk about a house in a story without showing a house, and to tell a relatable story with original content:

> So, it all depends then maybe if you think about the digital story or a story, you know, like an oral story. So, if it's digital, of course, good pictures should be used, and also, I think, not pictures taken from the internet like, I don't know, little smiley faces and all that bad stuff and you know. And also, the language complements the image, and the other way around, you know, so that the images complement… are complementary to the language. So, they don't… they don't say the same thing.

So, if I say house, don't show a house, you know, so add a little something that you can relate to but not necessarily is a house, you know, it's the feeling the feeling that you are sharing.

Joe and Erica (Digital Storytelling Facilitators, Canada) spoke about the use of stock images in different ways. Erica felt that original images are more compelling, whereas Joe saw the use of stock images and video footage in Robyn's and Jon's story as an accessible way of sharing ideas.

ERICA: I especially liked the video of her (Robyn) walking in the path. I think that's aesthetically quite appealing. I love that video. It's a beautiful place. I found the icebergs a bit cheesy because they don't look like images that they look like…like images that she got that…It's like stock images.

BRYN: Yes.

ERICA: So, I mean, being a digital storytelling facilitator, I'm quite fussy about that and I don't like it when people use stock images, but I appreciate that.

BRYN: Why not?

ERICA: Why not? Because I find it aesthetically unpleasing. I find it doesn't match the story. It doesn't look… it looks out of place, and it looks… but I know my opinions are super strong about it and they may not…I just might be biased but I would take what I'm saying with a grain of salt, but I understand that the metaphor was really important to her. So, I appreciate her use of it. I would have made… I would have encouraged different choices for her, aesthetically, but it doesn't change the fact that the metaphor is really profound in the story and really important, and I get why she wanted to use it. So, I'm down. I'm down with it.

In contrast, Joe noted:

JOE: we don't really critique cliché. I mean, I critique it less than anybody else, compared to my staff who are like, "Oh, but people will think we, you know, they'll think we're bad". But I'll say, "You know, if somebody uses a normative representation in a life that was never normative, there's a kind of aspiration to it".

So, when people use stock images and feel good about it, it's because they want to feel like they're normal, not because they, you know, not because they think it represents them and the sort of politics of representation, you know? And, um, what I liked about these pieces is that by choosing film and phew, you know, choosing a thing, like they exercise a…for example, Brigitte, where she's piecing herself back together. Um, it gives you, uh, another way to look at the person. As a character onscreen in action as opposed to, you know, let me show you more pictures of a shadow. You know, like you can see in the shattered lives of my picture, broken up in Photoshop or my picture that, you know, the frame of my picture of broken clay. And, and you know how many times I've

> seen those metaphors. I, you know, find a nickel, I'd be a millionaire. So, and that that's good. Meaning it's good that you guys do that.

Daniel and I discussed why some people experience difficulty unifying images and sounds. He suggested:

> [The task is difficult] because often our thoughts are confused… most people haven't tried to shape their lives through storytelling because that's not what we do. Um, one of the things about digital storytelling is, is that it helps you to do that. It helps you to teach you that storytelling is massively selective. You've… you've lived a whole life I could start, "I was born in 1952. My mother was… my dad was called Roddy, although she wasn't really called Anna name was Kathleen, but she…" You know it'd be boring if you only see your life as that sort of narrative. But if you say, I don't know, "Last week, I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and that's not… that's not great. But it's particularly bad for me because my mother had Multiple Sclerosis." So, you're coming at a story from a completely different place.

It is a skillful act by a storyteller working in tandem with a facilitator to seamlessly blend images with a compelling story.

4.2.2.2 Aesthetics

The way that storytellers can use images and sounds to tell great stories is through aesthetic strategies, and a few participants made observations about this. Interestingly, participants that talked about the importance of producing a polished final product did not share that they felt empathy while watching the stories. They might have felt empathetic, but they did not talk about it.

When creating stories, Jeff emphasized the importance of having a variety of shots or *"b-roll"* to select from, and said:

> I like some of the aesthetic things they were doing in some of the camera work. I thought early on… the out of focus shots in the hall with her walking to and from the camera. It was good. I think a little goes a long way. I think for any future workshop they do, or they want to produce more than you make sure to shoot enough footage of different varieties, so you have *a lot of visual options* when you're editing.

When storytellers have content to choose from, it may be more straightforward to decide what to omit. Likewise, they may record a sentence once, then repeat the same sentence but say it in a

different way to add or omit emphasis. For example, when asking a question, but forgetting to modify the pitch of your voice before the end of the sentence.

Naturally, participants working in fine arts were drawn to responding to the power of visual media in storytelling. Marcus (Fine Arts Professional, Canada) and I had an interesting discussion about how Robyn, Jon, and Brigitte used digital and analogue media and editing techniques to illustrate themes in their stories about aging out of foster care:

BRYN: I'm interested particularly in what you said about images that are clear compared to pixelated images. So, by making that formal decision, like Brigitte's decision, Jon was emphasizing that, can you say? It's almost taking a technique, and using the image technique as a storytelling technique?

MARCUS: Yeah, exactly. I mean just like the, like kind of like thinking about the distorted image, like thinking about pixilation, um, any kind of like digital distortion, I think like he speaks well through the medium, like especially considering it's a video, but like, through that kind of interaction with the medium itself, it also like really effectively talks about like what the medium, like what the medium is kind of like talking about. So, I think it's kind of like a really natural, like link between, um, the kind of like pixelated distortion and like the mental distortion of like thinking of someone like close to you who you have a very like different perspective on after like, um, an experience that is potentially like traumatizing, or life-altering.

In this example, Marcus argues for the use of "digital distortion" techniques in video editing as it works effectively in his opinion, to illustrate a cognitive distortion, or an experience that is "…traumatizing or life-altering" as he says. Pam and Robert also talked about the blurred image in Jon's video, and because the image of his grandparents is "very clear and bright" as I said, Pam responded,

Yes. Yes, exactly. So, there's…I mean there's a strong impression that the grandparents are still part of his life in some way. He does have that family.

In storytelling, dialogue and images often work in tandem to tell stories, and often images can stand alone in great stories as Susan (Arts and health researcher, Australia) identified in Robyn's story:

SUSAN: Robyn used so very few words that told a powerful, impactful story. Her images were everything, you know. If you had just a blank screen and her telling that story without the path that she retraced without the moving water of the river connecting her, and…(pause)

> BRYN: The falling iceberg…
>
> SUSAN: And all of that… yeah. Yeah, without those images her story is, you know, less powerful or less true almost. It's less her story without the images.

In the middle of Robyn's story, an image of a falling iceberg works to convey the sense of dissolution of her family life. At the same time, the metaphor illustrates Robyn's realization of this natural phenomenon with icebergs and unfortunately, the separation of families. Perhaps the iceberg also illustrates Robyn's coming to terms with herself as an individual. As Susan notes, "…without those images her story is, you know, less powerful or less true…" The power of the falling iceberg, the honest portrayal of the naturally occurring event, and the use of this metaphor to illustrate a personal event that is hard to put into words, makes Robyn's story feel authentic.

Karl connects the visual image and aesthetic decisions by Robyn to the emotional and affective response that Robyn was experiencing, and how that visual image works to illustrate the underlying concerns that Robyn was facing:

> BRYN: What do you think she was trying to express?
>
> KARL: I think she was expressing the sense of frustration of what happened to her and also that nobody really understood the real hurt. That was really very clear. The fact is an iceberg is 9/10ths below the water, and you can't necessarily judge what's going on on the surface. I also also… I like the visuals, you know sort of leaf pushing at the dead twig… that she was really alive. Nobody was treating her as a person, she was a thing. Especially when she got taken into care, nobody cared anyway. It was just being part of a process of being. I sort of sensed helplessness as well.

In this response, Karl is emphasizing the emotional and representational elements of Robyn's story, as well as the macro perspective about foster care in general. With his awareness of his experiences of working with youth at risk of leaving care in the European Union, his response highlights how the system continues to leave youth feeling as if their experiences are meaningless.

Mary-Jo's (Healthcare Professional, Canada) response to viewing the stories addresses the need to hear stories from youth formally in foster care. She noted that she "very much prefers the first-person experiential than anything else." She goes on to say:

> MARY-JO: It's pretty damning for the foster care system in Canada, but it's… but it's… amazingly it shows an amazing amount of resilience too.

BRYN: These videos in particular?

MARY-JO: Yeah. … Yeah. … Yeah.

BRYN: Maybe is it because of the perspective they had—the first-person?

MARY-JO: Well because it's these kids who are the survivors. Yeah, unfortunately, you don't have videos of the kids who aren't… you know. There are kids who are on the street… a lot of kids and youth are on the street and from foster care. A lot of youth who are too heavy into drugs or other bad stuff can't get anywhere near the people like you and others who are making videos to be part of it, right? Yeah, you had a good connection in order to get into being part of this.

BRYN: It's true that… that some sort of support…

MARY-JO: (naturally interrupts) so, the ones that are missing you probably need to have like 10 videos of blackness to say… this represents the kids who are lost, like, who didn't make it.

I paused for a while after Mary-Jo shared that idea, because if the stories were presented in that way, it would cause a very visceral and impactful reaction for an audience. I got chills as Mary-Jo said this because I did not think about that possibility. Her response came from her experience of knowing what it is like not to be able to share stories by "kids who are lost" and those "who didn't make it", as she said. I think if an audience experienced what it was like to see blank screens representing those who were lost or did not make it in the child welfare system, it would cause people to not only want to change the situation, but to bring others to the exhibit, including stakeholders responsible for implementation of child welfare policies.

Jacqueline noted the differences and similarities in aesthetic approaches to digital storytelling and photography, which is a medium that is frequently used in digital story production:

Jacqueline: So, you know, I think there's a trade-off in like the aesthetics sometimes, but it doesn't mean it's not worth it. But there is kind of that compared to say a photo essay. Of course, they're still high quality photography and not but like to get there and to have the right tools to do it and stuff…

I think it depends on how much time you have. Often, we don't have the time to do a proper lighting and really great editing techniques and things like that. So, you kind of sacrifice the aesthetics for the value of… the audio, the video, the moving images…

Many digital storytelling facilitators expressed concerns about time constraints in workshops, and Jacqueline's point about balancing the aesthetics with the time constraints is significant as

she felt, along with many other participants, that it is not as important to use advanced techniques to create stories as it is to create stories that are authentic and cause an emotional connection with the viewer.

Marcus injected his response with a discussion of the value of the merging of visual and written words in storytelling and in artistic reproductions:

> MARCUS: There is like a dissonance between like this space of where the artwork exists physically, and then this kind of reproduction that we are given, to look at…. (there is a) kind of race between technology and the artist, the artist is always trying to find new ways to create artwork that is hard to reproduce, and technology is always like on their heels, so it creates this kind of cat and mouse game… video really is like the artwork and the reproduction in itself. Um, because it is like the digital, it exists digitally, purely in a lot of ways. So, I think that's like really interesting to talk about because some artworks don't inform the way they do in certain ways, or there is like this space where some artwork like really does need to be talked about in a sense of like using writing as a tool to convey an idea to really complement to the artwork itself.
>
> BRYN: Yes, I understand.
>
> MARCUS: Sometimes I look at art and I think, like, "What the hell?" (laughs). Like I just don't know how to respond sometimes.
>
> BRYN: Yes, it takes time to see it.

Later, Marcus and I talked about how in digital storytelling, participants will often scan analogue artifacts such as personal photographs to be used in a final digital story. As artists, we agreed that we don't really *think* about the effect on our creative process of scanning analogue media for a digital piece, and this was stimulating, as an artist, to consider in the context of digital storytelling.

Echoing Marcus' response, Susan highlighted that storytelling and specifically digital storytelling works to empower the storyteller (to use her words) "…in ways that …conventional qualitative methods don't do":

> ...I feel like this is a way of handing… (brief pause) …really handing control of the story to the story *teller* in ways that even even... even conventional qualitative methods don't do. …You know, you're handing over the… the control of the story and you know supporting somebody to. In a sense. The research is a way of… equipping somebody to tell that story. Yeah, so I know I just think you know, a lot of times these stories are not best told in words alone... Robyn used so very

few words that told a powerful, impactful story. Where images were everything, you know, if you had just a blank screen and her telling that story without the path that she retraced without the moving water of the river connecting her…

In comparison to artists who do not engage with health and social science research, participants who I interviewed who are working in the arts *and* health emphasized their work in "equipping" and "providing" participants with methods and "tools" as Susan noted. Arts and health academics in this study, for example, Karl, Sarah, and Chloe, also talked a lot about relinquishing control and learning to observe how people choose to engage with the tools and techniques available to them. Likewise, in the following passage Chloe describes her awareness of how Brigitte used filmic techniques to illustrate her story, and her interest to "…know more about her…":

It was quite, um, philosophical. Like hearing her voiceover, in a way it didn't touch on the specific things of her story. It talked about identity, and empathy, and being yourself. But part of me wanted to know about her, and her specific story, I guess. But yeah, I thought the way that her visuals and her narrative relate, you could see how there were ways that they were really relating, the words and visuals, it was nice, and um, having her disappearing in that corridor, and um, the body mapping, and fragments, it was a nice analogy between the two.

Unlike an artist, Chloe's research background influenced her response to Brigitte's story. She shared that she wanted to "…know more about her, and her specific story…", suggesting the urge to probe and ask about the reasons for her aesthetic decisions in the production of her digital story.

4.2.3 Affect

In response to hearing or viewing great stories, an audience feels a range of emotions that can compel them to change their outlook about a situation.

According to participants, great stories cause an audience to feel specific emotions: hope, happiness, sadness, and surprise or shock. Participants often commented on their emotional responses to the stories and generally agreed that a great story can elicit a range of emotional responses. Those who tell great stories use purposeful expressions, technologies, and paralinguistic techniques to convey feelings. However, the nuances about the importance of

specific emotions, for example: happiness in the affect of a protagonist, and the connection of that emotion to the audience's sense of being compelled to act to change a situation, were serendipitously surprising to discover in the data.

When a small set of participants felt that they could act to change a situation, they expressed that they felt compassion. After watching the three digital stories participants often said that they wanted to watch more stories. When participants expressed a sense of curiosity and hope, they would often share stories about similar situations to express the empathy and sense of connection that they felt with the story and/or storyteller. Sometimes they would express that they saw themselves in the storyteller. Within this theme of affect are two subthemes: emotion and empathy.

4.2.3.1 Emotion

Erica spoke about how great stories will transport her to feel a range of emotions:

> Oh and there's actually one more really important element .. which is emotion, right? Emotion is what lets us connect across different… So I don't know what it's like to be you at all Bryn, but I know what it's like to have hope, to have joy, to have fear, to have pain, to have disappointment, to have grief, to have loss, you know and have excitement. I know what all those things feel like and so if you can…take me to the place where I can feel those things. Then it will be a good story.

Here, Erica connects quality with emotional impact. When participants talked about the importance of emotion in storytelling, they described it in their personal connection with the stories and the kinds of emotional responses that an audience is expecting. Secondary emotional responses were identified by participants as feelings that resulted from being moved by protagonists' circumstances, for example, the happiness one feels about a hopeful ending to a story (Karl), or the positively gripping sensation that one feels about a happy story (Barbara, Healthcare Professional, Canada).

The emotional connection that participants noted that they felt when hearing and/or viewing a story does involve a sense of relatability. For example, Pam shared the common responses that participants in her workshops say when she asks about the effect of good stories:

> Yeah, when I ask people, often in the in the sort of introductory presentation of a workshop, I'll often show people stories, and then ask them… what makes a story a good story and ask them to

sort of assess and yeah, they all have always say the same thing: it's gotta somehow grab my emotions and I have to be able to relate to it.

A sense of relatability or fellowship, as Cláudia (Digital storytelling facilitator, Brazil) noted, is evident in stories that are relatable. In contrast, stories that are unrelatable can result in a sense of disconnection for a viewer. For example, when thinking about her least favourite story, Trinley (Healthcare Professional, Canada) said:

Um, I guess the last one because it wasn't as clear as to what… had actually happened… I guess (Jon's story) because it was more vague… it wasn't as strong as an of an emotional connection to his story… I mean, I think things that really make you have… make the viewer have like an emotional connection to it.

Many authors have written about various types of stories. British Sociologist Clive Seale (2002) writes about the portrayal of health experiences in the media in "Media and Health". In a chapter called "The Production of Unreality," Seale (2002) provides evidence of how stories in the media produce unrealistic portrayals of health-related experiences, often to please an audience or to meet their expectations.

According to Seale (2002), some of the reasons why participants expected to see the common narrative of the hero, villain, victim, and so on, may be because of the ways that media constructs children's stories. However, it turns out that some audiences are curious, and interested in feeling surprised by great stories created by youth. This is conveyed in Barbara's response to Brigitte's story:

I love the storytelling part of this one because it wasn't so linear or concrete… she went inward on her journey to find herself and …found herself. And she… sees herself… and that was so powerful!

The "storytelling part" of Brigitte's story captured Barbara's attention because of Brigitte's effort to express her journey to self-discovery, reflection, and awareness at the end of her story, which was surprising and powerful for Barbara to witness.

Jeff and Sara (Digital Storytelling Facilitator, Canada) felt that vulnerability is an important element in storytelling. Sara said, "Even though the story is vulnerable, telling it helps you heal (from) anything that may have happened, or at least makes you process it." I was surprised that more participants did not mention the feeling of vulnerability. Sara and I talked about Brené

Brown's influential work in this area and that it takes a lot of courage to mention vulnerability. Sara and I worked together at two workshops and I think that contributed to the trust that she had with me in our interview and in this discussion in particular. Whereas, Jeff's work in film, video production, and digital storytelling is based in-part on the production of emotion. Interestingly, Jeff made the connection between the importance of authenticity "[revealing] something personal" and affect, "to change your heart and your mind" in digital storytelling and cinematic productions:

> To be a… a memorable character in any story, whether it's one of these are a movie, your character has to be vulnerable, flawed, to some degree,… and, the character has a personal mission: to change your heart, change your mind. So, but the youth (in these stories) are being vulnerable. I think it's key and being brave enough to reveal something personal.

As an audience, participants noted that having an emotional connection differs from feeling emotions in response to a story. I explored how this differs by looking into what they said about this theme in relation to the theme of anticipation. For example, Jeff said:

> I think that's the goal whether you have a sad story, (or an) exciting, action-packed story. You are causing an emotional reaction in the viewer and every story must accomplish that.

In the production of emotion, in contrast to the production of digital stories, there is an opportunity for filmmakers to impose an "emotional reaction" in the viewer, as Jeff noted. Yet in digital storytelling, as is evident in Jon's story in particular, viewers experience a range of emotions that storytellers may not be able to control.

In other instances, a viewer may react with a sense of confusion if they don't understand what the storyteller is saying due to a language barrier. For example, Gianluca (Fine Arts Professional, Italy) spoke about the sense of disconnection that he experienced with the stories and with the language, as Italian is his first language:

> For me to catch the… real feeling of all of the words and also the word that I have to maybe listen more than once to catch everything…
>
> Now when you say, I don't know, "sadness"… sadness is the situation of a feeling not just the… not… could be… maybe some key words highlighted the in the video and at the end … maybe (add a) glossary, when you put the specific words of text where the words that are used the know in some way and you just have to explain (the story).

A glossary is a creative idea to help overcome the language barrier, along with including captions, which these stories did not have. Gianluca also expressed that he felt disconnected with the stories as a father. He repeated the phrase, “it’s quite strange”, when referring to how child welfare is regarded in Canada, compared to in Italy, for example:

> It’s quite strange, to grow up… without parents because it doesn't happen only in Canada. But knowing that… your parents are somewhere, and you are staying alone? I think it's very… it’s very hard to accept… You know, if I have not understood all the words or I'm for sure it for me is impossible to catch the… the feeling because it's not my mother language and in this kind of videos is very important.

The parts that Gianluca responded to in the stories were those that he could understand. Witnessing youth in foster care was not familiar to Gianluca and the way that he unpacked that was imagining growing up without one’s own parents. In addition to the language barrier, Gianluca’s viewing experience was thwarted by this unfamiliar situation of youth leaving foster care to live independently with little to no resources. As he rolled and lit his cigarette near the end of our interview, he seemed to be frustrated to learn about this experience that youth are having as both a father and family-oriented person.

Many participants shared that it was important that great stories create a sense of “human connection” (Marcus), and an “emotional connection”. Marcus shared that he connected with the stories, as the “symbolic type of thing”:

> …I'm assuming that her being able to talk about this story, having her carried in such a way, with the help of you, and the help of the other organizations, I think, like that in a way is a sense of community, but I also think it's like a symbolic type of thing, from like, the video to real life, where I'm sure in her life, she has had like, had to find like a sense of community to find a part of herself as well.

The “symbolic type of thing” Marcus was expressing is about how the digital storytelling process enabled Brigitte to create a story that she connected with and that her collaborators and community connected with, and that it grew out of an experience of feeling like she had nothing. Through creating the story, it seemed to Marcus and other viewers that she created connections with the facilitators, fellow storytellers, and her viewers who could relate to the experience of self-discovery.

4.2.3.2 Empathy

Many participants talked about the feeling of empathy and empathizing with the storytellers. Only a handful of participants (n= 6), three from the healthcare field and three from the digital storytelling field, directly discussed compassion. For example, when talking about her favourite story, Trinley noted that Brigitte's story impacted her but that she "felt compassion and sadness about the other ones". On many occasions, participants mentioned that they felt empathetic towards the youth who created the digital stories. Unfortunately, they could rarely elaborate about why they felt this way. Nonspecific responses to questions may be due to feeling empathetic towards the youth storytellers, or sometimes participants needed more time to think about how to respond (S. Zembrzycki, 2021, personal communication). Participants described feeling compelled to either change the experience for the protagonist or they described how the stories influenced their outlook on the situations portrayed.

Over time, I became more attuned to listening for responses about empathy. At the same time, I was mindful about not priming participants to talk about compassion or empathy specifically. Rather, I mentioned the words in summation of what they said in our discussions. When I did this, I noticed that some participants identified that there is empathy for the youth or certain stories that they shared, but interestingly, digital storytelling facilitators who discussed having a compassionate response tended to avoid a deeper discussion about compassion. For example, Cláudia noted:

> CLÁUDIA: I feel better. I like the scene of the ocean, the ice, I like it, I feel better. I like, so much, the narrative slowly, because you can understand, you can feel the same thing that people are talking and thinking like you.
>
> BRYN: Empathy?
>
> CLÁUDIA: Yeah! Yeah, empathy. Yeah, yeah. I think that it is. Because nowadays, I don't know in Canada, but in Brazil, we are talking so much about how it is to be in the place of the other.
>
> …
>
> BRYN: Yes, we're doing that here, because here, people are getting older, and we're working to support older generations with empathic responses, so it's a big topic…Empathy means getting into the shoes of the other person, right?
>
> CLÁUDIA: Okay.

BRYN: Sometimes as an audience member, you can never really *get into* the shoes. So, I also wonder about compassion.

CLÁUDIA: No, I think it's about fellowship.

In response to hearing "compassion," Cláudia quickly said, "No…fellowship". Fellowship, instead of compassion, signals the alliance and comradery of a witness, not to the need to act, but to befriend. I wasn't able to ask her more about this because she was moving on to watch another story. But later, we talked about this again, and because of her work in digital storytelling facilitation, Cláudia explained that there is a need for fellowship as a facilitator so she can also maintain the social distance and professionalism required in her work. She also said that the experience of digital storytelling can be "empowering" to participants who might have never told their stories in this way before, and she went on to say:

To organize the story, recognizes the feelings. It's so powerful… The great story is your capacity to listen, for me. It's not formal, traditional, it's not, ahh…it's not a quiz. You have to have empathy for the people. This is a great story.

When participants did discuss compassion, they often talked about the need to change or to change foster care specifically. Marcus drew on his own experience of hearing stories from his mother who works in child and family services to speak about the state of foster care and the experiences of youth in care and youth aging out of care:

I think it's important to understand what it's like to be in this situation. Um, because I think it's important for people to connect and be empathetic towards people, especially younger people, or people that are at risk and living in the system, cause I think like even a little compassion could change a lot of how we have preconceived notions about um children are growing up in foster care systems, or how children cope with that or how they end up later in life even.

In contrast, Mary-Jo spoke of the need for self-compassion for those who are caring for youth in care:

MARY-JO: I just I know that I have a limited amount of energy and that you know, I do that for me. I have my head down doing the starfish thing, you know, the starfish principle?

BRYN: I don't.

MARY-JO: So, the little kid is on the beach and the beach is covered in starfish after the tide has gone out and all these starfish are starting to get too hot in the sun right, and the little kid is walking down the beach throwing the starfish back into the ocean. A guy walks along and says, "But hey,

> you're never going to throw all these starfish back in before they die". The kid says, "Oh, yeah, but it matters to this starfish". So, the point is that the kid saves the number of starfish the kid can save, and throws them back into the ocean, and just has to say "Yep, those are the ones that that got back in the ocean". You can't… you can't not do that, if you can do that, just because you won't get them all (laughs). Right? So, it's kind of starfish principle for me. I try to help the kids that I can.

This visceral story about setting boundaries as a facilitator and from Mary-Jo's experience as a psychologist touched a chord with me. As she shared the story, I thought of a moment at my first digital storytelling workshop where I reflected with Allison during a break on the importance of "distancing," which was a term I was familiar with at the time as a volunteer at a hospital in downtown Toronto. The way that I understood this concept of "distancing" at the time is that one makes every effort to connect with a patient or client but does not become attached; there are boundaries that you apply in your interactions, such as not divulging personal identifiable information.

After Mary-Jo talked about the starfish principle, what was so impactful for me was the sense of powerlessness that a facilitator or care provider may feel in response to witnessing a vulnerable individual express a vulnerable experience for their first time using digital media tools. The desire to try and help a participant "overcome" their experience may be strong. But, as I learned in subsequent post workshop debriefing meetings with facilitators, often at our dorms on site or at a restaurant on the eve of the workshop screening, is that it is not the job of a facilitator to do that: digital storytelling workshops are not designed to be therapeutic interventions. Nevertheless, facilitators (like healthcare providers who practice distancing techniques) can (and do) make meaningful connections with small groups of participants. Those connections can have very positive impacts on participants' life trajectories. The experience of "fellowship" as Cláudia said, may adequately represent the limits of our abilities, but only *adequately*, in my perspective. As Mary-Jo said, "…it matters to this starfish," and indeed, so many youth are left behind.

In medical education, Robert expressed that he is aware that medical students may not have grown up with difficult life experiences, and that he asks medical students to read divergently so that they can "…understand things outside of their experience." Following this, Robert said:

So, I'll get people to read things written by good writers about what it's like to be really sick because most medical students that I'm teaching have never been really sick. So that kind of idea, right it can work like that.

Robert's discussion of building empathy through education with medical students triggered what I was reflecting on about participant's responses to the stories about empathy. Robert also noted that the foster care system in Canada specifically has a role for youth in care and he said, "…still often it is not very good." In summary, he emphasizes that his response is in reflection of what he observed in the stories and not based on any assumptions, which I thought was refreshing to hear a participant say.

Robert's response and discussion about teaching empathy to medical students illustrates that empathy may or may not be a response by an audience. An audience responds to what they see, hear, and sense overall in a story.

4.2.4 Authenticity

Great stories are authentic and honest; they involve the sharing of personal experiences.

In 31 of 34 interviews, participants shared the importance of authentic, honest, and personal storytelling. These conversations usually contrasted personal narratives with the pervasive tendencies of mainstream and social media of sensationalizing stories and misrepresenting "real" experiences. In some everyday life situations, words that suggest ideal behaviours like "authentic" can become a cliché if they are overused and taken out of context. Joe commented on this:

…you and I can spend the rest of the year talking about what the heck… 'authenticity' means. It means everything and nothing because it's such a… a constructed idea, right?

Stories that engage authentically with challenging topics and the intentional act of making stories authentic differs. In the latter, the "constructed idea" that Joe talks about emerges. Whereas the former outcome may not be as easy to achieve. Since "authenticity" showed up in the data so many times, I explored why it was emerging so often, and in what context.

In this excerpt of our discussion, Antonia makes a good suggestion about how to create authentic digital stories:

> I think sometimes it's best when you… just try it, without having a lot of filters… just not thinking it… not thinking about it too much. Yeah, it's because it gets more real and direct. Because if you spend a lot of time editing a lot of story, then you lose… I think sometimes you have to be very good not to lose it (the story).

As Antonia said, authentic stories are about "real and direct" representations of a situation or experience. Also, Antonia's comment addresses the issue of editing, which is a skill that many video producers specialize in and that novice digital storytellers may struggle with. For example, some digital storytellers may over- or under-edit a story, so that postproduction techniques overpower the story.

Within this theme, two attributes of authenticity are highlighted: honesty and personal experiences.

4.2.4.1 Honesty

Repeatedly, participants highlighted how important it is to see and hear honest stories about youth formally in foster care from the youth themselves. Initially, I was surprised that Malaika saw video-based media about adoption or foster care before our discussion, as almost all other participants had not. Most participants only saw media portrayals of youth in care and adopted youth in print media, including newsletters, and advertisements posted on telephone polls (Chloe). Trinley and Barbara mentioned seeing films about youth in foster care.

It was not surprising to me to hear from Malaika that children were not telling the stories themselves in the media that she saw. Malaika said, "Yes, but the kids are not telling the stories. It's normally, like kids playing, or someone telling the story about them." Our conversation continued:

> MALAIKA: They will tell stories…So it's someone else's voice. Someone that has the *perfect* sounding voice. That captivating voice, they'll have the moral music playing in the back.
>
> BRYN: Like the piano music? (asked with regret)…

MALAIKA: Yeah, the piano, the soft music, and then they just show these like really cute kids. They'll show the older kids too, but the kids are so perfect and polished kids.

BRYN: Simulated…

MALAIKA: Uh huh. It's like "Look how cute these kids are" right… so, they do that a lot, and they try to go for the perfection look. Um hm.

BRYN: Not the reality.

MALAIKA: Not the reality. Yep.

BRYN: So, the truth is not getting out there and then foster parents are finding out…

MALAIKA: Yeah, and finding out that it's more difficult than they expected. Or, a lot of times they may highlight the younger kids, or people may forget that there are older kids, that that's an option, and so I think that that is, you know that becomes a concern.

In this discussion, it is evident that Malaika is concerned about the presentation of an unreal experience by youth in care. The ways that youth in care who need a permanent home are presented on televised media is having a ripple effect with all who are affected, including potential foster parents, youth, and youth that are nearing the age of being ineligible for permanent adoption.

Sometimes storytellers are drawn to using statistical information to convey 'objective' truths. However, I agree with Sarah (Arts and Health Researcher, Canada), who said:

A lot of young people I work with speak very much against being labelled a statistic, and they don't want to be a statistic. I feel like… storytelling provides the opposite of statistics. It kind of opens things up. It doesn't foreclose meaning; it is contradictory to that. You know, it's relational in a sense.

Sarah's point is supported by an example from Brigitte's digital story. When recording her audio, Brigitte said, "I am not a stat—a statistic". Brigitte ended up recording her entire four minutes of audio in one take. She did not re-record that section of her audio; her slight stutter underscored how important it was for her that her audience hear that youth formally in care do not wish to be called a statistic, or to be represented as a statistic, as Sarah also mentioned. For Brigitte, storytelling as Sarah said, acted as a place to share her thoughts and ideas in a "relational" and conversational way that numerical data fails to represent.

Other participants noted that statistical information that is presented in a digital story in-combination with the story—not in-place of the story—might make the story more accessible to people who have little knowledge about the topics addressed in the story. For example, as a facilitator, Jacqueline emphasized that sometimes stories "…might make you think about parts of their (participant's) story or identity or trauma in a way that you'll go, 'I never even thought about that before, you know'." As facilitators, Jacqueline and I reflected on this serendipitous experience of witnessing digital storytelling and creative production.

As Sarah said, "digital storytelling…does not foreclose meaning; it is contradictory to that". The meaning that people share in their stories is personal and often meant to invoke deeper reflection in a viewer, rather than suggest that a viewer agree with a result from a statistic. In Jon's story, Shusuke (Fine Arts Professional, Japan) noted how strong he was even though he was lied to many times in his life. Shusuke also discussed the metaphors in Robyn's story and how it could change one's outlook on an experience. Then, he shared how all three stories are generally about "how they got through (the) experience":

> …from my point of view, he has a strong uh… life, in a way, or a special life in a way, that not many people had. But still today, for him, it's still natural, or how he got through in a way. The end…somehow feels honest… it touched me actually.

One can only assume that the stories that the youth shared are honest portrayals of their experiences. What Shusuke is saying though, is that he recognized the central theme of resilience across all three stories and that Jon's story in particular resonated with Shusuke in an almost indescribable way.

Digital stories are constructed and edited. Nicholas (Digital Storytelling Facilitator, France) said, "it's not the truth 100% because it's storytelling." As Daniel stated:

> Most people who are good storytellers are just people who are good at telling lies (laughs)… there isn't that there isn't truth in the story… it's that you leave out so much, that…that you… you... yeah, you create something that is only it's truthful without being the truth.

If a storyteller started a workshop with the objective of sharing an honest and personal story, as Antonia also expressed, they may end up accidentally or unintentionally creating a story that could be seen as misleading and dishonest. To many participants, Jon's story stood out as a great

story because of Jon's authentic compulsion to tell an honest story about his life and his realization that he was lied to.

Steve (Social Services Professional, Canada) shared that a story can also distort the real experiences of what happens in care:

> I also think sometimes we hear that coming into care or being in care was the cause of your problems… It's easier to blame a system than it is to say actually that 'These are things that happened because of choices… or, maybe not choices, but things that happened in my family of origin.'

When the youth told their stories about what happened while they were in care, the impact of their honest, authentic statements stood out for many participants who listened to the stories. Hearing and seeing a story about a new perspective on a familiar situation can cause a viewer to feel drawn into the story and suspend their disbelief on the situation (Frye, 1964).

Jenni-Juulia (Fine Arts Professional, Finland) shared how important it is to her that there is less entertainment and more honest storytelling in the media:

> I think always, like, real-life stories are important. I don't mean that we should only make documentaries or like all these three stories could also be mixed into one making one in important story about foster care… but it has to be told in a way that gives a new angle to the thing.

In Jenni-Juulia's response to "What makes a great story?" she said that it's important to learn about the honest "angle" of the story because often stories are told for entertainment when the story subject matter is not always entertaining. In this example, she reflects on her awareness of digital storytelling in the media and she shared that often digital stories are told on behalf or for children or youth in care, but not by them:

> I don't hear enough of the voices of these children. I'm only hearing the journalists' terrifying stories… how terrified they are when they are writing about things that are happening wrong in these places but also often in those, there is no interview of the kids. There's only like this concept journalists telling what now happened.

As Steve asserts, there are a lot of contributing factors that result in the need for placing children or youth in foster care, but as Jenni-Juulia noted, there are negative distortions presented in the media from one-sided perspectives that leave out the perspective of children and youth who are experiencing these life transitions.

Today, we are bombarded with media that is, or is perceived to be "fake news" or disinformation. Cláudia spoke about this dilemma:

> Ah…I think of my PhD, … and we are talking about how important it is to give voice for the real people. For the people who are in the real problem. …. The life story, I think it can help to transport the media, the newspaper, magazine, the TV reporters, make it more real. More real. …. …. So, I feel if you show history, and real-life stories in media, it is better, it is more real. But here in Brazil, we're living in a place that has fake news. All the news are fake news.

The solution to the problem of fake news that Cláudia feels is effective, is if real stories are shared in the media. At the beginning of this excerpt, Cláudia identified the risk of *giving* voice for real people. The risk in doing that is the voice that is shared, as Cláudia describes, is not the voice that the person wants to share, but it is the voice that is given to the media or by the media, for example. As Cláudia and Jenni-Juulia observed in these three stories, youth digital storytellers are capable of sharing their perspectives in dynamic and compelling ways, if only there were more opportunities for their voices to be heard.

From a constructivist standpoint, the act of "giving voice" is controversial (Gillett, 1998). From a noncontroversial relativist and noncontroversial constructivist perspective, the notion of a "real" voice is relative to "history, culture, and individual circumstances" (Gillett, 1998, p. 4). So, enabling people to tell their life stories, as Cláudia explains, is definitely *better* than telling stories for people, because of the risks of spreading misinformation or disinformation through the media through what is not told, or because of what is told in place of another story.

Genuine efforts to tell honest stories, as Barrie said, do not inherently persuade one's thinking about an issue. Barrie goes on to say:

> In fact, they could put somebody off (of foster care), because quite clearly these people have left care with complicated lives. Whereas … films I've seen about foster care have played on the emotional to a certain extent, and they get you to pity the individual involved which you know pity is a very bad motivator, I think, and I would much rather that people saw something like this along with factual stuff, and they would obviously, you know, they'd only be part of the process.

Like many other participants, Barrie picked up on the issue of the "play on the emotional" in digital stories about foster care. To explain his rationale for not approaching digital stories like this, Barrie noted that "pity is a very bad motivator". Essentially what ends up happening,

unfortunately, is that stories are told on behalf of youth in the media, the responses from viewers are of pity and concern, but little action is taken or policy changed. Whereas if stories were more genuine, more authentic, and shared by youth, as Barrie notes, they might compel an audience to act to change a situation because of the sense of guilt that is created from seeing youth *having* to share their stories to affect change. Further discussion on the power of emotions and affect in storytelling can be found in section 4.2.3 above.

4.2.4.2 Personal

A dimension of authentic storytelling is the act of portraying personal experiences. Participants talked about the importance of sharing stories about personal experiences and about connecting with the stories. Nariman (Fine Arts Professional, Canada) felt that though the three digital stories by the youth were very personal experiences, it was equally important that the stories were coming from the youth themselves:

> These are very personal. I think it's important that they were speaking for themselves and defining their experience in their own words. So instead of having someone else relate or moderate the information and yeah, it was nice that this was their own—very own version of it.

In these stories, viewers had a chance to deeply reflect and respond to the meaning of the personal experiences that were explicitly shared or implied. Sarah noted that great stories are effective when an audience can "work a little bit" to discover the meaning behind the experiences shared:

> I think that sometimes the positive stories are also really beautiful and brilliant. …I think the real power of digital storytelling is that they can give an insider perspective.… [of] someone's real life experience or narrative and that experience might be very different than the person in the audience, right? When I think about like, pedagogical possibilities through their possibilities for like policy change or knowledge transfer and in that respect, I think if the audience can kind of work a little bit, it makes the story more successful rather than kind of a didactic, 'and then this is what happens,' right?

Following this, Sarah shared an example that if stories were didactic, it would be a similar experience to reading a report which cannot convey the "…heart behind a story, you know, the humanity behind a story." Stories that share personal experiences, as Sarah also noted, give "…people an insider view of kind of what it means to walk in someone else's shoes." The insider

view is the digital story, or the story that one hears or sees to learn more about someone else's experiences. While the viewer experiences the story, if the storyteller has shared a personal experience, it is possible to allow the audience to empathize with the storyteller and to feel what it is like to experience those things.

Karl described the need for young people in particular to share personal experiences in their digital stories.

> It is important for young people to see. That's one of the things we found, ah— one of the reasons for publishing the stories that we created was to enable others (youth) who were at risk to be able to realize that everyone has a story to tell. And that must be their story, you know, that they can find parallels, or they can find… they can make meaning of their story because it's about making meaning.

The perception of how people working in child welfare understand the stories of youth in care is distorted from the reality in some cases. In many instances, the opposite sentiment is true: some workers hold a deep level of empathy and care for the circumstances that youth are in. For instance, Blake (Social Services Professional, Canada) noted,

> So I think just the way as it struck me some of it was just the kind of numbness that's in the kids, especially the first (Brigitte's) and the third one (Robyn's). Some youth just feeling like their life's on pause, yeah, it seems like they either need a family, or they're just kind of stuck in care. They aren't necessarily living their life, they're just going through the motions. Especially the first one, like she's kind of… they should have their life is just kind of going through the motions of living their life per se.

In this reflection, Blake shares his moment of realization after watching the three stories, when he saw how the youth felt detached from their lives. I drew from his observations that he felt it was important for many others working in social services to also watch these stories. As a worker, reflecting on the "numbness inside" and life being "on pause," these metaphors reflect the medium of digital storytelling, which for some youth acted like a container for their experiences.

In contrast, Steve noted how digital storytelling works to illustrate personal experiences and how, in his work, the type of videos that are effective are those that convey possibilities for intervention:

> …within our agency anyways, the videos that we watch are about things we didn't do right for kids that are in care. … it's their perspective, it's their story, and we kind of hear what their experience was, and I always feel like I want to know more specifics. … You know like, it would be also helpful for me to kind of hear, reflectively, like what were some of the good things about your experience, what were some of the negative things or challenges and what, like how do you think…how do you think things would've been different for you if you would have stayed in your family home versus coming into care, right….Whether there is any value to you, or no value to you, or do you think you would've been more, or less successful?

In this discussion, Steve views storytelling as a way to investigate a problem and as a learning tool to uncover how to support youth with becoming independent and successful after aging out. Similarly, the patients that Trinley works with are sometimes invited to create video diaries about their experiences of overcoming major heart surgery. Trinley noted that the video diaries convey a sort of ideal response to treatment, in a similar way that stories about youth formally in care in the media convey positive sides of experiences. Trinley reflected:

> Sometimes we get videos… we see videos later on of heart transplant patients who have gotten their hearts and they're 10 years out and they're doing fantastic, but it's also I think important for us to know, that there's those that don't thrive—after getting a life-saving [procedure]... Like sure, they're alive, and they're living, but what's the quality of life like? So, I mean, I think it's always good to have this type of… I think we should have more video diaries of patients. …. So, I think would be important for… for… I mean… any… any type of situation where it's a life-altering event, that people have an opportunity to have these diaries. I mean, I think it's a really good idea.

As Trinley noted, it is important for people to know about the spectrum of experiences and how significant heart surgery is for people who are making decisions about their course of treatment. For people who have decided on a specific course of treatment, it helps for Trinley to see their actual, authentic, personal experiences about the treatment and the effects of it.

As an audience, many participants noted that great stories caused a deeper level of reflection. As Nicholas noted, he felt that storytelling is not always truthful, but then said:

> But it… it comes from histories, and in that sense, I think it's more powerful than all those other media. It's like a personal diary so, you cannot get… you cannot be more powerful in terms of intimacy than the personal diary.

As participants reflected on the meaning beneath the words and actions of the stories, and the scenes and situations that the youth shared, the ways that they engaged with the stories shifted to:

describing how the stories made them feel, how the youth must have felt in those situations, and how stories can elicit a set of specific emotions in an audience.

4.3 Summary of the Findings

This study found that great (digital) stories attend to the 4As: authenticity, affect, anticipation, and actualization. They convey honest and personal accounts of experiences that connect to the emotions of an audience in an impactful way which may compel them to change negative experiences or outlooks.

There are important similarities and differences across individual and group-based responses. For example, healthcare providers talk about the stories from a situational, case-based perspective, as compared to psychologists and social services workers who tend to talk about the stories with an emotional description. Artists were compelled to talk about the aesthetic and communicative qualities of storytelling such as clarity. Arts and health researchers talked about the need to balance an exploration of arts-based research methods with producing research outputs. Digital storytelling facilitators were interested to share how they sought to encourage storytellers to get their stories out in an authentic, and honest way that is enjoyable, and that helped them share a personal experience in a way that created connection with themselves and their communities.

After discussing the outcomes of multimodal reflexivity, in the final chapter, I will discuss these findings in relation to existing literature and provide recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5 Outcomes of Multimodal Reflexivity

This section describes the outcomes of seven multimodal reflexive acts. Each of the following subsections are labelled with a number from i-vii, which corresponds to the numbers on the "Outcomes" area of "Figure 10: Multimodal Reflexivity."

5.1 Visual Memos and Digital Exhibit (i)

It was new for me to reflect in a visual way about interactions with participants over Skype. As a reflexive act, painting *Their Stories* (See Figure 15) was a way for me to learn how to teach viewers about the need for compassion. I felt a need to visually express the positions of each stakeholder in this process: the youth, adult viewers in this case, and myself, as the researcher. The expression took the form of an acrylic painting, which took 12 hours to complete, and is 48x64" (See Figure 15).

The process of painting this work yielded expected and unexpected theoretical findings that are described in-depth in Chapter 4. In brief, painting this piece helped me relinquish my attachment to the youth participants, view them as individuals, and illustrate how and where adult viewers of digital stories created by former youth in foster care in Canada need to and should stand with the youth.

When trying to come to a conclusion about the data, a visual memo contributes to the "body of work" in the analysis (Charmaz, 2003). The process of creating "Their Stories" involved a few layers of imagery that I documented over the 12 hours of painting (See Figure 16). The first layer was a representation of two adult figures. The second layer was a very abstract, colourful arrangement. At this stage of creating the piece, I also came to understand and accept my own adoption story more clearly after a closer reading of the documentation that my family was provided about my biological parents and family.

Figure 15: Their Stories, acrylic on canvas, 48x64"

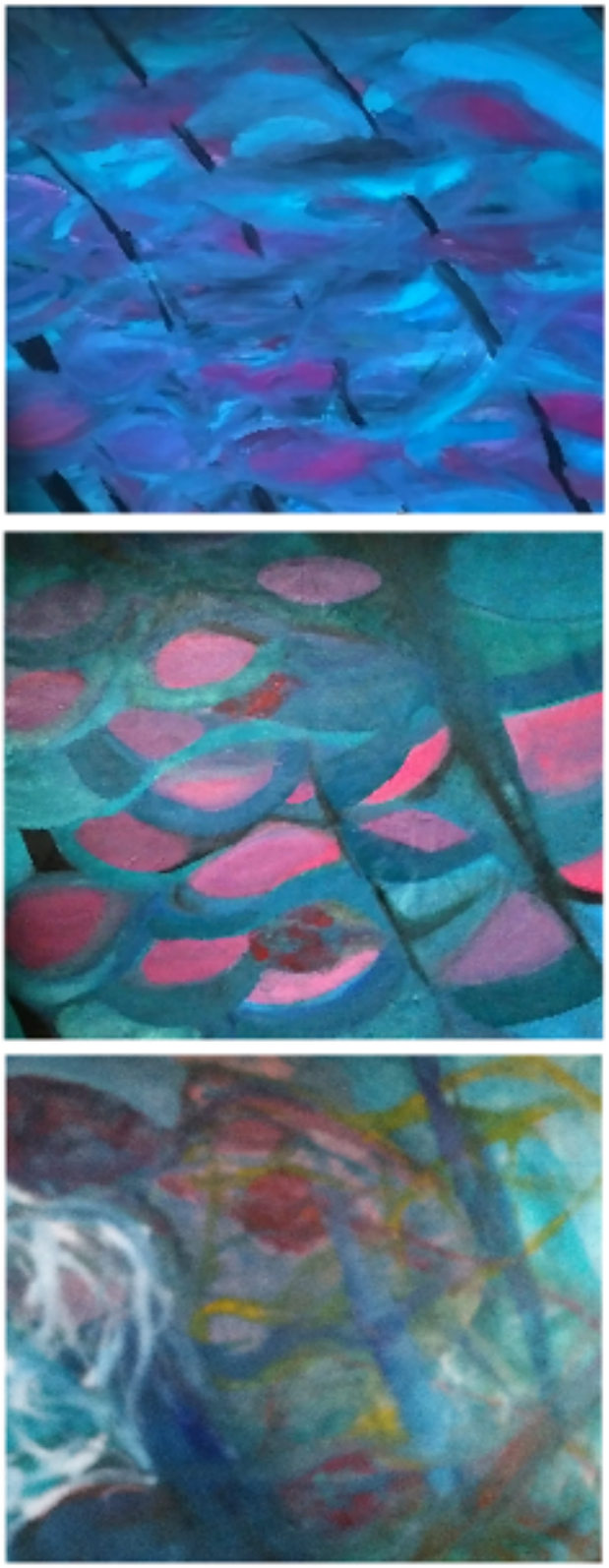

Figure 16: Process of creating "Their Stories".

In the fall of 2019, “Their Stories” was exhibited at “The Body Electric” digital art exhibition in Ottawa, Ontario (https://thebodyelectric-lecorpselectrique.ca/exhibitions/ottawa-2019/digital-catalogue-2019/). The annual exhibit “uses art as a way to critically engage with medicine and healthcare” (Crawford & Richardson, 2014) and is held at the International Conference on Residency Education, in partnership with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, and Associated Medical Services (AMS) Healthcare.

At the end of our interview, Cláudia asked to take a selfie *with* me. She was in Bauru, Brazil, which is 7961.51 kilometers away from where I was sitting at my desk in Toronto. She took a couple photos and shared them with her friends on Facebook. I asked if I could share the photos that she took of us, and she said “of course!” (See Figure 17).

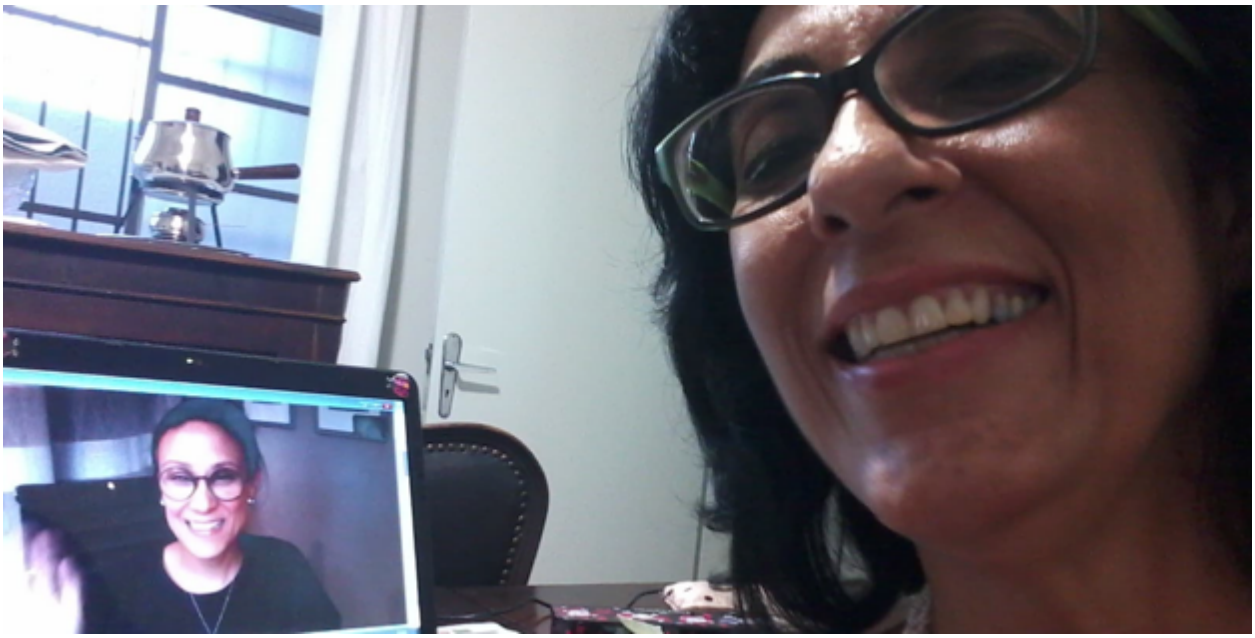

Figure 17: Photograph of Cláudia and I on Skype (Photograph taken by Cláudia)

Immediately after our interview, my response to the encounter was about the pose that Cláudia held while we were speaking, which was so similar to other participants. While listening to the stories and thinking about their responses to them, I thought of drawing their poses too, but held back because I didn’t think it would be significant. When Cláudia took a photo of us, I was compelled to respond in my own way too by drawing a portrait of Cláudia after we hung up (See Figure 18):

Figure 18: A Visual Memo of Cláudia

5.2 First Digital Story (ii)

At a three-day workshop in September 2019 in Toronto, I created my first digital story (https://vimeo.com/545629443). The workshop was facilitated by StoryCenter USA facilitator, Rob Kershaw, and StoryCentre Canada facilitator, Rani Sanderson. Before the workshop, I wrote the story at the same time as the Preface of this dissertation, thinking that I would save time by writing one story. I soon learned that *writing for an audience* differs quite a bit. When I shared my story with Rani, she suggested that I cut up each row of words to help rearrange what I had into a shorter, action-focused story. This offline approach helped me think creatively and focus on what I needed to share and say at that time.

When I read my story out loud in a stairwell at the workshop to record the audio, I realized then why it is so important for digital storytelling facilitators to have facilitated their own story before facilitating a digital storytelling workshop. It was transformative to hear my story recorded with my voice because it helped me understand that I can let go of my story. Not necessarily that I could share it, but that I could let it go. Eventually I did share it, but after I created it I noticed the difference between letting go of my story and sharing my story, which I think is an underestimated experience in digital storytelling practice. For example, many facilitators who I interviewed talked about the importance of sharing stories, because at least one person will be positively impacted by it. But I think that if participants decide not to share their story after a workshop, at least for them, they have let go of the story.

The story that I created combines many images and videos to tell a story within a story. As I wrote in the story description on Vimeo, “[M]y objective of overlapping the images and video footage is to tell a story within a story. This technique is known as "haptic visuality”” (Marks, 2015). Professor Laura Marks (Simon Fraser University) coined the phrase which combines “embodied, tactile, and multisensory visuality” theories to describe how film can be used in a sensory way to convey memories through senses other than those commonly experienced in film and video media, sight and sound (Marks, 2015).

Before the workshop, I collected images and short videos that I recorded over many years and put them into a digital folder. I also scanned photographs with my phone from my childhood that I wanted to include in the story. Some of the images were of my biological parents, my mother and father (adoptive parents), and handwritten letters from my biological and adoptive mothers that were sent to me at different times. As I collected the images, I thought of what Marcus and I talked about, that digital stories are digitized representations of analog memories. So, in some areas of my story, I tried to preserve the original textures of the images, and I left the shakiness of the cycling video. At the same time, I also wanted to emphasize the sensory aspects of the images and memories that I have of the moments, and I used a lot of overlay techniques and repetition to emphasize these haptic qualities (Marks, 2015) for the viewer of the story.

5.3 “Someone To Wave To” Proposal (iii)

When listening to participants comment on the lack of support for youth leaving foster care, the misrepresentation of youth in care and of adopted youth in the media, and the lack of awareness in society about the real experiences of foster care, I was also inspired to read more about the situation. When speaking with Mary-Jo and after reading about youth transitions from foster care, I learned that there are less than 10% of youth formerly in foster care who go on to attend postsecondary education (Collins, 2015). As well, youth formerly in foster care may not have someone to wave to at their graduation. The peer support of a mentor helps youth make a successful transition to adulthood.

In June 2019, I met with staff at the guidance department of my high school, Central Technical School, and talked about a proposal for a peer mentorship program involving alumni who were formerly in foster care along with other alumni who want to support youth graduating and also leaving foster care. The "Someone To Wave To" peer mentorship program will involve alumni "wavers" who will wave and cheer on youth formerly in foster care/youth in care who are graduating high school. There will also be social support before and after graduation. Maybe someday it will expand to universities and colleges. As a project idea, it could translate to other domains, such as peer support for mental health and addictions, trauma recovery, and post-COVID-19 recovery, for example.

5.4 Interactive Data Visualization of Demographics (iv)

This data visualization of self-reported sociodemographic characteristics was created with Google Data Studio (See Figure 13).

To create this interactive data visualization of the self-reported demographic data from Table 6, the data were entered onto a Google Excel Sheet that is stored on my encrypted Google Drive. Following this, I converted the Excel sheet to a data source sheet on Google Data Studio, which takes the data and creates suggested forms of “Dimensions” and “Metrics” or list headings, for example: age range, country, and so on. Following this conversion, I checked that numerical forms of data were displayed as “number” types of data, for example: Record Count, which is the number of records that correspond to specific dimensions such as how many people live in

Canada versus the USA. The same procedure was followed for text-based data that was automatically labelled as numerical data but needed to be text-based data so that it would correspond to textual information, for example: city and country. The only metrics, or numerical data that I needed to display were the number of records because participant ID numbers are confidential.

Following this initial setup of the Google Data Sheet on Google Data Studio, I created a Google Data Studio "Report", chose a design theme, and added "Charts". These charts were relatively simple to setup, but difficult to develop when there was more than one dimension to display on the chart together, for example: highest level of education and profession. I chose to analyze these two dimensions together, rather than other variables such as race/ethnicity or country, because I didn't feel that it was relevant in the research question in this study to generalize on these variables.

Digital storytelling facilitators completed a broad range of education from high school to doctorate degrees, with some higher education in-progress. This result shows that digital storytelling facilitators have many years of work experience in addition to their formal academic training. The initial coding that I completed until that point revealed that their responses to the interview questions were the most impactful of all participants. This pattern also started to emerge in the information power assessment.

After completing the information power assessment, I realized that level of education does not determine the quality of a video elicitation interview, which is an unexpected and positive outcome of this research, in my opinion. As the interactive data visualization in Figure 13 reveals, it is years of experience in one's field—combining age range and profession—that will result in a high-level video elicitation interview about the question, "What makes a great story?" As a profession, digital storytelling facilitation is a life-long career.

5.5 9th International DST Conference Paper & Book Chapter (v)

In March 2020, my abstract was accepted for a panel presentation at the 9th International Digital Storytelling Conference in Loughborough, England. This international conference includes delegates from around the world who are leaders in digital storytelling research and practice.

Unfortunately, by March 11, 2020, I cancelled my flight because of the World Health Organization's declaration of a pandemic, and the risks of contracting COVID-19. Despite this, the conference committee persisted with the conference plan and postponed it to a later date.

On June 21, 2021, I presented my paper, "'What makes a great story?': Multidisciplinary and international perspectives on digital stories by youth formerly in foster care in Canada" at an online, 24-hour "marathon" conference. The conference was a great opportunity to receive feedback about my doctoral research. As a graduate student, I have been fortunate to have had many scholarly publications, and I think it is because the work I have shared is work that I am passionate about studying and sharing.

5.6 Map & Tweets of #DSTGlobalProjects (vi)

During our interviews, some participants shared names of digital storytelling projects around the world in an effort to help me find interesting places to recruit participants. This map that I created with ArcGIS® ESRI displays geolocated Twitter postings about digital storytelling projects around the world that I tagged, "#DSGlobalProjects" (See Figure 19). After tweeting about the projects that participants shared with me in our interviews and others that I found online, I searched on Twitter for the hashtag, and copied and pasted the postings and links to the postings on a story map with ArcGIS ESRI.

In response to seeing the map of projects on Twitter, Mia Massicotte replied, "Maybe I'm not seeing all the map elements in this shared version? The legend doesn't correspond; all the pushpins are green, regardless of city" (2019). Indeed, Massicotte was right; this was an important learning outcome. ESRI includes push pins that allows one to add text-based responses. Those were active and showing up in the legend in-place of the locations of the cities! So instead of showing a legend, I removed it and wrote the names of the cities on the pushpins. At the time of writing this, the map has been viewed 439 times online, however, I am unable to check locations or other demographic information about the viewers in order to assess the impact of this output.

Figure 19: Story Map about Participant's Responses
to the Question, "What makes a great story?"

5.7 Maps of Participant Locations (vii)

At the end of each interview, I invited participants to view a map that I created with "mapcustomizer.com," which shows the cities of where participants were based (Kaeding, 2014); See Figure 20). The benefit of creating this map was that I could share the link in the Skype chat window and participants could easily look at it and continue speaking with me on Skype. The map prompted some participants to talk about previous digital storytelling initiatives that they worked on in other countries, and they also shared the names of digital storytelling centres around the world.

Figure 20: Map of Cities that Participants Connected from (https://www.mapcustomizer.com/map/InterviewLocations)

With the mapcustomizer map, it is possible to create an account, login, view, and edit a map after it is created. Alternatively, one can risk leaving the website and returning without clearing the cookies on their browser to edit the map and add more locations. When I showed the map to Nicholas and Cláudia, they suggested a few more people that I could contact. Their digital storytelling project, "My Decision, My Action, My Future" uses ArcGIS ESRI Story Maps to showcase digital stories created by youth at risk of leaving school in Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom (My Decision.My Action.My Future, 2016).

After viewing my mapcustomizer map, Karl suggested that I use ArcGIS ESRI to create more advanced maps, and "story maps" which involves telling stories that are geolocated on a

map. When the interviews were complete, transcribed, and imported in NVivo12, I used the "query" feature to search each of the transcripts for "great story". When the results of the query appeared, I created a map on ESRI of all of the locations of participants, then started a new story map where I could copy and paste each participant's responses into the cities that they were based in. Unlike mapcustomizer, with ESRI it is necessary to create an account and all maps are saved as "story maps", "web maps" or "web mapping applications" in an "item gallery" on your profile page for access later. After seeing the responses on the map, I thought I might be able to analyze the connections between each response; this proved challenging, because of the diversity of responses and not being able to draw arrows, for example, between their responses.

Instead of focusing on the disconnected points on this map, I think of the connections that I made with participants, and the dream that I share with map artist, Fernando Poyón, who created "En el sitio" (In the place/field, 2010)," which was exhibited at the National Gallery of Canada between 2019-2020 (Hill, et al., 2019). On Poyón's constructed map, all countries in the world are connected as one large body of land. Poyón created the map by carving into a large stone from his homeland of Guatemala (Palacios, 2020), and he created the map of the world as one land mass because he dreamt of a "world without borders" (ROFA Gallery, n.d., para. 1). Though it is not possible for me to create a single land mass with the story map as it is now, while looking at the map I remember the connections made with participants, and the similarities of their thoughts about "What makes a great story?", rather than the time, distance, or borders between us.

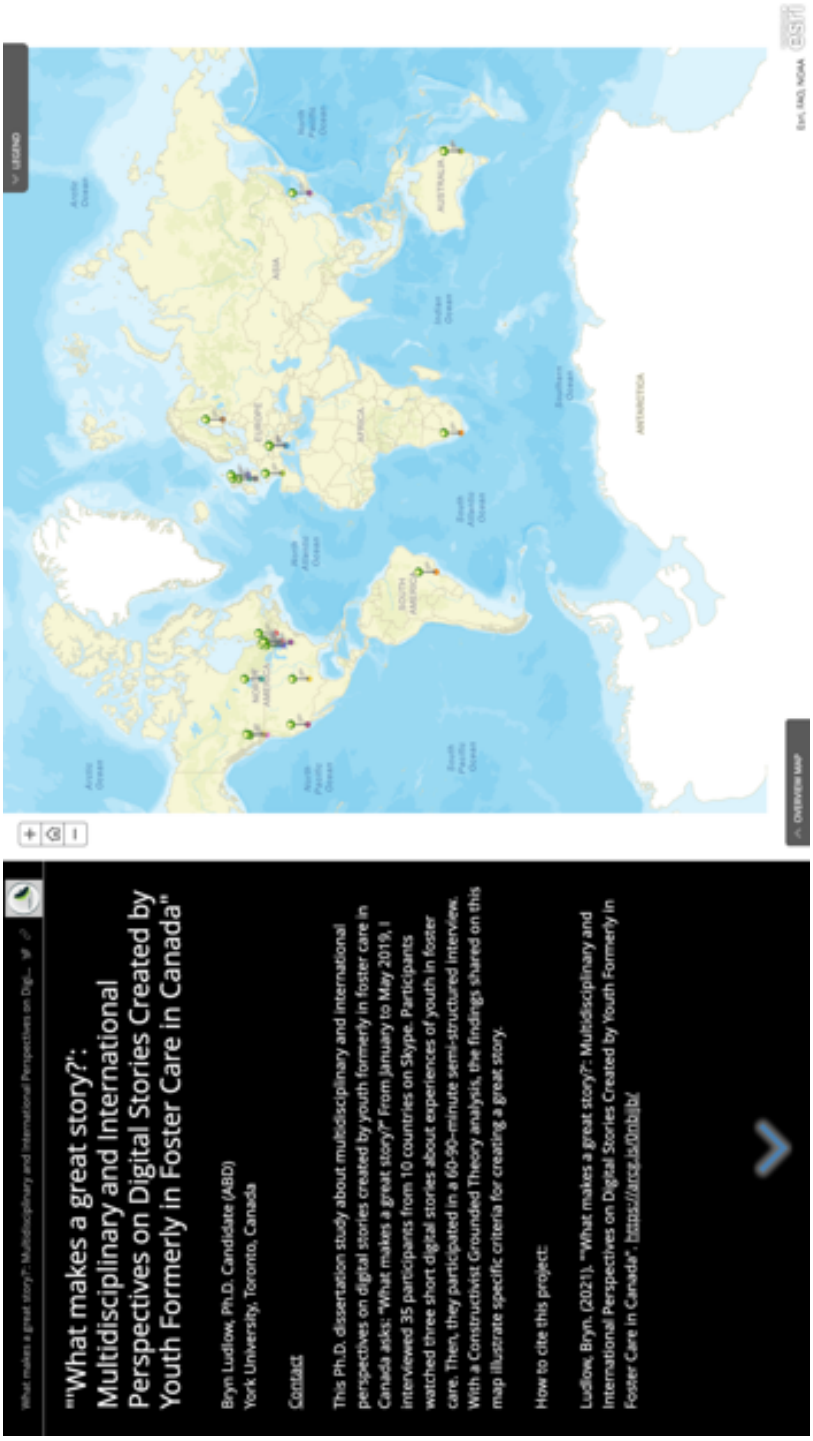

Figure 21: Map of Responses to my Research Question: https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=a53ad94249d244da916a0d3f4305b2ab

Chapter 6 Discussion

The following is a discussion of the findings to help researchers, educators, healthcare providers, and community-based organizations take the findings further and, when possible, apply the 4-A Model to their work.

6.1 Anticipation

The findings of this dissertation indicate that it is important to consider what the impact and value of a digital story might be in order to affect change on a specific audience. Digital storytelling facilitators expressed the importance of having forethought to ensure that there is an opportunity to share a digital story with the right audience, at the right time, and under the right conditions.

Anticipating an audience's expectations when viewing a story is an art in itself. In the workshops with the youth, all youth were invited to create personal stories that they could use to advocate for permanent adoption, or to share at a meeting with potential foster parents, or to share with a magistrate responsible for making child welfare decisions, for example. At each workshop, all youth participants were also invited to create their stories around a central theme, and the themes of the three workshops that I participated in were: a memory (Toronto), a journey (Moncton), and a moment (Winnipeg). These themes were provided at the workshops to help the youth think of how to structure their story. Plot design is one of the formal ways that digital storytellers can develop their story for a specific audience; however, in this study, the findings indicate that great stories were not necessarily predicated on plot development, which Rabiger (2014, p. 283) states is "the organization of situations, circumstances, and events that pressure a story's characters." Participants responded to the specific qualities that make a great story rather than the vernacular.

When creating a digital story, many facilitators commented on the importance of thinking about the impact and value of the story on the audience. As a practice of telling great stories, digital storytellers need to be aware of the audience that will hear their stories from the start of when they write them in the story circle (Hartley & McWilliam, 2009), as this will affect the

tone of voice that they use, among other aspects. Likewise, if they are using a story for advocacy, there is a certain tone and way of presenting information that may assist in creating an effective advocacy story. Furthermore, as Mishler (2004, p. 103) stated, "we story our lives differently depending on the occasion, audience, and reason for the telling." Mishler (2004) discusses the issue of rehearsal, where the first "telling" often expresses "control and distance" (p. 107), and the second telling often has "more feeling and is more reflective" (Mishler, 2005, p. 105). When one begins to think of a story, according to Mishler, this is the first telling; the ideological sharing of their story is the second telling (Mishler, 2005). In some cases of retelling stories, the second storying differs from the first (Mishler, 2004) and this has implications in the justice system for witnesses of crime, for example.

In "Directing the documentary," Michael Rabiger (2014, p. 283) describes the common, three-act structure of stories: "1) Establishes the set-up; 2) Escalates the complications in relationships; and 3) Intensifies the situation, then it is solved and resolved." In this study, participants in the arts, healthcare, and social services spoke about the structure of stories, and their interest to know if the story had a resolution. Generally, all participants felt that it was important that great stories have a happy ending, or if that is not possible, they felt it was important for a story to continue. This finding is consistent with the initial findings of this study which revealed that story structure was not as important as other factors such as authenticity and emotion.

In the "Teaching story online" workshop with Joe Lambert (2020) at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, facilitators learned about the different types of narrative arcs and storylines, including the common "hero's journey," the survivor, and the life course arc from birth to end of life. Having an awareness of these classic story structures can give digital storytellers a structure to produce stories that are clear and impactful for a specific audience.

Recently, Brockington et al., (2021, p. 5) found that stories "go well beyond simple entertainment value… Storytelling increases oxytocin and positive emotions and decreases cortisol and pain in hospitalized children." Further, they argue that a narrative arc:

> provides a context that allows individuals to identify with the main characters, become emotionally invested, simulate different mental worlds, and allows a temporal dislocation from the here and now—all of which contribute to the development of adaptive psychological and behavioral reactions when dealing with challenging real-life situations. (2021, p. 5).

Lambert and Hessler (2018) also discuss these common story designs and the usefulness of applying them in certain stories. However, at the first workshop session, Lambert (2020, personal communication) mentioned that "story seeds work for about 50% of storytellers." For the most part, people are interested to explore how to share an existing idea, to be creative, to learn from the stories by others and have fun at a digital storytelling workshop.

From a methodological perspective, Rose (2016) commented on the response of an audience to visual media, noting that there is a:

> …relative lack of interest in the site of audiencing: that is, in what happens when images are encountered in the social world. (p. 253).

Rose goes on to say,

> Audiences…bring discourses to bear on the visual materials they encounter, and these also could be analyzed in order to understand the productive effects of images. (p. 259).

In these statements, Rose (2016) emphasizes the importance of considering the perspectives of an audience in visual research, and the lack of engagement with the perspective of an audience in visual studies. For example, they stated:

> Audiencing, then, as something involving specific social/actors engaging with visual materials in specific contexts, is neglected in all these approaches of visual materials. (p. 254).

As participants in this study stated, the creative experience that digital storytelling offers participants may not result in a story that is objectively "great." Sometimes participants simply create a story that they need to tell. Emphasis is often placed on ensuring a positive process experience rather than on developing a product that can be leveraged for advocacy. Depending on the goals of a project, providing youth with a meaningful experience may also be a "great" outcome.

In the arts, anticipating how the final product may be received may involve writing a treatment and production plan. These clearly communicate the intended presentation on a screen, online, or in an installation, for example, along with the equipment required to produce the final product. Whereas in healthcare, enabling and encouraging patients to create a personal video diary, as Trinley said, to reflect on their healing may be beneficial to both the patient and healthcare provider. A healthcare provider is interested to learn how well the patient is recovering from the treatment and to provide reassurance to future patients and colleagues about the efficacy of their treatment plan and outcome of the intervention. A patient is interested to

document their current state of convalescence and their healing journey. Social service providers stressed the importance of creating stories that are emotionally compelling and clearly explicate the concerns that the youth are grappling with so that they could be used for advocacy purposes.

6.2 Actualization

The actualization of a digital story refers to the materialization and realization of the initial concept to the final product. Actualization encompasses all components of digital production, including two of the core outcomes from this study: clarity and aesthetics. As digital storytellers write, record, film, assemble, and edit their stories, they are going through a process of actualizing the work that they anticipated creating. Part of the process of actualization is structured (e.g., writing a story that one has thought about before attending a workshop or including a photograph that is essential to a story). Part of it is unstructured and spontaneous (e.g., acting in a story to demonstrate a theme or issue, or editing footage in an unexpected way that is effective for the storyline). Nonetheless, the ways that digital stories are actualized largely depends on the creative communication of a clear and compelling story by the storyteller.

In scenography, which is the "manipulation and orchestration of the performance environment" (McKinney & Butterworth, 2009, p. 4), the process of actualization refers to the creation of a "kinaesthetic contribution" to the "architectural nature… of the scenic object and its close relationship with the performers" (McKinney & Butterworth, 2009, p. 3). The multimodal and "multidimensional" aspects of scenography and digital storytelling share similar concerns in relation to the actualization of the finished product for an audience (McKinney & Butterworth, 2009, p. 7). In fact, as McKinney and Butterworth (2009, p. 4) note, "Scenography is not simply concerned with creating and presenting images to an audience; it is concerned with audience reception and engagement," much like digital storytelling. Furthermore, McKinney and Butterworth (2009, p. 7) stated in "The Cambridge introduction to scenography … The audience is a vital component in the completion of scenography. In digital storytelling, and scenography, audience feedback is essential, and

> … scenography happens with audiences as witnesses. Vsevolod Meyerhold felt his productions were 'unfinished' when they reached the stage and required an audience to make the 'crucial revision'. (McKinney & Butterworth, 2009, p. 7).

As McKinney and Butterworth (2009, p. 7) go on to say, the audience takes "an active role" in a performance. Like scenography, digital storytelling can consider the environment and space that it takes up, and the similarities and differences of an audience's response to the story based on the viewing environment (McKinney & Butterworth, 2009). To understand how to apply scenographic principles with digital storytelling, I created a three minute digital story in the form of an online interactive ballet in memory of George Floyd, called "Release" (Ludlow, 2021, https://brynludlow.com/#Ballet_in_Memory_of_George_Floyd). In the ballet, images that I archived from scenes of the protests in Minneapolis following the death of George Floyd are presented at the back of the stage, along with ballet dancers holding evocative poses, and a woman swinging from an African shweshwe art globe above the novel coronavirus. An excerpt from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech, about the risks of remaining "satisfied" with injustices, and house jazz music fill the spaces between the scene transitions, which are interactive and respond to computer mouse movements.

The field of audience studies is vast. Rose (2016) discussed the application of audience studies in digital media and arts-based research, with reference to the work of media and cultural studies theorist, Stuart Hall, who described the process of reading media in three areas: "preferred," which "affirms the hegemonic political, economic, social, and cultural order", "oppositional," which challenges the way that TV news in particular "affirms the dominant order of things,", and "negotiated," which is a combination of preferred and oppositional readings (p. 259). Audiences "bring their own knowledges and understandings to bear on the products of the media," as Rose (2016, p. 259) noted, and this insight can be beneficial to study at digital storytelling screenings for future research.

This dissertation study looked at diverse perspectives on digital stories as a means to share visual materials and gather an audience's perspective on them. A key theorist in audience studies is John Fiske (2005), who argues that audiences are themselves classed bodies and 'constructed' and television is a "…medium for the expression of classes for themselves" (Fiske, 2005, p. 79). Since digital storytelling was designed as a democratizing form in response to social issues that affect individuals in society, I posit that the method itself is similarly constructed. The method of digital storytelling mobilizes classes to respond with the medium that will be viewed: a digital

video. The medium, as McLuhan (1994) would say of digital video then, is the source of power in digital storytelling.

Audience responses to viewing digital stories rely on contextual and conceptual (Drotner, 2008) understandings of digital media, along with external factors such as viewing environment, location, cultural and social history, practices, thought, and values (Thumim, 2008). Other ways that audiences are described in the literature is as "fans" that form affinities around topics of interest, and "users" who attend live TV shows and may also participate in responding to questions or prompts during the recording (Rose, 2016, p. 262–263).

In arts-based research, the inclusion of audiences as informants might benefit studies that use digital storytelling to find out new information about a specific population, with the interest in creating social change. Since audiences can be observed and interviewed, discussions can be recorded, and responses can be analyzed with a fairly wide range of theoretical and epistemological approaches, including ethnography, there are many opportunities across a study to consider including an audience in an analysis (Rose, 2016).

As digital storytelling practice expands into collaborative (Marshall et al., 2021) and interactive approaches (Miller, 2020), digital storytelling researchers and facilitators would benefit from considering how the performing arts have employed principles of scenography to engage audiences. This study found that great stories involve audio and video that works alongside the narrative, not in competition with it. Surprisingly, technique and temporality were not considered to be as important. This is true in this theme of actualization; however, digital storytelling facilitators (Antonia and Joe) expressed the importance of showing without telling, and in order to do that well, there are technical and temporal considerations that facilitators can assist participants with. There are limitations to the use of video alone in digital storytelling production, as McKinney and Butterworth (2009, p. 8) state:

> Video recordings do not replicate the 'perceptual discourse of the spectator's eye' because the camera determines the limits of what the viewer can see. In the theatre, spectators are free to look wherever they choose. According to Peggy Phelan, once performance is recorded, documented or represented it 'becomes something other than performance'. In recordings, the multi-sensory experience of live scenography is altered. The auditory and visual are prioritised while spatial dimensions involving depth, scale and proportion, so crucial to the reception of scenography, are adapted. Factors such as vital reference points for appreciation of the spatial, dimensions and dynamics of the performance venue, and the sensing body of the spectator are all downplayed, if not lost, as the live event is edited for the screen.

Despite the power of video in digital storytelling, when considering the experiences of an audience, as McKinney and Butterworth (2009) exemplify, multisensory experiences are limited to a 16:9 screen, audiovisual is privileged over more sensory experiences, and these experiences can be translated in digital storytelling, as Breitz, Margolles, and Rosefeldt have demonstrated in their artistic, storied installations.

By including a critical, semi-structured approach to the discussion of the stories at a screening, such as inviting audiences to respond in written or other forms of critical response, audiences could influence and assist storytellers with the review of their work, as McKinney and Butterworth (2009) suggest, and this process can take place virtually, in blended, synchronous or asynchronous formats, or at in-person screenings.

6.3 Affect

The study of affect theory from a pragmatic perspective began in the late 1800s with William James' writing on perception and emotion (1884). British Australian scholar Sara Ahmed approaches affect studies through the lens of the social structure of emotion, and notes in the afterword of her book, "The cultural politics of emotion," "…I wanted to reflect on how social norms become affective over time" (2015, p. 204). In contrast, Brian Massumi (2002) is a leading Canadian scholar who also writes about affect but describes how affect involves shifts in *intensities of experiences*. The work of both theorists is intriguing to study for the application of their work with digital technology. The first part of this section thus compares and contrasts how Ahmed (2015) and Massumi (2002) engage with affect theory. The second part addresses the implications for practice in the arts, healthcare, and social service sectors. The ways that Massumi (2002) and Ahmed (2015) define affect are discussed in this section in-relation to the finding that great digital stories are affective and stir up a *range of emotions that compel an audience to change their outlook about a situation.*

Brian Massumi (2002)

Massumi's approach to analyzing affect is influenced by Spinoza's definition, which he states is "…an 'affection' [in other words an impingement upon] the body, and at the same time the idea of the affection" (original emphasis) (2002. Loc. 592). To unpack what affect is and its significance in relation to this finding, three statements are addressed here to explain and locate the meaning of affect from Massumi's perspective:

In his book, "Paraboles for the virtual: Movement, affect, sensation," Massumi (2002) presents "stories" about affect. To Massumi (2002), affect is expressed by feelings and sensations, and the ways of understanding sensations takes place in the space between dyads of experience, such as in the following examples he provides:

> … mind and body… volition and cognition… language, expectation and suspense, body depth and epidermis, past and future, action and reaction, happiness and sadness, quiescence and arousal, passivity and activity. (Massumi, 2002, Loc. 622).

In Massumi's (2002) theoretical conceptualization of affect, he notes that affect emerges with varying "levels at play" that "resonate" (Loc. 626) usually as two levels, such as, "happiness and sadness" (Loc. 622), and then whichever level is desired more is experienced more intensely; affect then vanishes as one level and the process constantly repeats (Figure 22). The process repeats because of the "two-sidedness, the simultaneous participation of the virtual in the actual and the actual in the virtual", and to Massumi, affect has two sides that are constantly turning (2002, Loc. 663). Participants consistently expressed that they experienced three core emotions while viewing the digital stories, including happiness, sadness, and surprise. Certain stories yielded specific emotional responses more than others, which was due in part to the overall theme of the story.

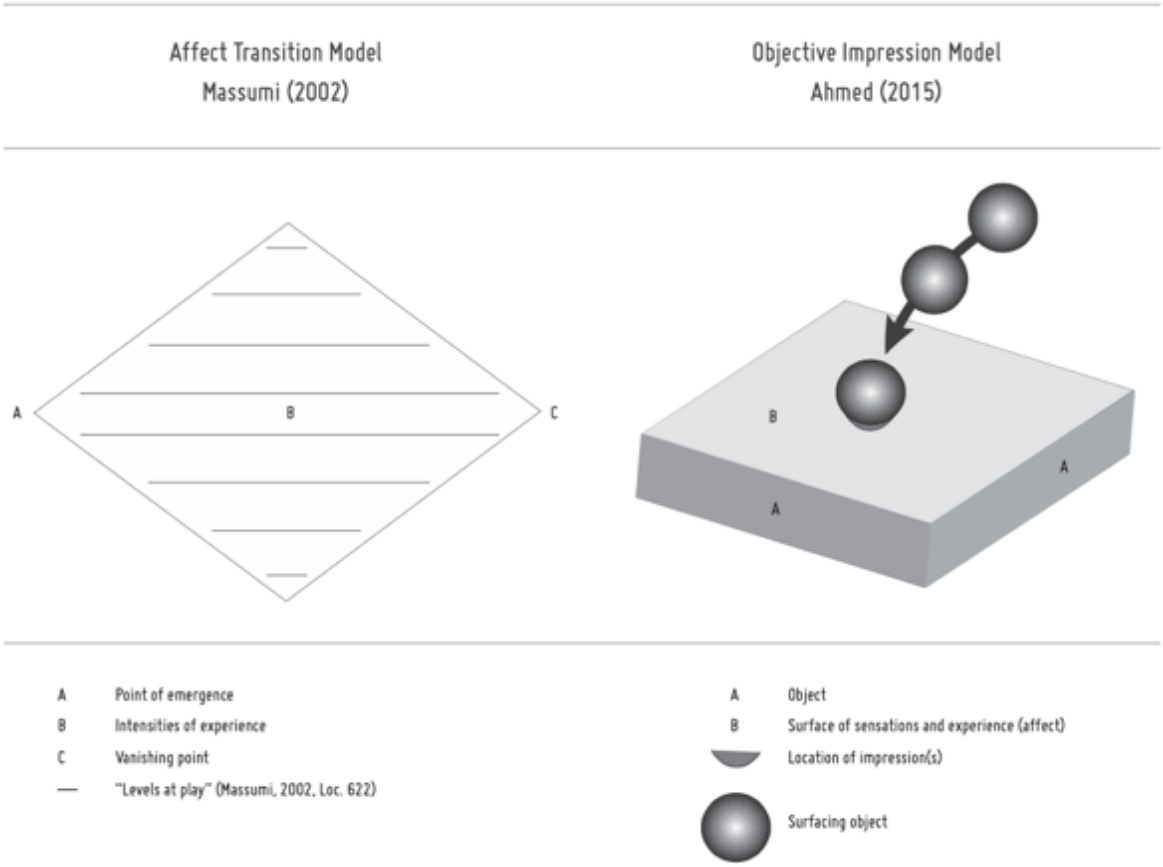

Figure 22: Interpretation of how Massumi (2002) and Ahmed (2013) conceptualize affect. Diagram by Bryn Ludlow (2016).

Sometimes the stories that a storyteller tells could be framed in an alternative way to affect how it is received cognitively and emotionally by the audience and storyteller. When I began the interviews, I read an inspiring article in the Harvard Business Review by Dan Cable (2018), "The Most Powerful Lesson My Cancer Taught Me About Life and Work." In the article, he talked about the power and influence of telling yourself a story and the effects of storytelling on human behaviour. He said,

> If we can craft a better story about the meaning of our circumstances, then we can change the way we relate to those circumstances. The result? Better emotions and better outcomes. (para. 7).

While undergoing chemotherapy, Cable (2018) realized that mindset affects behaviour and stated,

> …change your behaviours to match the best story you can believe in, and you are more likely to inspire others and make your work more meaningful. (para. 29).

To Massumi, the body separates affective experience from the mind, over and over in the process of conscious reflection of encounters with new stimuli (2002). The body encounters experiences, for example, through telling and listening to stories, and Massumi's position is that affect is part —but only a part—of embodied experience (2002).

Since affect is only felt, then when the body encounters experiences, Massumi (2002) contends that affect is felt by the body within the experiences. For example, near the end of the interviews, I asked participants about their experience of the similarities and differences of watching stories on their computer and at a cinema. Then, I asked them what experience they preferred. Many participants said that it was "fine" to watch stories on their computer, but that watching stories on a computer screen pales in comparison to going to a cinema, which is immersive and allows one to become absorbed by the story on the widescreen. When they said that it is "fine" to watch the stories on their computer screen, it was because they were not watching the stories in a cinema when I asked the question, and watching the stories on their computer screen was a fine or satisfactory experience. It is difficult for people to express what it feels like to have an experience that they are not currently experiencing.

To explain this claim further, Massumi (2002) asserts that feelings are not experienced but rather they are components of experiences. The sensations of touch and sight, in another example by Massumi (2002, Loc 663), logically "participate in each other," such as in hand-eye coordination, for example, seeing an object and then picking it up with your hand. Because emotions *become* tangible, Massumi notes that emotions are "disorienting" in the "capture" of affect (2002, Loc. 674). In other words, the virtual quality of affect is "autonomous" until it is "formed" into emotions (Massumi, 2002, Loc. 663).

Many feelings shape single emotions, such as feelings of joy, excitement, and interest that form the emotion of happiness (Massumi, 2002). This is why verbally describing emotions was challenging for many participants. The emotions of anger and love are affective emotions that are often expressed in relationships with other people and have many layers of feelings compared to less-intense, or less-affective emotions of surprise or shock, which can be about people, places, or things (Massumi, 2002).

Many participants expressed that they felt very moved by video-based media in particular and stories that they have seen on the news, however, it really takes a special story to influence them to change a habit or perspective. There was no specific digital story that compelled the audience to change or act more than another. Some participants said that they would change their outlook on the experiences of youth in foster care and youth leaving care. After viewing the stories, those who were working in child welfare and social services said that they would work with their colleagues and one-on-one with youth to improve on service delivery. These participants also noticed that representations of youth in care who need permanent adoption and youth that have aged out of foster care are inadequate and do not capture the emotional challenges that youth in care experience. For example, adjusting to a new foster home in a new city and attending a new school in a short period of time, as Steve noted.

Many participants felt that video production companies in mainstream media repeatedly miss the opportunity to convey the real experiences of youth in care and youth leaving care, and instead they share two perspectives that are unrelatable: a polished story of a happy reunion, or a difficult, sad, and surprising story that generates a sense of pity but results in little to no action on behalf of the viewer. For example, in the photograph that I took at a fast-food restaurant, "Wendy's" below, a young girl is seen holding a fluffy puppy. At first glance, I thought that the advertisement was for puppy adoption, given that at the start of the pandemic many people were adopting pets. Then, I realized that it was an advertisement for the adoption of people (Carnyx Group Ltd., 2022). Although the Dave Thomas Foundation does incredible advocacy for adoption of children and youth, it still felt unsettling to see that it was more effective to show an image of a fluffy puppy to encourage *adoption* rather than focus on the youth who need to be *adopted*.

Youth leaving foster care experience greater disparities of social determinants of health compared to youth of a similar age: a high prevalence of homelessness (41-43%) (Gaetz, et al., 2014), poverty (Hudon, 2017), discrimination based on race or sexual orientation (Mountz et al. 2020; Collins, 2015), social isolation (Kumar & Nayar, 2019), and illness and disability (Ahmann, 2017). Indigenous Services Canada (2022) points to the 2016 Census which reported, "In Canada, 52.2% of children in foster care are Indigenous, but account for only 7.7% of the child population according to Census 2016" (para. 13). In 2016, 43,880 foster children and youth

lived in the child welfare system across Canada (Kovarikova, 2017). Many measures are in place to improve the aforementioned disparities in the social determinants of health for youth in foster care, including increasing access to community-based programs and virtual online “non-place” (Collins, 2015: 465) communities to enhance social connection during their transition to independent living.

Figure 23: "Up for Adoption" photograph by Bryn Ludlow (2021)

Several aspects of participants' narratives echoed Clive Seale's (2002) discussion of media portrayals of youth, in the chapter, “The production of unreality." As Seale (2002, p. 51) noted, there is a need for scholars to study the “consequences of inaccuracy” and inaccurate portrayals of vulnerable and underrepresented populations in the media. As Seale (2002, p. 50) stated, “high viewers of medical dramas also exhibit unusually high levels of faith in doctors and medical

solutions to health problems". Paradoxically, health information overload causes people to require more healthcare services (Seale, 2002). The way that this occurs is through a cycle of the "externalization" by the media of health-based information, and an "assumption of direct effects" whereby the viewer assumes the information is accurate or causative (p. 51).

At the end of his book, Massumi presents a similar conceptual model as what Seale (2002) discussed of how affective experiences are communicated with images, in a "non-ideological" way that can be understood in phases of "induction" and "transduction" (Massumi, 2002, Loc. 806). This conceptual model is similar to other standard communication models, especially Hall's (1980/2019) work on the encoding and decoding of messages. Communication is received, transmitted, and felt, from Massumi's perspective (2002). Induction and transduction entail an emergence of the "bifurcations" (Massumi, 2002, Loc. 468), or *splitting* of experience. For example, after watching the digital stories, I asked participants, "What were they trying to express in this video?" which was a question that asked participants to think about the story and the audiovisual content in the video. In a society that is saturated with media, this seems like a straightforward task, but Massumi (2002) describes how this visual memory of the visceral and embodied experience of viewing media is induced and transmitted on the virtual: actual states of affect, "from one actualization to another" (Massumi, 2002, Loc. 807).

In the phase of transmitting emergent feelings, for example: joy and excitement, into a tangible named emotion such as happiness or joy, the *virtual: actual* embodiment of joy and excitement might encounter other feeling-pairs, such as cold or warmth, fight or flight, and guilt or shame (Massumi, 2002). According to Massumi (2002), in a single moment, one might experience many emotions. According to the conceptual model of induction: transduction, this depends on the intensity, or the effect of the experience being witnessed (Massumi, 2002). Therefore, a highly affective experience such as witnessing a surprising or shocking scene in a digital story can become challenging to process or transmit into a single specific emotional response (Massumi, 2002).

Massumi (2002) also indicates that sometimes experiences transmit affective responses that are *captured* faster than one is able to process what happened. The experience itself moves faster than the speed of the embodied encounter, such as in processing more intense emotions

(Massumi, 2002). But, Massumi stated "something that happens too quickly to have happened, actually is virtual. The body is as immediately virtual as it is actual" (2002, Loc. 571). As affect is experienced, the virtual side of affect is where feelings overlap; therefore, according to Massumi, affect naturally involves objective and non-objective states until emotions are named (Massumi, 2002).

Sara Ahmed (2013)

Ahmed's (2013) engagement with affect will be addressed in this section with a discussion of three tenets in relation to the findings of this study.

1. Affect is located within emotional responses to the circulation of objects

Approaching affect from a Marxist perspective, Ahmed (2013) believes that affect is located within the transfer of emotion to the circulation of objects. Objects have meaning and are given meaning (Ahmed, 2013). Photo albums, books, rings, and national flags, for example, have historical meaning that increases as time passes and as they are passed down through generations. Ahmed claims that "affect is the result of the 'effect of circulation'" of emotion (2015, p. 45). Emotion "comes from the Latin, 'emovere' referring "to move, to move out" (Ahmed, 2013, p. 11). Because emotions are felt, expressed, and shared in society, from Ahmed's (2013) perspective, emotions are inherently social.

Words can signify emotions, and when sensations are signified as feelings, Ahmed interprets this signification as a material-corporeal impression of the surfacing of emotion (2013). For example, at the end of Brigitte's story, she added a message that said, "[T]o all youth, and survivors in foster care –Brigitte." This message worked to remind the viewer that the story that they just watched is as much about Brigitte's story as it is about the thousands of youth and survivors in foster care. The words that Brigitte wrote at the end of her story were in some ways, more powerful than her powerful story because of the emotional weight (Ahmed, 2013) of the words, "youth" and "survivors," in particular. To the viewers, and participants in this study, the word "youth" denotes a sense of joy and freedom, and "survivors" are those who experienced trauma.

To participants in this study, Brigitte's story was the most hopeful and happy story. The message at the end of her story, I think, reminded participants that she too, is a survivor and a former youth in care. This emotional connection to Brigitte's story in particular, created a sense of empathy from a group of participants working in healthcare and social services. This group, I think, felt that it is possible for youth leaving care to feel hopeful like Brigitte, and that youth like Brigitte should receive better care than what she experienced.

2. Affect is learned and emotion depends on power

Affect is experienced personally and collectively (Ahmed, 2013). According to Ahmed (2013), the feeling before the effect of emotional change is affect. As reported by Ahmed (2013), emotion objectifies the feeling. In support of this claim, Ahmed cites James (2013, p. 5), who stated "[T]he bodily changes follow directly the perception of the existing fact… and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion" (1890, p. 449). We therefore learn how to change, arguably through the ability to name our emotions (Ahmed, 2013). After viewing the stories, many participants who felt happiness after seeing a story may not have felt the same at the start of the interview. For many participants, after seeing Brigitte's story they expressed that they were interested in changing their outlook on youth leaving foster care and using digital storytelling to *affect change.*

Finally, emotions need to be witnessed to be registered and acknowledged (Ahmed, 2013). As witnesses to the digital stories, participants acknowledged both their own responses and the effect of the digital storytelling experience on the youth participants; some participants also talked about how the digital stories would affect viewers from disciplines other than their own. Due to the way that all participants (except for Barbara) watched the stories on their own screen, it was not possible for us to watch the stories together and observe each other's body language and expressions as we watched the stories. Barbara, a Psychologist and Filmmaker, shared her screen with me, but due to the bandwidth on Skype I was not able to see her screen clearly and could not hear the audio clearly. After sharing her screen for the third story, I told her that I could not see or hear it well and did not want to interrupt her in that process as it seemed important for her to feel as if I was watching the stories with her. It was a connection that we shared, literally through the screen sharing.

As Ahmed (2013) reports, often the emotions that individuals and society experience are determined by the connections made with others. In other words, emotions can become embodied by connections (Ahmed, 2013). In future studies involving video elicitation, it would be worth including a screen sharing option to view a video so that researcher and participant could view a story together at the same time. It would be particularly effective with the digital storytelling method, which involves a process of social engagement, connection, and witnessing of experience.

3. Attunement to the emotions of others is an affective experience

As Claudia mentioned, she felt a sense of fellowship to the youth storytellers. “Fellow feeling is a perception” according to Ahmed (2013, p. 223), who goes on to say that “not everyone feels the same emotion at the same time”. For example, in a study by Nummenmaa et al., (2014), the authors found that individuals across cultures experience collective expressions of emotions such as love and sadness that are felt in similar locations of the body. This would explain the finding of this dissertation study that the digital stories create a sense of emotional connection for the viewers.

The times when two or more people share an emotion is called “attunement” (Ahmed, 2013, p. 222). Attunement is a code for how connection and disconnection occur in relationships and it “requires emotional labour” (Ahmed, 2013, p. 229). Since not everyone feels the same way at the same time, connecting with another person while watching and listening to a digital story, for example, is laborious and can create a sense of serendipity and delight when you experience similar, positive emotional responses. When participants expressed that they felt a sense of surprise, it sometimes confirmed my sense of surprise when seeing the stories too; when participants expressed a sense of happiness and hope, it confirmed my emotions of happiness and hope about the stories too; and when participants expressed a sense of concern after feeling surprised or unsettled after seeing a story, those emotions transferred to me and reminded me of the moment when I first watched the final cut of the stories that involved concerning scenes.

In summary, there is no direct method for bridging Ahmed and Massumi’s perspectives; each one differs slightly. But, if it were true that Massumi’s perspective on the transitory nature of affect encloses Ahmed’s objective impression perspective, as indicated in Figure 22, Ahmed’s

perspective is not simply a level within Massumi's layers of experience. Equally, Ahmed's perspective could encompass Massumi's perspective, and it could be said that objects are both surrounded by the transitoriness of affect and that they are shaped and formed by it.

A tenet that draws the work of both theorists together to understand the meaning, form, and location of affect is that affect is pre-change, or pre-*effect*. This perspective provides an opportunity for future researchers to investigate how to apply interventions such as digital storytelling to help people understand that they can be affected by things, but can also affect things, and sometimes those encounters occur simultaneously.

6.4 Authenticity

Thirty-one participants said that authenticity is an important quality of great stories. The strength of this finding is consistent with other studies. Kaare and Lundby (2008, p. 116) similarly found that participants felt that the form of the story does not matter, but it is important that it shows "who I am" to a specific audience. They also found that honest, authentic self-portrayals were important, especially if the stories might be seen by someone known to the storyteller.

Many participants wanted to hear more about the "authentic" experiences of foster care in Canada because they felt that the media did not share these stories. In order to understand why this trend has emerged, it is necessary to understand how the foster care system has limited the exposure of youth in care by the media for so long, since it originated in the late 1800s in Great Britain, until the expansion today around the world. Appendix V addresses this historical perspective in more depth, with a discussion of the Barnardo foster care system in Great Britain, the promise of "oranges and sunshine" to so many "British Home Children" and youth who were deported to Australia and Canada, and finally, a brief overview of the structure of the adoption and foster care system in Canada.

In the book, "On being authentic" by Guignon (2004, p. 6), the idea that authenticity is a "project" reflects the notion of narrative identity construction posited by Holstein and Gubrium (2000), who stated, "[N]arrative practice lies at the heart of self construction" (p. 104). As Guignon (2004, p. 6) stated:

> …the project of becoming authentic asks us to get in touch with the real self we have within, a task that is achieved primarily through introspection, self-reflection or meditation…Second… [T]he assumption is that it is only by expressing our true selves that we can achieve self-realization and self-fulfillment as authentic human beings. (p. 6).

Taken literally, the *project* of constructing a story of oneself occurs with digital storytelling. In the workshops that youth participated in, they were both interpreting their stories and self-reflecting on their narratives. As they all acted in the stories, they expressed how they felt and the emotions they were experiencing while in care and after leaving care in their process of "outward-turning" for the digital story. This action of turning how they felt inside-out to the digital story is perceived by participants in this study as an authentic act, *to put yourself out there,* as the adage says.

Yet, authenticity is frequently regarded as a trope. Kaare and Lundby (2008, p. 110) stated that "[D]igital stories represent the performance of a mediated identity which might be perceived as 'authentic'" but is inauthentic. But often, digital storytelling empowers people to show "who I am," as Kaare and Lundby 2008, p. 116) stated. For many storytellers, this outcome is often good enough. As Kaare and Lundby (2008) stated,

> …they *are* revealing truths. These truths don't reveal the past "as it actually was", aspiring to a standard of objectivity. They give us instead the truths of our experiences. (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 61, as cited by Kaare & Lundby, 2008, p. 109).

When people tell stories about their lives, the important thing is that the stories are told. The opposite perspectives on authenticity are due to the differences of two perspectives, which I argue stem from a narrativist perspective in contrast to a Nietzschean perspective (Guignon, 2004).

Guignon (2004) applies the work of Friederick Nietzsche, who wrote about relinquishing any preconceived notions about the self so that the self emerges naturally, and you "become what you are" (Nietzsche, as cited by Guignon, 2004, p. 130). This sentiment was emphasized by participants in this study working in the fine arts, arts and health research, and digital storytelling sectors who spoke about the importance of authenticity in relation to human connection (Marcus) and having fun while making original creative outputs (Daniel), often without thought (Nariman, Daniel, Marcus). At digital storytelling workshops, participants who create authentic, personal, honest stories are fully immersed in the process (Daniel).

In contrast to Nietzsche's perspective, Guignon (2004) discusses the narrativist perspective that Heidegger aligned with. Heidegger regarded authenticity as "an initial recognition of the gravity of human finitude" (Guignon, 2004, p. 132). To Heidegger, authenticity is a part of life and ultimately, of death (Guignon, 2004). Indeed, testimonial, autobiographical, and life course perspectives to storytelling (Fairclough, 1992) are valid methods to employ, and not all storytellers follow this line of critique; in other words, authentic storytelling is not always about axiological or moral concerns. Storytelling can be spontaneous, surprising, and unplanned, and as all participants in this study noted, these approaches to storytelling can be known as authentic.

Holstein and Gubrium (2000) consider the Nietzschean perspective, noting that

> …if we want to understand how the self is storied, we need to carefully attend to, and appreciate storytelling for its artful and methodical practices, as well (as) for its content. (2000, p. 142).

What's encouraging about Nietzsche's perspective on authenticity is that he regards it as a project of "self-making," and to "own and to own up to what one is," while "giving style' to one's character" (Guignon, 2004, p. 131). In reflection of authentic narrative construction, Holstein and Gubrium (2000) refer to Trinh Minh-ha who repositions the impulsion to understand "*who* am I, to progressive …questions of when, where, and how am I?" (p. 105).

When considering the importance of authenticity in storytelling by youth storytellers formerly in foster care, it is impossible to ignore the inevitable theme of identity construction. This progressive storytelling perspective relies on multimodal technologies, which the digital production method (Rose, 2016) of digital storytelling employs, primarily with video that allows youth storytellers to present their responses to *when, where, and how* they are (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000), and how they want to express themselves.

In "Embodied Being: Examining Tool Use in Digital Storytelling" by Stacy Irwin (2014, p. 42), they note:

> It is understood without a doubt, that digital tools have changed the world. "New media and new conditions of telling 'my' and 'our' story are open to more and more individuals and groups in society (Lundby, 2008)." A less discussed topic is how using the digital tools have made changes in the digital storytelling process.

The tools that extend one's ability to communicate about oneself "become invaluable" (Lambert, 2006, p. 17, as cited by Kaare & Lundby, 2008, p. 116). By using the digital tools to express one's character instead of *becoming,* a Nietzschean perspective, asserts a present tense of the

statement that the tools of digital production *are* invaluable to digital storytelling, as digital storytelling in its arts-based multimodal forms does not exist without technologies (Guignon, 2004). Digital storytelling provides the tools, time, and space to actualize one's authentic self.

6.5 Original Methodological Contributions of this Dissertation

Throughout the data collection and analysis stages, I engaged in an exploratory process of multimodal reflexivity, where I translated the interview locations onto world maps, created artworks in response to participants' reception of the stories, and developed a community-based program proposal for youth leaving care and graduating high school. In this section, I will reflect on my methodological decision making. I will also discuss the limitations of Skype and of engaging in a practice of multimodal reflexivity as a doctoral researcher.

6.5.1 Video Elicitation with Skype

An area that this study contributes to is in the use of video elicitation (Sayre, 2001) with Skype. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was more common to conduct research interviews with human participants in person and videoconferencing was usually reserved for people who were unable to meet in person due to their geographical locations, for example, physicians providing telemedicine for patients in rural or remote areas (Zhou et al., 2016). Today, many people still complain about missing Zoom links in email invitations, not hearing each other correctly because the audio is muted, and not seeing someone because the camera is covered, for example. On the other hand, videoconferencing has become the primary way for people to stay connected during this unprecedented time of social distancing.

The important learning outcomes that I uncovered with this method were to ensure that participants feel confident to express themselves freely without the distraction of technological glitches, for example, in the moments of sharing a video and talking about it. Before the pandemic, Skype was a videoconferencing platform that many people had access to, compared to Zoom which was primarily used by major institutions. When designing this study, I did not want participants to have to pay out of pocket to use a platform in order to meet with me. The benefits to using Skype in a research study seemed to outweigh the challenges often experienced, such as

dropped phone calls or frozen screens (Lo Iacono et al., 2017). At the time of these interviews, it seemed to be novel to use Skype as a way to connect with people around the world, and it was a very positive experience that I would repeat in future studies involving video elicitation.

I think that it was sufficient to record audio only and take notes of significant body language; however, in a phenomenological study design, where embodied reactions to conversations are important to analyze, it may have been useful to have recorded video footage of participants to study this outcome in more depth.

6.5.2 Bearing Witness and Transforming Responses with Multimodal Reflexive Techniques

Showing the stories to adults working in diverse fields went beyond pressing play and then asking, "How was it?" While sharing the stories with participants, I needed to also listen to the stories again, to use the adage, *to get on the same page* with participants, and to think about the act of listening from participant's perspectives. Inevitably, listening deeply in this way had an effect on me. Over time, after listening to the three stories 34 times, after having facilitated the workshops with the youth that created them, I experienced a negative stress reaction. I did not understand that this was happening until after the interviews ended. With a support person, I was told that what I experienced was called "vicarious trauma."

In their article, "Vicarious traumatization: A framework for understanding the psychological effects of working with victims," McCann and Pearlman (1990) discuss the meaning of vicarious trauma (VT), and associated states of burnout and compassion fatigue. Using cases as examples, they describe the psychosomatic and cognitive changes that can occur with VT for therapists specifically (McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Though I am not a therapist, after reading about VT, I learned that some of my exploratory, self-reflexive acts probably resulted from *witnessing* the stories over and over again. Yet, engaging in a critical self-reflexive process while collecting and analyzing the data probably helped me transform the negative experience of witnessing trauma to a less negative experience by reshaping the way that I initially interpreted the stories with my existing "beliefs, assumptions, and expectations about self and world," otherwise known as a "schema" (McCann & Pearlman, 1990, p. 137). Essentially, what McCann and Pearlman (1990,

p. 136) found is that the impact of witnessing the stories is less if the witness engages in a "parallel process" to transform the experiences.

Likewise, as a social science researcher beginning any research study, Charmaz (2006) encourages a process of written memoing to let go of assumptions, biases, and expectations about the data so that it can be examined for what it is. However, written memos alone do not entirely capture the experience of witnessing difficult experiences; the additional visual memoing (Ludlow, 2021, 2014) and other multimodal reflexive outputs that I created in response to the data worked to set aside my preconceived notions about the data, and to help me as a researcher process the experience of witnessing, and use it as a strength rather than a barrier in my research process.

Despite not being in the same room as participants, the Skype videoconference provided a sense of connection that was similar to the experience of meeting face-to-face. There were some limitations with showing videos to participants on Skype. For example, when participants visited the video links Skype was still running in the background; for some participants, it was confusing to navigate back from their internet browser windows to our conversation on Skype. While watching the stories, except for a few participants who had internet connection issues, the Skype videoconference continued, and I could observe participants as they watched the stories. This outcome of the video elicitation method was meaningful to me as a researcher as I did not anticipate how impactful it would be to observe participants while they watched the stories. Regrettably, only the audio from our conversations was recorded. Throughout the study, generating multimodal reflexive outputs in response to emerging themes assisted in the process of data analysis; the observations of body language and facial expressions, as well as my own responses to listening to the stories, are included in those reflections.

The video elicitation method emerged in response to the need to tell stories while maintaining participant privacy (Sayre, 2001). Interviewing participants from diverse fields, particularly those working in healthcare or social services, meant that confidentiality and privacy were a priority. As researchers, it is also important to acknowledge that we are responsible for protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who are shown in the videos, and, at the same time, a video elicitation interview is not a single-channel experience for participants and

participants alone. In addition to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of participants viewing the videos, researchers are responsible for monitoring the privacy and confidentiality of those who are represented in the videos (in this case, youth formerly in foster care) and the impact of viewing difficult narratives with participants on themselves, often over a lengthy period of time due to the nature of the interviewing method in-general (S. Zembrzycki, 2021, personal communication).

For the purposes of advancing the video elicitation method, these are areas that researchers who are interested in using video elicitation should consider studying in future research. Throughout the study, generating multimodal reflexive outputs in response to emerging themes assisted in the process of data analysis and intersubjective reflexivity (Mitchell, et al., 2017). The observations of body language and facial expressions, as well as my own responses to listening to the stories, are included in those reflections in the final chapter of this study.

6.5.3 Multimodal Reflexivity and Integrated Arts-based Knowledge Translation

The primary concern that I encountered while producing multimodal outputs to disseminate publicly was that my approach to the practice was exploratory. In contrast to an exploratory approach, Kukkonen and Cooper (2019) note that it is important to select an efficient and effective form to create a knowledge output that will result in a high impact product for a specific audience. Though prior planning is recommended by Barwick (2008) and others, the innovative nature of producing integrative arts-based knowledge outputs in response to key moments in this research meant that the effects and impacts of the outputs that I eventually produced were unknown at the pre-planning stage.

A bit of serendipity is required in artistic production, and at the same time, like any other profession, artists may encounter challenges as to appropriate and ethical ways to respond. In reflection of creating and disseminating these multimodal reflexive outputs, I realized that they do not all fit under arts-based knowledge translation, as I had originally assumed. Some outputs are personal responses to the data, such as the visual memos; some outputs were meant to be shared publicly, such as the maps; and, some outputs emerged out of discussions with participants, such as the program proposal for youth leaving care and graduating high school.

When I set out to interview adults working in diverse fields, I did not anticipate such a positive global response, or foresee that adults working in digital storytelling facilitation around the world would also be interested in geolocating their stories for knowledge dissemination. I became more aware of the vast possibilities of digital storytelling and how it can be used in practical ways with advanced digital tools, aside from traditional methods of video production.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

In this dissertation, I set out to discover, "What makes a great story?" The data that I applied to study this question in 34 online video elicitation interviews were created by Robyn, Jon, and Brigitte, three storytellers who were formerly in foster care in Canada. It is important to undertake this work now, and for readers to leave with a clear understanding of the results of the analysis, as well as the issues that each theme uncovered, because there are so many calls to create stories across sectors in the arts, business, technology, finance, healthcare, and social services, and so on, but little guidance about how to tell great stories that result in social change.

The findings of this study lead to the development of the "4-A Model of Great Storytelling," which includes interconnected stages of anticipation, actualization, affect, and authenticity. Within each item are eight sub-themes that describe the findings in more detail, namely in the production, facilitation, research, and dissemination of digital stories for a specific audience. All participants spoke about how the three digital stories presented honest and personal experiences that contrast dramatically with stories presented in the media about foster care. The seven multimodal outputs that I created contributed to the shaping of the findings and enhanced reflexive praxis.

When I set out to interview anyone anywhere in the world with an internet connection about my open-ended research question, "What makes a great story?" it was pleasantly surprising that so many people across 11 countries were interested to participate and talk about how a great story, specifically a digital story, can be produced to effectively address the topic of foster care and aging out, which I assumed was unfamiliar to many people.

In Canada and internationally, there is a serious issue of a lack of data about the rates of adoption and foster care, and a lack of awareness in the media about the need for permanent adoption, specifically (United Nations, 2009). It is a *double-edged steel sword*: my assumption when beginning this study was that because of the general unfamiliarity of the situation of foster care in Canada, not many people would be interested to participate. A criteria of data saturation that I applied, using a modified form of information power (Malterud et al., 2016) as a guide,

was to confirm if participants knew about digital storytelling or not, given the research question. In hindsight, if I asked about foster care, there may have been many more participants to recruit.

The video elicitation interviews took place over Skype from January to June 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. With almost two years of experiencing virtual communications only, the pandemic has created an "enfolding," as Bennett stated (2005, p. 128), of virtual communication in our everyday lives: there is a social acceptance of, critique, and rejection of the use of online video conferencing systems instead of in-person communications. Though online video conferencing is not new, it is relatively new in qualitative research, with the earliest work produced in the late 90s (Henry & Fetters, 2012). Once the pandemic eventually subsides and people return to engaging in-person, many people will continue participating in online videoconferencing and researchers should use it as an opportunity to include people who may not otherwise be able to attend an in-person interview.

When analyzing an audience's response to a digital story, a useful strategy can be to look at the conventions of painting. Jill Bennet (2005) discusses the abject gaze in Gordon Bennett's painting, "Notes to Basquiat (Mirror)" (2001).[9] Bennett's painting shows an abstract face with geometric eyes looking at the viewer, as Bennet (2005, p. 129) notes, "from a place that is not our place but in which we are nevertheless thoroughly enmeshed and implicated". This statement resonated with me, because it emphasized the involvement and responsibility of an audience while viewing art, and of the artist while making and presenting it. A similar effect occurred in the video elicitation of the three stories by Robyn, Jon, and Brigitte.

As participants watched the stories, they said that they understood what it was like to grow up as a child and the awkwardness that this experience felt like as they grew up, but they did not know (for the most part) what it was like to grow up moving from one foster care home to another. As viewers of digital stories by youth formerly in care I agree that we, as viewers and as a society are "implicated" as Bennet (2005, p. 129) noted, but not "enmeshed" enough, or at least

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[9] Bennett's painting was created after 9/11 and is part of a series of works that respond to a collection by Basquiat, with scenes of New York, NY in the 1980s, in contrast with the terrorist attacks on 9/11.

as much as we can be, as those who compassionately care, and the video elicitation interviews in this dissertation study revealed that concern.

Following the analysis of this dissertation study and literature review, I do not think that viewers of digital stories feel a sense of implication or social responsibility due to the repression of the expression of emotions, and this is a reason that digital stories addressing social justice issues need to be developed in *anticipation* of the need for a specific audience to respond. To anticipate what story one needs to tell, they need to already know in a general sense, about the story that their audience needs to hear. Anticipation of the audience is not always straightforward for a participant at a workshop, so it may be useful to workshop participants for facilitators to create a specific open-ended objective that allows participants to explore and share their stories around the theme. For example, many youths attending the workshops with the Adoption Council of Canada and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health knew that they would create stories about advocacy for permanent adoption. However, as much as a facilitation team anticipates the needs of participants in relation to the goals of a workshop or research study, some participants may shape their responses according to their needs and the needs of their peers (Rice, 2020).

In the preface of this dissertation, I noted that "without knowing my own adoption story I would not be able to undertake this work," and to expand on what I meant in saying that, I understand that as an adoptee at five days old, my experience pales in comparison to youth that I met at the workshops, who were almost 18 and had already lived in over ten foster homes. In the first study on "Adoption: Trends and policies" by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) (United Nations, 2009), the social perception of the rates of child and youth adoption globally is likely to be far greater than what is reported. Internationally, there is a significant lack of data on rates of adoption (United Nations, 2009). In order to help adopted youth, youth in care, and youth formerly in foster care *actualize* the stories that they want specific audiences to hear, facilitators need to be aware of the rates of adoption, foster care, the history of child welfare, and the social regard for the child (see Appendix V).

Many stories in history are about birth, life, and death —beginnings, endings. Knowing who one is may sometimes rely upon knowing about how they came to be—in other words, their birth

story. Cavarero highlights that it must be remembered that everyone, as a "unique extant" who tells a story, that "story of one's life always begins where that person's life begins" (Cavarero, 2000, p. 11). For youth who are adopted, as I was, we experience the connection to our individuality at a certain stage in life depending on our experiences. Memories, which shape our stories (Cavarero, 2000) are repressed and expressed. Some youth may never realize this until they are much older, if at all. When one finds out that the parents they have always known are not their biological parents, they also learn that their given name—unless it is kept by the adoptive parents—is also not their own. The identity that shaped them until that point is suddenly frozen, and Cavarero (2000, p. 8) identifies this issue as realized in Ulysses' story, that "…everyone responds immediately to the question "who are you" by pronouncing their proper name, even if a thousand others can respond with the same name".

Though the definitions of foster care and adoption are different from orphan care, it is significant that the foundation of storytelling—of course—extends from birth, and the construct of child services can frame how stories are told, but that the storyteller is still separate from this frame. In fact, Collins (2015) notes that "Aries (1968) argued that the concept of "child" is a modern invention that did not exist before the 17th Century" (Collins, 2015, p. 88)—but stories did.

In the forward of Cavarero's (2000) book, Paul A. Kottman illustrates how Cavarero (2000) sought to describe the selfhood in narratology. "The 'narratable self'—one of the central notions introduced in Relating Narratives—is a self, which, following similar work by Philosopher, Hannah Arendt, is exposed from birth within the interactive scene of the world (which Arendt calls 'political')" (Kottman, 2000, p. ix–x). This narratable self, in Cavarero's sense, though desired, is not the self-as-storyteller. On a deeper level, Cavarero (2000) asserts that individuals cannot be reduced to the stories that they tell (2000). When storytellers come to realize this, Cavarero calls this realization "a reifying experience" (Kottman, 2000, p. xvi). The reason that the narratable self cannot be the person—the individual storyteller— is because Cavarero (2000) notes that through telling one's story, the narrative self emerges.

One of the ways that stories are framed is in the branch of philosophy that leans towards describing *what* people are rather than *who* people are (Kottman, 2000). For example, Henri

Bourdieu, and Erving Goffman, who specialize in the habitus and human-labour relations (Bourdieu, 1977) and self-presentation and identity (Goffman, 1956). Critically, digital storytelling assists individuals (and groups, where relevant), with telling their audience who they are, and Kottman notes, "… 'who' someone is can be 'known' (although this is not epistemological knowledge) through the narration of the life-story of which that person is the protagonist" (Kottman, 2000, p. viii). Kottman (2000) cites Arendt who states, "who somebody is or was we can know only by knowing the story of which they are (sic) himself the hero—their (sic) biography, in other words" (Arendt, 1957, as cited by Kottman, 2000, p. viii). By sharing who we are in a narrative form like a digital story, we can realize that we are not what we are called, but we are who we are (Kottman, in Cavarero, 2000). This shift in the semantic way of describing relations in narrative connects to American Psychologist Judith Lewis Herman's (2015) compelling statement that a survivor of a traumatic event loses "the belief that one can be oneself in relation to others" (p. 53). Significantly, acknowledging who a storyteller is, instead of what they do (Kottman, 2000) may restore the sense of "autonomy and dignity" (Herman, 2015, p. 53) that a storyteller loses, particularly in telling a traumatic story. In Amy Hill's project that advocates for survivors of violence "Silence Speaks," storytellers were invited "to step into a position of power and authority in order to articulate a story that 'talks back' to or resists dominant discourses about violence even as it may inevitably also reflect them" (p. 127). The story that one tells may be the story about them; it may not be by definition "great," yet, it is their story.

One of the multimodal reflexive outputs that resulted from this dissertation was a proposal for a program designed to support youth leaving care and graduating high school. In a recent conversation with a project partner, who was my former gym teacher, he mentioned how proud he was to hear about my dissertation. I responded by saying:

> It's all about perseverance. Tell your students today that you will encounter blocks and people who will say no, a lot, along the way, but you have to persevere if it is right, and just, no matter what. It's very simple.

He responded:

> Yes, that's right, and for so many youth, they don't have someone with them to encourage them and say how proud they are, and that's what allows them to persevere. It can't all come from within,

for everyone. They will feel confident enough, and self-efficacious to continue when someone can encourage them.

The conversation reminded me of what I indicated in the chapter summary and recommendations in the literature review that it may not be possible for many people to get to a place where they can tell their story at all, let alone, to tell a great story. The conversation with my former gym teacher reveals how important digital storytelling facilitation is for youth in care and youth formerly in care to *actualize* a digital story – it involves active facilitation, encouragement, mentorship, leadership, dedication, skill development, and many other qualities that enable them to produce a clear digital story. At the screenings of digital stories, these storytellers, who had very few people in their life to encourage them, seemed to feel seen, heard, and confident to take their next step in life, and I think that this was a result of the small ratio (~1:3) of facilitators to participants. In future workshops, it is important to consider the impact of facilitation on vulnerable groupings in particular and the impact of close facilitation on their ability to actualize their great stories.

The ways that viewers of digital stories feel during and after watching a digital story are so variable and temporal. There are many programs now that claim to have the secret for creating a great story. For example, IDEO-U (2022) pitched an ad recently on Instagram that showed a portrait of their founder, Jenn Maer, who is Design Director at IDEO, and a "Storytelling for Influence Instructor." Along with Maer's profile, was a quote,

> "The most important thing to remember in storytelling is that the basics of a good story have remained the same from a caveman sitting around a fire to crazy VR technology. It's about the narrative, the compelling character, the single driving idea, making people feel things, and being personal. These elements are always going to be the same no matter what technology comes along. Stay focused on the truth of your story."
>
> IDEO Design Director Jenn Maer shares how to design powerful stories that can move, mobilize, and motivate people toward change, in our online course Storytelling for Influence. Course closes soon—enroll now!

Like the IDEO-U (2022) *Storytelling for Influence* course, Carolyn Handler Miller (2020) wrote about the gradual evolution of storytelling in a similar way to explain the similarities and differences of types of storytelling, and the development of digital, interactive forms. In contrast to the five aspects of good storytelling presented by IDEO-U (2022): "…narrative, compelling character, single driving idea, making people feel things, and being personal…" the 4-A Model,

"Anticipation, Actualization, Affect, and Authenticity" in this dissertation points to the process of thinking about, planning, creating, and connecting a story with a specific audience. These attributes help storytellers, facilitators, researchers, and people interested in telling stories that will connect with a specific audience, honestly, authentically, and clearly, to create social change. This ad led me to the question, given that emotions vary for individuals, how can one process *advice* for specific emotional concerns?

Ahmed (2013, p. 195) states, "[E]motions then cannot be installed as the 'truth' of injustice, partly as they do not simply belong to subjects." "Emotions… are effects…" of original concerns (Ahmed, 2013, p. 196). As this study found, stories that claim to portray the truth (somewhat ironically) tend to be less believable. I think the 4-A Model might assist people with their decision-making process involved in choosing a digital storytelling course to enroll in. Individuals or groups interested in creating a digital story should consider the learning objectives that the course offers, and whether or not it will deliver on the possibilities to develop a great story.

It was surprising to find out in this study that many people are *not* aware of the history of the foster care system in their own country! Expressions of sympathy emerged in our discussions and participants expressed feeling empathetic when hearing about the experiences of youth in care. Yet, there is a lack of understanding of the mimesis of re-abandonment that occurs when youth age out of care, and there is a lack of action to create positive change for the benefit of the child at the Municipal, Provincial, and Federal levels of Government. When adopted youth, youth in care, and youth formerly in care tell their stories, they need to feel and witness this action—compassionate caring—not sympathy. Until a child is fully acknowledged as a developing member of society who is able to continue their education, I believe that this construct will persist. As Ahmed (2013) stated,

> To be moved by the suffering of some others (the 'deserving' poor, the innocent child, the injured hero), is also to be elevated into a place that remains untouched by other others (whose suffering cannot be converted into my sympathy or admiration). So it is not a coincidence that it is a child's suffering that touches the nation. The child represents the face of innocence; through the child, the threat of difference is transformed into the promise or hope of likeness. That child *could be* mine; his pain is universalized through the imagined loss of *any* child as a loss that could be my loss. The child's pain is what brings us closer to the others, because I can identify with the pain another must feel when faced by the child's pain…the position of indebtedness is the position of gratitude (Hochschild, 2003): the other must be grateful for being saved or being brought into civil society. (p. 192).

It is simplistic to respond to a story by stating that one "feels bad" for the storyteller; however, many participants expressed that pity is not compelling. As Steve noted, many family and children's services will attempt to place a child with a member of their family, known as "kinship care," if the child is unable to remain in their family home due to reasons of neglect and other forms of abuse. Having at least some recognition in the form of sympathy from another person is better than nothing at all. However, from my experience of interviewing adults working in diverse fields, the social construction of the notion of the child as a "becoming" adult (Aries, 1962 as cited by Collins, 2015) has masked the need to understand the experiences and needs of the developing child. Globally, "[T]here are over a quarter of a million adoptions every year…fewer than 12 children are adopted for every 100,000 persons under age 18…adoption remains, therefore, a relatively rare event" (United Nations, 2009, p. xv). By exploring the question "What makes a great story?" with three stories created by youth formerly in foster care in Canada, I also sought to uncover strategies that this population can apply to get out the message that there is a need for permanent adoption in Canada, specifically. This was the need that I heard clearly and carried with me as I left each of the workshop rooms.

A challenge to approach in future studies is that if people do not *have* a connection to an experience, they will often not *feel* the need to respond. Situations that warrant a response might be regarded as injustices. As Ahmed (2013, p. 195) stated, "If emotions are not possessions, then the terrain of (in)justice cannot be a question of 'having' or 'not having' an emotion." In other words, it is necessary to respond to injustices despite not having personal connections to them. Digital storytelling provides a window into the worlds of people who unfortunately, experience injustice simply because of who they are, where they were born, or where they have ended up in life.

In digital storytelling, facilitation is an act of witnessing injustice in the form of fellowship, as Claudia noted. This empathetic response converts justice to a feeling, as Ahmed (2013) noted, and it is sufficient to have fellowship, in a general sense, with participants who share their stories to help them use it for social change. Many facilitators noted the importance of maintaining healthy boundaries, avoiding dual relationships with participants, and not providing workshops as therapy when that is not a service they can offer.

Digital stories that connect to the emotions of an audience are affective forms that call in a specific audience to attend to the concerns expressed by the storyteller. The democratizing effect that often occurs in digital storytelling (Lambert, 2013) is precisely because of the connection that a great story has with a viewer, and the result is that they can connect *authentically* to the story. Another similarity between Gordon Bennett's paintings (Bennet, 2005), and digital storytelling in general, is in the notion of "unhomeliness," that Bennet (2005) proposes, which is that a painting is "neither wholly owned by the artist nor confined to the viewer response but is potentially transferable or shared: an inclusive rather than exclusive outsiderness" (p. 129). Like many artists who paint self-portraits, Gordon Bennett's works call the audience in to empathize with the person in the portrait (Bennet, 2005). In the digital stories shared in this study, a similar effect occurred but in an affective and powerful medium of video.

Couldry (2008, p. 374) asks, "how (does) media transform the social?" He discusses the uses of "mediation" compared to "mediatization" and the implications of these terms on digital storytelling as a method for social inquiry (Couldry, 2008). Couldry (2008) makes this case that digital storytelling is mediatized in society, and he outlines two stylistic conditions of digital storytelling production:

> … there are certain consistent patterns and logistics with a narrative in a digital form. (p. 381);
>
> and
>
> "… important features of online forms…" … "… involve "pressures" to combine, mix, and generate limited length digital material for a digital online society. This, of course results in digital stories that are too similar, lacking creativity, and imaginative exploration. (p. 381).

In comparison to mediated stories, "the concept of mediatization starts out from the notion of replication, the spreading of the media forms to spaces of contemporary life that are required to be re-presented to media forms" (p. 374). Provocatively, Couldry (p. 382) states "if digital storytellers assume that their public narratives will be in archives that can be used against them in years to come, they may adjust the stories they tell online." Mobile digital storytellers should not only be concerned about adjusting the stories that come out, they should also be concerned about having digital foresight into the ethical and legal implications of what is shared on the World Wide Web.

Couldry (2008, p. 383) further states "by holding back up personal narratives from such sites, young people are protecting an older, private/public boundary rather than tolerating a shift in that boundary because of significant social pressure to have an online presence." Interestingly, some personal narratives created by social media influencers, such as Greta Thunberg's Twitter-based call to action to end climate change video, are gathering attention by policymakers due to the large numbers of followers (See https://twitter.com/GretaThunberg/status/1041369960436703232?s=20). At the time of writing this, Thunberg's video posted on Twitter received almost 200k "likes". In particular, the youth voice on social media is reclaiming a mediated status of personal narratives online. Yet, they maintain the two stylistic conditions outlined by Couldry (2008) above, with a single storyteller speaking directly to the camera, for example.

Due to technological advances in communication after the dotcom boom in the 1990s, digital stories can be created and shared on cellphones, at any time anywhere in the world. In the early 2000s, social media was regarded colloquially as a sort of freedom train for change. Anything and potentially everything about oneself can be shared on social media, as long as it does not involve the harassment or intimidation of other people, among other restrictions. Couldry (2008) calls digital storytelling a "shift of storytelling form" (p. 374) and it "has implications for the sustaining or expansion of democracy" (p. 374). Social media platforms such as Instagram are places where anyone with an account can create and share a story, record a voice note or live event, and reach a large population of viewers instantly. But what effect is this personal power having on society? Melumad and Meyer (2020) found that people will share more personal stories on their phones compared to their computers. In an interview with Arianne Cohen of FastCompany, Melumad stated the cellphone acts an "adult pacifier" (Cohen, 2020, para. 3) that provides "psychological comfort" (Melamud & Meyer, 2020, p. 30).

During the time of COVID-19, there are limited places where one can express themselves publicly, aside from the internet. This is the downside of digital storytelling. More and more often, digital online societies have grown to include sharing responses to tragedies, such as the loss of land due to severe weather and climate change, the loss of dignity due to bullying at work and school, and the loss of life due to gun violence. In 2020, Canada and New Zealand banned together with other world nations to stop people from sharing live videos or hate driven text on

social media created by those who perpetuate crime. Despite the archives of digital videos on YouTube or CNN of America's 45th president of the United States expelling lie after lie about current events and public policy, he remained in office until the end of his term.

We are thus at a point where the medium of digital video can no longer be reliably referred to as a source of truth. "Deepfake Videos" can be created using artificial intelligence to misrepresent the actions of celebrities for example (Deibert, 2020). MyHeritage and other DNA and family tree systems apply facial recognition technology to family photos to *bring back* people who passed on (Deibert, 2020). Couldry's (2008) statement about the "…disarticulation between individual narratives and social political narratives" (p. 388) is accurate today, and social media may be the culprit.

This is not to say that digital videos do not include truthful stories, but there is a risk in creating too many stories with the aim to generate an emotional reaction without a focus or intent. As Couldry (2008, p. 386) stated,

> Digital storytelling in principle…provides the means to just distribute more widely the capacity to tell important stories about oneself—to represent oneself as a social, and therefore potentially political agent—in a way that is registered in the public domain.

Nevertheless, the shift towards creating more "considered storytelling online" as Daniel Meadows said (personal communication) highlights (as Couldry (2008) also discusses) the benefits of digital storytelling, compared to storytelling within the mediatized frames of social media platforms, as *Digital Storytelling* (Kaare & Lundby, 2008) "operates outside the boundaries of mainstream media institutions, although it can work on the margins of such institutions" (Couldry, 2008, p. 386).

Nevertheless, there is a risk in the method of digital storytelling that Couldry (2008) identifies, which is that it is just a phase in life that people "go through… and the stories go unseen, and become hidden overtime—the opposite of their potential as mediated forms of narrative" (p. 389). For digital storytelling participants, it is important to know about the structure of a digital storytelling workshop before getting involved. In all workshops, participants should be more cautious about enrolling when it is unclear how the stories will be archived or disseminated, as it diminishes the democratizing effect of a digital story if the story is mediatized (Couldry, 2008) in a format that a participant does not feel in control of. The objectives of digital

stories and workshop goals are important to consider early on, such as: can stories become mediated forms for a global, web-based society to learn from, or can stories be shared in other artistic formats as mediatized stories to subvert hegemonic structures that limit or oppress the voice that the storyteller wishes to express (Couldry, 2008)?

The interest to connect to a global network is a phenomenon that Bennet (2005, p. 128) calls, "global interconnection." Following each interview, participants were keen to learn about where I had interviewed other participants. With an interest in integrated knowledge translation, I documented each exploration along the way and finished the study with seven multimodal reflexive outputs (See Figure 10). These multimodal outputs might inform future practices and research involving arts-based methods and inductive multimodal methodologies that involve a general understanding of ontological interests. As a visual thinker and interpretive qualitative researcher, I was drawn to the approaches of critical arts-based inquiry, critical audience engagement, and intersubjective reflexivity, and applied my personal and professional interests in writing, painting, web design, geographic information systems (GIS) mapping, social media marketing, and presentation in deliberate and focused ways to gather feedback from participants and the public, and apply current perspectives to my study. Indeed, this exploratory approach to Constructivist Grounded Theory analysis, multimodal reflexivity, knowledge translation, dissemination, and implementation is not accessible for everyone to replicate. But I would suggest that other researchers, especially graduate students, consider approaching their work with a sense of purpose and connection to their overall life in order to generate meaningful outputs that also benefit society.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, collaboration will be an essential element of digital storytelling research and practice. International and interactive approaches to digital production (Marshall et al., 2020; Miller, 2020) will expand the method. In "Participation, flow, redistribution of authorship," Sara Diamond (2008) makes the case that curators are essential to collaboration, as they work closely with all stakeholders in ensuring that all collaborators are included. Critically, Diamond (2008, p. 153) notes that the artist is not privileged in curatorial work as "…the role of the artist as originator is as subject to challenge as is the role of curator." Diamond (2008, p. 136) noted that collaboration "can be understood as a process between two or more individuals that blurs roles, can confuse authorship, and can create new forms of

identification and cohesion." Trends in the literature across the arts, healthcare, and education sectors indicate that there will be a shift away from self-created artifacts (Miller, 2020) to co-created and co-designed (Barber, 2016), participatory (Marshall, 2021), and collaboratively researched outputs about collective experiences (Marshall, Smaira & Staeheli, 2021). Marshall et al., (2021) talk about ways to apply digital storytelling today in a collaborative approach and using GIS. They stated:

> The challenge remains how to use spatial visualization in a way that pivots between lived and representational space, that is, between individual experience and social-spatial context (Bodenhamer, Harris, and Corrigan 2013). It is in this in-between space that we locate place-based digital storytelling. (p. 3).

Marshall et al., (2021) recommend collaboration in the production of place-based narratives for future digital storytelling projects. Digital stories sit within the frame of *social technologies*, which Bazely et al., (2015) propose are sustainable approaches to enhancing knowledge production, and build on existing knowledge and share it within a community. Bazely et al., (2015, p. 7) were the first researchers to "conceptualize knowledge as a nutrient in the ecosystem." Their definition of social technologies is useful to consider in the reflections on the sustainability of digital storytelling practice:

> Social technologies can be born within a community or academic environment. They can also combine popular knowledge and technical-scientific knowledge. Essentially, the effectiveness of these technologies multiplies, allowing development to scale-up… Social technologies are key to economic, social and environmental sustainability. (Dagnino et al. 2004, Funda o Banco do Brasil 2009, Costa 2013). (Bazely et al., 2015, p. 9).

Digital storytelling is a collaborative practice and today, collaboration occurs across borders. As a multimodal reflexive method, GIS tools can be used to visualize themes in a study and to make connections between stories on a map. A challenge for digital storytelling facilitators and digital storytellers is to think about how to effectively combine GIS software with digital storytelling production technologies without feeling frustrated with the technology or having to use too many systems.

It is evident in the literature review and the findings of this dissertation study that great stories involve an immersion of the self in the dialogue and actions of a protagonist. As Holstein and Gubrium (2000) noted in "The Self We Live By: Narrative Identity in a Postmodern World", "narrative practice… is a part of interpretive practice, a term we use to simultaneously

characterize the activities of storytelling, the resources used to tell stories, and the auspices under which stories are told" (p. 104).

Some stories invoke deep thoughts about the present and future state of an everyday life experience. As Holstein and Gubrium (2000) stated, "over and over, we are learning that selves are constructed through storytelling (Ezzy, 1998, Randall, 1995, p. 4). These "selves" are viewed as an "undeniable feature of contemporary social life, a presence that is more vital, dynamic, and necessary than ever" (p. 4). For example, there is an entire generation of youth today that are creating stories about their lives with known and unknown effects, with exploratory and experiential approaches to production, and with a sharp acuity to the need to be seen and heard by a specific audience. This trend is not new to youth. Youth today, as in the past, are not naïve about the effects of technology. Rather, new technologies today compared to those in the past involve greater ethical risks that are largely unknown.

Many authors claim that digital storytelling can elevate the voice of those who have been silenced by oppressive circumstances. In the "dark side" of selfhood, Holstein and Gubrium (2000) emphasize the effect of "stigmatization" on narratives about the self. They note that social psychologist Erving Goffman (1963) found that *the stigmatized* (emphasis added) "take on society's view of themselves" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000, p. 54). This critique by Holstein and Gubrium (2000) on the concept explored by Goffman in 1963 is both outdated yet intriguing to reconsider today, to think about how stories of the self are shared, or not, and why not.

For instance, stigmatization is one component of the cycle of structural racism (Loury, 2005). In "Racial stigma and its consequences" Loury (2005, p. 2) notes that the "indirect and subtle effects of racial stigma (is) distinct from discrimination". It is worth reconsidering the effect of stigmatization on narratives of the self, while conceptualizing how narratives of the self can contribute to the production of great stories for underrepresented people in particular, for example youth formerly in foster care in Canada.

Likewise, the COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on the experiences of the most vulnerable individuals in society. As social inequities are revealed around the world, for example, in terms of the free and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines that prevent serious illness or hospitalization, it is clear that the effects of stigmatization transcend race and gender to

an intersectional (Crenshaw, 1991) way of thinking about and addressing stigma. People who are stigmatized stand in opposition to those who are not (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). *The stigmatized* are often mistreated by those who are in positions of power. For example, in August 2021 people living in homeless encampments at parks in downtown Toronto due to overcrowded conditions in public shelters were forcibly removed from the parks by police. The stories of *the stigmatized* are cyclic and repetitive. As Loury (2005, p. 2) noted, stigmatization repeats in

> … "vicious circles" of cumulative causation: self-sustaining processes in which the failure of blacks to make progress justifies for whites the very prejudicial attitudes that, when reflected in social and political action, ensure that blacks will not advance.

Referring to the work of George H. Mead, Holstein and Gubrium (2000, p. 27) stated "self-consciousness rather than feelings, 'provides the core and primary structure of the self'". In some cases, repetition of stories can occur subconsciously; however, it is productive to think of it as a self-conscious, intentional occurrence. When doing so, there may be a range of effects that are felt positively or negatively. Yet, in an interview with Eldershaw, Mayan, and Winkler (2007) sociologist Arthur Frank stated:

> …the crucial thing is that we need to get away from this rather crude epistemology of one person having the story inside of him- or herself and then delivering the story like the goose laying the egg in the presence of the other person, who then goes: What an egg! In fact, it's a collaborative activity all the way through. (Eldershaw, Mayan, & Winkler, 2007, p. 133).

As I found in the literature review on digital storytelling in healthcare, it is nearly impossible for people to avoid describing the self (Frank, 1995). Ill people need to tell their stories in order to construct new maps and new perceptions of their relationship to the world. Stories about illness in particular always contain a form of testimony (Frank, 1995). In the following excerpt, Frank (1995) explains that the idea that one person can give voice *for* people who are ill, particularly in a medical context, is problematic because:

> A person who is bombarded with so many points of view has to struggle to hold one point of view that can be recognized as her own. When this happens, we lose the continuity of our experiences; we become people who are written on from the outside.
>
> The postmodern phrase that complements "reclaiming" is "finding one's voice". Here also a significant truth underpins the cliché: people who are written on from the outside have lost their voices. Speaking in a voice recognizable as one's own becomes increasingly difficult, so speech proliferates in search of the voice. (p. 71).

Frank's (2012) interest in narrative began when he encountered a story of a child in hospital who said, "'Tell someone…' the child whispered, 'Tell someone I'm here'" (2012, Loc. 117).

Throughout his book, "*Letting Stories Breathe,"* Frank (2012) emphasizes that it is natural for people to repeat stories; that stories are essential for life and are often recycled (2012).

What storytellers need is to be heard, to be recognized, and to recognize their stories within, along with the stories that are told about, with, and for them, as Blackstock and Blackstock (2021) and Moore (2012) remind us in their reframing of the act of coming in, instead of coming out as a liberatory and emancipatory approach to advocacy with (not for) underrepresented and vulnerable populations, including BIPOC+ and Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and additional sexual orientations and gender identities (2SLGBTQI+) communities. The act of being heard and recognized is discussed by French Philosopher and Narrative Theorist Paul Ricœur in the book, "Memory, history, and forgetting" (2006/2000).

Stories and memories that are recalled are recognized (Ricœur, 2006). As Ricœur (2006, p. 434) stated, "[R]ecognition authorizes us to believe it: what we have once seen, heard, experienced, or learned is not definitively lost, but survives since we can recall it and recognize it." In contrast to Frank's claims about self-stories (1995), Ricœur (2006, p. 120-121) stated "the earliest memories are shared memories, common memories. They allow us to affirm that "in reality, we are never alone". Having said that, Loury (2005, p. 5) reminds us that there is "a complex web of social connections and a long train of historical influences [that] interact to form the opportunities and shape the outlooks of individuals."

As participants responded to the stories, they were tuning into the stories that the youth told and recovering their memories of similar stories and circumstances that they were familiar with, as a way of orienting to the media. The survival of the image as Ricœur (2006) notes is important in video elicitation interviews, where the visual imagery sustains and helps a participant describe what they witnessed. Likewise, in reflexive practice the survival of images signifies the difference between research practice as usual, obtaining permission from an ethics board to undertake a research study, and "ethics in practice" which involves attuning to the ethical issues that may arise in research practice (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 262).

Holstein and Gubrium (2000) make intriguing claims about the narratable self but Cavarero (2000), who wrote at the same time, described the power of *storytelling as a platform* where the

self becomes free—reified—which is a compelling statement that reimagines the "dark side" that is "taken on" by storied selves posited by Holstein and Gubrium (2000, p. 54). Likewise, Frank (in Eldershaw, et al., 2007, p. 133), stated,

> People beat up on other people with stories all the time. That's the damaged identities thing. It's what I've had to acknowledge…that stories have their very *dark side (emphasis added)*. Telling a story is not in itself any kind of high ground. Stories are used just as much to oppress and to justify violence as they are used to liberate. It's where we have to be willing to entertain that duality. I don't see any way around it.

From a humanistic perspective that Ricœur (2006) employs, to interpret and employstories, it may not be possible or even necessary to "entertain" this duality between oppression and liberation (Frank, 1995). The fact is, *the stigmatized* often do not get to choose how their stories are told. Instead of getting caught in a cycle of repetition and "doom scrolling," a perspective on storytelling that makes space for recognition offers a chance for *the stigmatized* to challenge the narratives that they have—not that they take on—and the narratives that are imposed upon them (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000) through recognizing (Ricœur, 2006) the stories that can be told.

At a time when connection—authentic connection, as multiple participants reiterated in this study—is at the forefront of communication online and in-person, I believe that it is important to consider the questions: "What stories need to be created and shared to establish and maintain authentic connection?" and "What stories do not need to be shared at this time, specifically?" The reason that I think it is important to consider these other two questions, is that the current lack of anticipation, actualization, affect, and authenticity that is involved in the production of great digital stories is creating the opposite effect of what is needed: prediction and speculation, disinformation and fake news (Deibert, 2020), and detachment and resignation from creative exploration and action of sharing "considered narratives" (Meadows, personal communication, 2019) in digital media formats. Though the perspectives on the stories differ from each participant, the commonalities that they share are that stories matter: that the storyteller's voice is accepted and nurtured, and that more platforms need to be made available for youth in care and youth formally in care to think about, create, share—and decide what not to share, without penalty—their stories with specific audiences that can feel and sense what it is like to walk in their shoes and help create meaningful social change.

7.1 Future Directions

"I know there is a difference between the received story…and what is actually going on."

–Toni Morrison, interview with Hilton Als (*The New Yorker*, 2019).

In the literature about the value of storytelling, many people agree that stories need to be told. As Rebecca Solnit states in her book, "*The Faraway Nearby*" (2013, p. 29), "tell stories rather than be told by them." When storytellers tell stories, they often feel a sense of agency knowing that they will be heard. Yet not everyone shares this experience of knowing that they will feel heard or the experience of feeling heard at all; and not everyone feels free to share stories about personal experiences due to stigmatization and discrimination.

Stories reveal the multifaceted range of emotions that affect contributions to creating. One of the themes of this dissertation, "Great stories cause an audience to feel a range of emotions that can compel them to change their outlook about a situation" necessitated a deeper reflection on the affective impact of digital storytelling. In an interview with Hilton Als, the late African American author and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Toni Morrison talked about her concern about the distortion of stories in the news and on TV (Du Boff, 2019). Morrison's comment about the *difference* between the stories that are told and what actually occurred in the quote above, taken from the interview with Als (2019), is compelling to think about in relation to the theme about affect in this dissertation, particularly around lingering affective responses to racism by racialized individuals. Morrison goes on to say "Adults can no longer say, 'Go outside and play,' because it's dangerous out there" (Morrison, 2019 as cited by Du Boff, 2019). Before the growth of the internet in the early 1990s, the idea of "Go outside and play" was a request for children to go outside and express their emotions by playing, moving around, and connecting with other children in their neighbourhoods (Morrison, 2019 as cited by Du Boff, 2019). Today, there is a legitimate sense of fear for children to go outside and play because of the frequent acts of violence—specifically gun violence—and a loss of community and cultural connection when social interactions do not transpire (Morrison, 2019 as cited by Du Boff, 2019).

When Morrison mentions difference, she alludes to the socialized fear of difference along with the risk of living a double life that results from this fear by not sharing and hearing stories

despite their challenging and unsettling realities. Indeed, there are stories with happy and uplifting endings, and it is naïve of any researcher or digital storytelling facilitator to think that all stories will result in positive empathetic responses (Nouvet & Sinding, 2016). In their editorial, Nouvet and Sinding (2016, p. 2) challenge the positive belief that empathy is a solution and stated, "The arts…have a particular capacity to facilitate just and ethical social relations," and, this *capacity* does not always yield tolerable endings. They underscore the fact that "[I]n many contexts, broken and even murdered bodies disappear under a blanket of gorgeous art" (Nouvet & Sinding, 2016, p. 3). This claim reminds me of Theresa Margolles' installation artwork that memorializes missing and murdered women in Mexico, and its engagement with affect as a medium that is separate and a part of the original work. Yet the integrative approach that Margolles applies acknowledges the body in the art, after death, and the interplay between life and death in Margolles' work emphasizes the effect of affect on the art, artist, installation space, and viewer.

In contrast to an integrative approach to engaging with emotion in the arts, storytellers that disengage with critical discussions of difference while amplifying the entertainment value of their story produce outputs that effect the most vulnerable and underrepresented people (personal communication, Tiffany Hsiung (Director, "*The Apology" 2016), guest lecture, York University Prof. Ali Kazemi, 14 Feb. 2022).* Stories about racial difference in particular, as Morrison emphasized (Du Boff, 2019), are most problematic when racism is not addressed. Racialized people may become numb to the underlying stories that perpetuate racism but are distorted in a form of entertainment (personal communication, Tiffany Hsiung *(*Director, "*The Apology" 2016), guest lecture, York University Prof. Ali Kazemi, 14 Feb. 2022*)*. One of the greatest films that I have seen that confronts issues of racism and engages with identity head-on with real, relatable, and raw scenes is "*Imitation of Life*" directed by Douglas Sirk (1959). In the film, Sarah Jane is confronted with the need to connect with her identity through the realization of her self-alienation and pressures to conform to stereotypical portrayals of a mixed-race woman with a light complexion in post-World War I America (Sirk, 1959). Here, I will highlight two key moments of the film that stood out as important to consider when thinking about how to engage with difficult stories in digital storytelling production.

At the very beginning of the film, Lora's daughter Sarah Jane is missing on a crowded beach (Sirk, 1959). Lora asks for assistance and finds her daughter with another mother and daughter who are also enjoying their time on the beach (Sirk, 1959). At that moment, Sarah Jane, a mixed-race child, realizes that she has a light complexion and can *pass* as white (Sirk, 1959). Later, this story repeats when Sarah Jane attempts to pass as white in a relationship with a white man and again as a dancer at a nightclub (Sirk, 1959). Throughout these repeated expressions of passing, Sarah Jane is also avoiding making a connection with her identity by denying her identity which is different than her white peers (Sirk, 1959). She becomes fearful of connecting with her identity because of the painful anti-Black racism experiences that her mother, who is Black, encounters (Sirk, 1959). Midway through the film, Sarah Jane lies to her mother about her whereabouts and then sees her mother backstage at the night club; it is evident that in that moment, Sarah Jane knows that she is living a double life (Sirk, 1959). But the story that Sarah Jane needs to tell is masked by the story that she wants to tell, due to her fear of experiencing discrimination and ostracization (Sirk, 1959).

One of the ways that this experience of having a double life can be understood is through an awareness of how this phenomenon occurs internally in thoughts and reflections on past experiences, and how external mediators facilitate the ongoing avoidance of connection with one's true self. In "*The Culture of the Copy*" Hillel Schwartz (2014) presents a rich analysis of the history of the copy. The root effects of doubling on society are brought to the fore, in the presentation of Schwartz's (2014) thesis: the conscious or subconscious postmodern act of doubling cultural artifacts and figures is hidden under the guise of the imbalances and abuses of power in the cultural production of systems and objects (2014). The forms of power exerted in WWI and WWII, which involved the production of copies of objects as mediating factors— for example, mannequins created by artists as decoys in the ditches— induced a heightened sense of fear and altered the social fabric and psychological affectual relation with the self (Schwartz, 2014). This form of power shifting is essentially a third or possibly fourth layer of the copy, which Schwartz (2014) identifies as occurring in issues of identity, for example in presentations of the self in digital stories or in self-portraits or selfies on social media. The selfie is a form of copying for external sharing, and it is a form of societal self-protection as dissociation (Schwartz, 2014). The late Rhetorician and University of Chicago Professor of English, Lauren Berlant (2014) regarded these layers of societal dissociation as tied to states of being and proximity:

being is associated with space and being dissociated from it. Schwartz's (2014) discussion about the power of the copy emphasizes the finding in this study on the value of authentic, unpolished portrayals of experiences, and what Seale (2002) challenges in his discussion of the production of unreality: people no longer feel like themselves when their image is pre-designed (Schwartz, 2014).

The speed that technological design has on producing copies causes more confusion about what is real and original versus what is copied (Schwartz, 2014). At this juncture, Schwartz (2014) interestingly questions if we are caught in this confusing act of copying when using computers to produce digital stories, for example, because computers encode copies of information that is already available. As Marcus and I reflected on the digital storytelling process during our interview, we talked about the aura of original objects that are scanned and photographed to assemble in a digital story, and though digital stories are highly personal and meaningful products, the original photographs and objects have a new meaning for the viewer and storyteller when they are reproduced for a digital story. To elaborate on this thought, in the novel "The Golden Notebook," by Doris Lessing (1962, p. 16), Molly corrects Anna's mimicry (an act of copying) of a German woman's accent when saying, "There's nothing new under the sun." Like trees that cast shadows, are computers like trees that recast information?

Affective experiences are simultaneously transformative and destructive. According to Ruth Leys, in *"A turn to affect: A critique*" (2011, p. 443), "affect is a matter of autonomic responses that are held to occur below the threshold of consciousness and cognition and to be rooted in the body," and "action and behavior are held to be determined by affective dispositions that are independent of consciousness and the mind's control." Stories may have destructive outcomes which may or may not be under one's control once they are shared. It can be traumatizing and triggering to tell stories of a deeply personal nature in under five minutes, with the potential to be shared and seen around the world. Nouvet and Sinding (2016, pp. 5-6) eloquently stated,

> There is not one affect or mode of relating that is particularly positioned to disrupt rather than reiterate stigmatizing, offensive, or violence-facilitating ways of seeing and communicating difference.

Affect is most destructive and disruptive at the point of sudden change in a story. This discomforting experience of disruption, in my opinion, manifests in the form of loss at various magnitudes. Loss is one of the most discomforting and disruptive experiences in life. In the

digital story “Just like a lion” by Daniel Allison (StoryCenter/Daniel Allison, 2021), Daniel speaks about climbing up to the top of “S-Mountain” with his mother. As he climbs, he thinks of some of the qualities that lions have, such as courage and strength, and how he tries to embody these traits (StoryCenter, 2021). Then, Daniel shares how and where he uses these qualities, at school, for example (StoryCenter, 2021). Until this point in the story, with under a minute to go, Daniel seems like he is a strong and courageous boy. Then he discloses that his mother, who he used to climb the mountain with, passed away two years prior to the making of his story (StoryCenter, 2021). Music starts to play and Daniel explains that he feels “pretty courageous” when he gets to the top of his mountains (StoryCenter, 2021). This thought follows Daniel’s sharing of how he dealt with feeling angry after his mother’s passing; it is inspiring to see that at such a young age, Daniel is so resilient and aware that he can try to overcome his challenges by confronting them (StoryCenter, 2021).

In testimonial storytelling, often the destabilizing, irrational, dangerous, repulsive, and alluring qualities of affect are processed with the objective to *tell and release*. In a workshop, “The stories we tell,” I learned about the history of testimonial storytelling with facilitators, Anne K. Ream and R. Clifton Spargo, and wrote a story about sexual assault survival with other survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence (2015). One of the takeaways from the three-day workshop was understanding that one does not have to be defined by *the stories they tell*. As Ream (2014, p. xi) stated, “The sharing of a story, especially a story of having survived rape or sexual abuse, is inherently an act of faith in the listener.” Testimonial storytelling takes shape in speeches and letter writing to help a listener connect with the issues that destabilize a society. For example, at the workshop we read Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (16 Apr. 1963). It was the first time that I encountered this full speech and I realized how necessary it was for King Jr. to write about the need to speak out against injustice in this letter, in the time that it was written, and in making clear for the reader his shift away from moderate political perspectives. Testimonial storytelling highlights the importance of gut feelings and risk-taking in the face of abrupt social change; in this sense, testimonial storytelling can have immediate productive impacts when shared, and the impacts are not always pleasant. Though testimonial writing for storytelling is discussed at length in the literature and media, it did not emerge in discussions of the data in this dissertation study.

Affect destabilizes subjectivity, such as in mythical stories, which Morrison discussed in an excerpt of an interview with Charlie Rose, in a short documentary "*Dreaming gave us wings,"* by Sophia Nahli Allison (2019),

> The one thing you say about a myth is that there's some truth in there, no matter how bizarre they may seem. And the one that I had always heard that seemed like just a child's wish was one about Black people, Black slaves, who came to the United States, and under certain circumstances, they would fly back to Africa. When I looked at it more closely, I read a lot of those slave narratives that they published in the '30s, and the interviewer would ask certain basic questions, and then some others. They (*sic)* always asked me that, "Have you ever heard of flying?" (Allison, 2019).

Writing digital stories as myths works as a narrative strategy to highlight the plight of a protagonist and the unworldly challenges that they encounter. Affective experiences are relational and there is a subjective nuance to the way that people respond to stories that highlights the tensions that affect reveals. Due to the unpredictable transcendence of affect within a group, the expression of affect varies with individuals. For example, in the snowman study by Hertha Sturm and colleagues (Leys, 2011) they measured children's affective responses to a video of a melting snowperson at physiological, verbal, and emotional levels. Significantly, the authors noted that minor verbal changes in the film resulted in a wide range of viewer responses (Leys, 2011). Often, after viewing a film one might not have an immediate response, and other people might feel like crying but might hold it back; this finding by Leys (2011) offers an opportunity for a viewer to understand that their response to viewing a story is individual and to consider not holding back their emotional response, even in a public place like a theatre.

Affect is the antithesis of control; it reveals the messiness of life. Affect can have the power to move people, and it cannot always be managed and regulated through the storytelling process. Affect is the feeling of loss and joy simultaneously at the point of a high level of achievement in life, for example (Leys, 2011). In their article, "*Unexpected self-expression and the limits of narrative: Exploring the implications of unconscious dynamics for narrative inquiry in the digital storytelling of immigrant women"* Brushwood Rose and Granger (2012, p. 2) ask, "[I]s it possible to tell a story we don't already know? What are the limits of self-narration?" Storytelling is a personal practice that becomes public once shared, and stories encourage and enable reflection on past, present, and future experiences that result in unpredictable emotional expressions (Brushwood Rose & Granger, 2012).

During the induction and transduction phases of affect (Massumi, 2002) words to describe emotions are "lost" or they flow freely, depending on the intensities of the emotion (See Figure 22). Regardless, relational experiences of emotion are intense. Ahmed (2013) understands this and acknowledges the disruptive qualities of affect as a turbulent life force: the expected unexpectedness of an experience, and the failure of the method of digital storytelling to enable a participant to complete a story, for example (Rice, 2020). Knowing that "storytelling as [a] method is shape-shifting, continuously moving and changing along with subjectivities and social worlds" (Rice et al., 2018b, as cited by Rice, 2020, p. 344), at the point of failure, however, change happened. As an autonomic response affect has passed; yet, as a cultured audience to stories, we hold onto the potential recovery of the protagonist and the hopeful resolution of a sequel, even if it will not be released for many years ahead.

The relational bind that affects induce necessitates a discussion about grief, which reveals the swirling transduction of emotions like a broken record that skips, rewinds, and repeats. In grief, one may go through specific stages, such as what Elizabeth Kübler-Ross proposed: "Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance" (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2009, para. 1). Or, one might experience multiple overlapping emotional responses in one moment. I have felt an overwhelming sense of grief after the loss of loved ones through death and separation, and I have experienced the simultaneous sense of an ability and inability to verbally respond to the power and persuasion of grief. In "*Imitation of Life,"* when Sarah Jane attends the funeral of her mother and walks behind the casket, this overwhelming sense of grief is expressed through her constricted body language, facial expressions, and other emotions that encircle the sense of overwhelm that she feels, such as grief for disassociating from her mother and from her own identity (Sirk, 1959). Though it is extremely challenging to experience, a sense of overwhelm that results from disruptive affective states can propel one towards necessary change, in this case to confront one's fear of connecting with their identity. In the digital stories created by youth formerly in foster care, their bravery for confronting their fears to connect with their stories may have been felt by some participants to be positive and transformative, while for others it may still be a very challenging, emotionally draining, and open-ended process.

Grieving, like other emotional responses, is often imposed, through rituals or through sitting with the turbulence of memories of the loss. Despite a genuine interest to tell a story—even a

small, short story—unlike other emotions, grief provides little direction about how to start. The storyteller grieves this loss and celebrates their ability to share and let go of their story. Grief and celebration in storytelling happens at the same time, and many youth participants at the workshops stated that they were happy to have completed their stories and sad that they could not continue editing, for example. Likewise, participants in this study felt interested to continue watching the stories, and some re-watched the stories. Knowing that we might never see each other again, Cláudia took a selfie to remember the moment.

Individual emotions are expressed in different ways, through different approaches, and by people with varying abilities (Leys, 2011). The avoidance of relational connection may be the reason why affect is so challenging to understand, because the loss of affect is unavoidable. Perhaps, then, the issue with affect is the human awareness of the passing of time, of the possibility for sudden or expected endings, and of loss, while working towards creating and facilitating joy. Attempts to document a story about one's life aligns so closely with this experience, that awareness of loss, and of grief, is actualized through the disruptive expressions of affect, in personal memories and in witnessing loss through expressions by others. When we confront these concerns with digital media, such as digital storytelling, affect emerges to stir up emotions, encourage distraction, or initiate an authentic and present-focused reflection on one's current or past experience in life. By actualizing a story inspired by destructive and disruptive emotions, affect invites one to try again.

7.1.1 Approaches to Decolonization of Digital Storytelling as a Research Method

The development of digital storytelling by and with Indigenous digital storytelling researchers and facilitators is simultaneously working to dismantle and decolonize existing heteropatriarchal structures in the education sector, specifically. As Judy Iseke and Sylvia Moore (2011, p. 21) stated, "Indigenous digital storytelling is created by or with Indigenous peoples for Indigenous communities." Calling it "Indigenous digital storytelling" can be empowering to Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island (Canada) specifically, who due to settler colonialism, were not permitted to *tell* stories simply because of their race (Iseke & Moore, 2011). As this study involved participants who voluntarily self-identified as Indigenous, it is necessary to acknowledge the impact of the Indigenous digital storytelling approach to the method.

The examples of research presented in this section are organized around three groupings of themes: agency and ownership; accountability and responsibility; and collaboration and inclusivity. It is my hope that these groupings can inform a framework for the current and future work on the decolonization of digital storytelling as a research method, and for scholars and community-based facilitators to approach collaboration and practice in the many ways that Indigenous digital storytellers are interested to.

7.1.1.1 Agency and Ownership

Along with giving agency to the storyteller through the application and practice of technological skills in video production and editing (Di Fulvio et al, 2016b), Iseke and Moore (2011) suggest that the power of digital storytelling is in the sense of ownership of the stories before and after completing a digital story. They note "Indigenous storytelling challenges not only the stories of the dominant society but also opposes the exclusivity of text-based resources" (p. 33). This statement illustrates the power of visual methods too. Iseke and Moore (2011) cite Harold Prins who wrote, "In an intervention that paralleled the postcolonial move to 'write back' against colonial masters, Indian activists began to "shoot back," reversing the colonial gaze by constructing their own visual media, telling their stories on their own terms" (p. 32).

In New Zealand, non-Indigenous Scholars Beltrán and Begun (2014), met with Māori peoples with the intention to build trust and invite them to participate in their study. As a result, participants willingly joined the study that was focused on long-term Historical Trauma (HT) in New Zealand (Beltrán & Begun, 2014). The workshop helped participants understand how HT transpired in their lives (Beltrán & Begun, 2014). Participants felt less isolated after learning that HT is also a global issue (Beltrán & Begun, 2014). As Haraway (2019) stated, "[W]ho owns life stories and who has access to another's story are crucial questions in struggles for the sovereignty and integrity of Indigenous peoples around the world" (p. 568). After creating the digital stories, participants felt empowered and the authors stated "the very nature of *Indigenous digital storytelling* is both individualized and collective, while also simultaneously engaged in the present as well as the past" (Beltrán & Begun, 2014, p. 170). Participants also expressed how digital storytelling might benefit older or younger community members and noted that they intend to share their stories to teach community members about their own resiliency (Beltrán & Begun, 2014). Though digital storytelling *is* beneficial to most participants, Beltrán

and Begun (2014) emphasized the need for containment and safety when presenting Indigenous digital stories online on public websites specifically, where potentially anyone can post a triggering comment.

7.1.1.2 Accountability and Responsibility

The question of whether or not to share digital stories is more contentious when participants are identified by a researcher as a "vulnerable population." Naturally, one might ask for example, "What is the impact of writing about social theory through the lens of digital stories if the social events can be observed in other less intrusive ways?" Well, Wexler, et al., (2012) identified new social patterns and behaviors among youth participants in their workshop in Northwest Alaska, which were revealed in their digital stories. In fact, many authors of digital storytelling projects identify this as an outcome, and a few digital storytelling facilitators in my dissertation study expressed that they could sense that the youth enjoyed creating their stories and there was good collaboration in the workshops without even being at the workshop. Wexler et al. (2012) suggest that digital storytelling can be:

> …used as mechanisms for engagement, as asset-based processes for stimulating these conversations, as well as a platform for researchers and practitioners to examine the ways that, through a kind of symbolic creativity, Inupiaq values are used and reworked by young people as affirmative narrative resources for identity construction. (p. 496).

The authors point to the outcome of how their workshops helped them understand how to "[develop]…youth development programming for boys and girls" (Wexler et al., 2012, p. 493). Through the use of digital storytelling, they identified gaps in program development for Indigenous young men in particular (Wexler et al., 2012). Participatory visual methods like digital storytelling allow for more in-depth perspectives on social issues that are often overlooked in other methods of data collection; they have the potential to reveal what is both present and absent (Mitchell, De Lange, & Moletsane, 2017). Wexler et al. (2012) noticed that the "boys left young men out of their stories" and they "posit that this *narrative silence* (Oochs & Capps, 1996) might signal an absence of young adult male role models for boys" (Wexler et al., 2012, p. 495; emphasis added).

In Canada specifically, adults have a right to decide what kind of media they want to share publicly, to a certain extent (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2020). Though many digital stories are meant to be shared, often the process informs the product; for instance, a storyteller

may need to share certain things in the story that are more private and they have the right to decide at the end not to share it publicly (Gubrium et al., 2016; Lambert & Hessler, 2018). Personal stories about difficult experiences need to be seen and heard in order to influence social change. Wexler, et al., (2012) found a limitation in their research with youth, who created their stories with

> …the idea that they would be shared publicly (in their community, via the internet). This probably influenced the ways they represented themselves and their lives, but the particular effects of this on the digital story content (and analysis) is undetermined. (p. 494).

Before posting a story online, a participant might feel protective about deciding not to share an intense and highly emotional story, but often those stories are the most transformative. In Canadian research studies, it is well-known that participants can voluntarily participate *and* withdraw at any time without penalty. Yet, in the community setting, this option may not be spelled out, especially if the workshop is held for the purposes of creating a collection of digital stories. In that case, facilitators and/or workshop program coordinators might include the caveat such as "participants can freely decide to withdraw at any time without penalty" (Lambert & Hessler, 2018).

7.1.1.3 Collaboration and Inclusivity

In Western Canada, participants in Iseke and Moore's (2011) study worked collaboratively with an Indigenous Elder to edit their stories. Iseke preferred to edit the videos *for* the Elders which generated an understanding between Iseke and the Elder of trust and shared authenticity in the story development. In reflection of the medicine wheel, editing is seen as a task for knowledge keepers, as Iseke and Moore (2011) note:

> Those with a relationship to the Elders and the community and those who are aware of the political, historical, social, and economic implications of the stories are in a better position to make decisions about what to include and exclude as a result of the editing process. (p. 27).

The editing process helped with containing the stories in a mediated form (Couldry, 2008; Iseke & Moore, 2011). Elders shared many stories; Iseke and Moore (2011) describe how they selected the stories: Stories were filmic if they contained characters that could be illustrated and stories that proceeded in a fairly direct manner making them appropriate to share with children (the primary audience for the film) (p. 25). Iseke and Moore (2011) note, "The video-making process reflected the shared experience of the community members and centered the community as the

site of power" (p. 26). Indigenous digital storytelling emphasizes process versus product, as "the work increases students' Indigenous knowledge" (p. 26). The end of that last sentence is important to unpack. Lennette et al.,'s (2015) description of narrative supports this outlook on editing that Iseke and Moore (2011) describe. Significantly, the person-centred terminology used here by Iseke and Moore (2011), versus the terminology of selection and sequencing by Lenette et al., (2015) which aligns to the form of technical editing itself, speaks to the thoughtful integration of Indigenous ways of knowing where stories that are *included* are a result of stories that are *excluded*. Indigenous ways of storytelling ensures that stories can be adapted for different audiences by age so that a complete story is shared across generations.

By collaborating on the filmmaking process, researchers developed trust with participants (Iseke & Moore, 2011). Whereas youth were involved as co-editors, they note, "The challenge is to work with youth to make informed editorial decisions when they have limited experiences and understanding of the possible implications of the film" (p. 27). Adult participants and Elder participants in particular accepted that the researchers would edit their stories in the way that they agreed to (Iseke & Moore, 2011).

Iseke and Moore (2011) suggest using shorter clips and visuals to maintain the narrative effect for a participant who is soft-spoken. This approach to production gives the viewer time to think abstractly about what they are hearing and seeing. They suggest not increasing the volume level on stories told by soft-spoken narrators so that the stories heard are as close to the original as possible (Iseke & Moore, 2011). In Indigenous digital storytelling, storytelling is as important as listening deeply while stories are being told.

The intergenerational and cultural considerations involved in Indigenous digital storytelling are not often included in other approaches to the method. However, I think that the cultural considerations in particular that are often involved in Indigenous digital storytelling as Iseke and Moore (2011) noted, can be included, especially in participatory ways. When thinking of Indigenous digital storytelling, I echo the sentiments that Flicker et al., (2020, p. 809) poignantly stated:

> If we are serious about redressing the health inequalities experienced by Indigenous communities, it is imperative that we find new ways of doing public health that are culturally safe, decolonizing, and respect the self-determination of Indigenous peoples, particularly youth.

What Indigenous digital storytelling offers to Western approaches of digital storytelling transcends the three phases of the digital storytelling process: in the initial stages of a digital storytelling workshop, Indigenous ways of acknowledging a workshop space, the land, and the wisdom in the room can be included in the story circle before storytellers write and share their stories; in the production stages, storytellers can bring cultural artifacts to use or wear in a story rather than presenting photographs of them, for example; and in the post-production and screening stage Elders can be included in the editing process, as Iseke and Moore (2011) did in their study.

7.1.1.4 Towards an Emancipatory Epistemology of Decolonization of Digital Storytelling

These initial reflections on a framework for future work on the decolonization of digital storytelling as a research method are preliminary. Hopefully, it offers researchers a strategy to ethically engage with Indigenous digital storytellers. It is necessary to apply the lessons and outcomes from work by and with Indigenous digital storytellers in order to stay the course on the decolonization of the method.

Many researchers have applied digital storytelling as a bridging practice to work to decolonize outdated programs and systems. Gachago et al. (2013) describe a study involving the decolonization of education of pre-service teacher education students in South Africa. Students felt jolted by the need to become anti-racist in their approaches to teaching without attending to the foundations of power and privilege that brought them to their careers (Gachago et al., 2013). To understand their sentiments, Gachago et al. (2013) used digital storytelling as an intervention to understand students' beliefs and willingness to transform their approach to teaching. The study draws on the "affective turn" which is concerned with "…the relationship of body and mind, of reason and passion, emotions and cognition" and they emphasize that "…only by understanding how the mind and body, action and passions work together can we understand how power circulates through feelings and how knowing is affected by feeling" (Gachago et al., 2013, p. 25). It seems that the practice of unsettling is an attempt to encourage a rethinking of the dominant ways that research and teaching is practiced, to re-approach instruction and communication, broadly speaking, with an inclusive and decolonizing way of listening and reflecting. Or, so it should be.

There is a trend in the literature on the need to "unsettle" narratives about racialized peoples, specifically, Indigenous peoples. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines "unsettling" as "having the effect of upsetting, disturbing, or discomposing." The words "settler" and "settling" mean to arrive to a new place and not leave. The slippery slope of the argument for unsettling of settler ways is in the use of the term "settler" without "colonialism," which masks what settler colonialists have done to Indigenous peoples, their culture, infrastructure, and land. As Rice et al. (2022) stated, "Despite historic and ongoing efforts to recognize Indigenous rights to traditional lands, relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples continue to be shaped by settler colonialism." They acknowledge that after the Truth and Reconciliation report, an ideology of ignorance infiltrated white settler colonialists who denied the racism and atrocities that occurred (Rice, et al., 2022). As Audre Lorde (1979) said, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house". It is simply impossible—futile even—for racialized people to work to change the perspectives of white supremacists who continue to employ tactics of ignorance, intimidation, denial, shame, blame, and fear. Furthermore, the buzzword, "unsettling," which swings closer to feelings of personal upset and sadness on the perpetrator—the settler—takes focus away from racialized individuals who continue to experience harm from the *good intentions* of white researchers who wish to share their pain and suffering instead of seeking justice and making space for racialized people to speak up, speak out, and create change within our communities on our own. As Rosemary Sadlier, OOnt stated in a guest lecture at OCAD University on June 7th, 2022 "racism is a power dynamic" (personal communication).

Indeed, there is a need to change the ways that narratives about racialized people are presented in the media, especially if said narratives are racist. But this need is not for non-racialized individuals to receive pity for. This is a backwards approach to creating social change, and was made visible in the documentary film, "Deconstructing Karen," which features a group of white women who were invited to a catered dinner to talk about their understanding of racism (Ivins, 2021). Notably, a few of them became upset and the rules were if they cried during the dinner, they had to leave the room. A few of them also stated that they "do not see colour" (referring to skin colour). In response, facilitators immediately challenged these statements, acknowledging that the women were being racist by ignoring the fact that racism exists. After hearing them say how they felt about race, I felt bad that they didn't have an educational experience to learn about racism. Then, after reading what Mikki Kendall (2020) notes in her

book, "Hood Feminism*"* I realized that their comments come from a place of ignorance and denial:

> Feminism cannot be about pitying women who didn't have access to the right schools or the same opportunities, or making them projects to be studied, or requiring them to be more respectable in order for them to be full participants in the movement. Respectability has not saved women of color from racism; it won't save any woman from sexism or outright misogyny. Yet mainstream white feminists ignore their own harmful behaviour in favor of focusing on an external enemy.

Kendall (2020) extends their argument to emphasize what James Baldwin also stated about enemies, "…if a society permits one portion of its citizenry to be menaced or destroyed, then, very soon, no one in that society is safe" (p. 26). Settler colonialist narratives need to be undone, revealed, unmasked, exposed, and released so that we can critique them and recognize the harms that they have been causing racialized peoples, not only in a relational sense, but across all dimensions of the social determinants of health. If all is being done for settler colonialists is an unsettling of how they *feel* about how they have been treating racialized individuals, then that is like starting at minus one, not zero.

In my opinion, white people who have ancestors who colonized Indigenous land and stayed can never effectively Indigenize as witnesses. Furthermore, settler colonialists can never decolonize while writing *about,* not *with*, Indigenous peoples. Due to the history of violence that settler colonialists inflicted on Indigenous peoples, I think that instead of unsettling efforts, settler colonialists need to work on "uncovering, contesting, and thinking beyond heteropatriarchal structures of colonial oppression" (Rice et al., 2022, p. 3) within themselves. By doing so, I think that eventually settler colonialists will begin to understand their power, place, and privilege so they can step down, invite, and let in Black, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQI+ people who have been silenced, and shut out of research practice.

The actions of stepping down and making space creates division and reveals patterns of difference, which many people may be uncomfortable with. However, an issue that I think is restricting the growth of this research method is the Western fear of difference and diversity. As Audre Lorde (1979) poignantly exclaimed,

> Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters…Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged. As women, we have been taught either to ignore our

> differences, or to view them as causes for separation and suspicion rather than as forces for change. (pp. 1–2).

The interdependency that results from activating one's unique contributions to society enhances diversity, which is a form of social capital. In an inspiring article written in the Globe and Mail Leadership Lab, Roy Osing wrote,

> Fitting in has been hammered into our heads our whole lives. School teaches us to comply and conform to what the textbook says. Our parents reinforce at a very early age that being normal like everyone else is the thing to do, that not being like others gets you noticed and gets you in trouble… As a result, we have created herds of people who are all alike in some way. (2018, paras 1-3).

In the article, "*If you're not different, then who are you?*" Osing (2018) asserts that to be successful, one has to "step away" from the context that is familiar to them and be "the only one" that does something (para. 15). Therein may lie the reason for the social compulsion to conform: it involves the "constant (prioritization)" of individuation as a mindset. This may be one mechanism of the fear of difference and diversity, among many, and this debate is ongoing. But the time to address decolonization of Western research methods is now. As the authors have presented, approaches to digital storytelling by Indigenous storytellers in particular, add a richness and diversity to the method that makes space for a diversity of perspectives.

In a follow-up piece to the book, "Staying with the Trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene," (2016), Haraway (2019) responded to the discussion of compost and storytelling, and made an important point about the importance of remaining present and open to telling and sharing stories—or not:

> Stories, even stories offered for sale on the Internet, belong to storytellers, who share them, or not, in practices of situated worlding. The conditions for sharing stories must not be set by raiders, academic or otherwise. That does not mean the game is restricted to Native commentators in Native places for Native audiences in a perverse caricature of a reservation. It does mean the terms of telling, listening, and playing have been relocated decisively. (p. 570).

The "raiders" that Haraway (2019, p. 570) mentioned are those who seek to take stories from racialized individuals—a challenging notion to think about and read on-screen—and without being naïve, acknowledging it does occur. "The terms" that Haraway (2019, p. 570) brings up are the spoken and unspoken terms of collaboration and interaction between research groups and the communities that they interact with. Haraway (2016) refers to collaboration as "Sympoiesis," a bioscientific term that means "making-with" (Haraway, 2016, p. 59).

The human interaction with technology that digital storytelling enables is a sympoietic experience. Haraway relates the concept to compost; as in the soil that results from the fermentation of fruits, vegetables, and other organic food-based scraps. Fittingly, digital storytelling requires collaboration and participation; it is an interdisciplinary practice that unites facilitators who are trained in video arts production, qualitative research, and healthcare service delivery, and so forth (Fiddian-Green et al., 2019). In relation to the development of digital storytelling—it's present and future— Haraway (2016) notes, "An emerging "New New Synthesis"—an extended synthesis—in transdisciplinary biologies and arts proposes string figures tying together human and nonhuman ecologies, evolution, development, history, affects, performances, technologies, and more" (Haraway, 2016, p. 63). Participants in digital storytelling workshops often come from diverse fields of work that cross the arts, healthcare, and social services. They bring their lived experiences to digital storytelling workshops so they can learn about what they have lived through themselves and learn from others who have lived through similar experiences. The Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication (2019) defines lived experience as, "Personal knowledge about the world gained through direct, first-hand involvement in everyday events rather than through representations constructed by other people. It may also refer to knowledge of people gained from direct face-to-face interaction rather than through a technological medium." Participants bring their lives to digital storytelling workshops, and their lives are often changed in unexpected and productive ways.

Haraway (2016) notes, "A common livable world must be composed, bit by bit, or not at all" (Haraway, 2016, p. 40), and the way that the world can be (and has been) composed in these bits is through storytelling. With an example of "the first game developed in collaboration with the Inupiat, an Alaska Native people" called, "Never Alone" by Kisima Ingitchuna, Haraway (2016) states,

> Stories, even stories offered for sale on the Internet, belong to storytellers, who share them, or not, in practices of situated worlding. The conditions for sharing stories must not be set by raiders, academic or otherwise. That does not mean the game is restricted to native commentators in native places for native audiences in a perverse caricature of a reservation. It does mean that the terms of telling, listening, and playing have been relocated decisively. (p. 87).

Without having played the game, I think that Haraway (2016) is commenting on the need for storytellers to continue to share their situated narratives and to be acknowledged for their work; this is a fair request for artists, digital storytelling facilitators, and researchers to consider. With

the example of a game created by an Indigenous artist from Alaska, Haraway (2016) is also calling for the persistence of diversity and equity in storytelling creation and dissemination, while knowing the inherent risks of open-source sharing, with digital stories in particular being available online.

The Chthulucene is an epoch that follows the Anthropocene, which essentially means, the time is now (Haraway, 2016). As Haraway states, the next stage, the Chthulucene is "a kind of timeplace for learning to stay with the trouble of living and dying in response-ability on a damaged earth" (Haraway, 2016, p. 2). Haraway's argument for the Chthulucene, I think, is more realistic for what everyday citizens can accomplish, given the large scale of devastation and global climate change that is occurring today. By definition, it does not mean that nothing can be done. Rather, we have to stick together to accomplish more. As she says, "we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles. We become-with each other or not at all" (Haraway, 2016, p. 4).

When Dana Winslow Atchley III combined bits of computer of software on his new Apple computer in 1993 (Pink, 1998), it was a sympoietic (Haraway, 2016) act to turn the stale conventions of video and computer arts (of that time) into a new communications approach that he called "digital storytelling" (Pink, 1998). Atchley used what was available on one system to create a new method, and I think that the future of digital storytelling as an arts-based method will continue to grow, following the method of technological assemblage that Atchley used to develop it (Pink, 1998). As new technologies will emerge, artists and engineers will continue to explore and merge devices and software to create new methods for data collection. Digital storytelling involves the creation of new scenes for the stories that are translated to the computer or tablet screens, and in the workshop room, where participants talk, critique, and edit together. Thus, digital storytelling is a sympoietic (Haraway, 2016) experience, which results in unique digital products that can be disseminated and archived online.

Digital storytelling can be used with many different populations and for many different purposes (de Jager et al., 2017). When digital storytelling is used as a way to reclaim one's story, it unifies the storyteller with technology and vice-versa; it unifies and reifies (Cavarero, 2000) one's sense of self with technology in the creative process, which many arts-based methods fail

to actualize. Digital storytelling has liberated narratology as a feminist narratology (Kottman, 2000). Haraway (2016) argues for the creation of situated life stories—with everyone and anyone—for the sake of humanity.

In addition to what is already presented in this dissertation, I want to emphasize here that in future work, facilitators who are aware of the affective point between anticipation of a suitable audience for a story and actualization of a story need to hold space for the potentially disruptive changes that a storyteller might encounter in the creative process of digital storytelling. Healthcare and social service providers may be familiar with cathartic expression or physiological responses, and less so with a storyteller that is interested to approach a story in destabilizing ways through the expression of pain, and loss, as artists may be (Nouvet & Sinding, 2016). Instead of dismissing difference in digital storytelling, give space for the unfamiliar yet safe expression of difficult emotional responses that one has held inside due to internal and external barriers to expression. At the same time, it is important for everyone to have an awareness of ethical and free expression through the arts, and to know that it is also one's right not to share if they do not feel ready to do so.

Great stories emerge with great listeners.

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Appendices

Appendix I. Video Elicitation & Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Video-Elicitation Interview Guide By Bryn A. Ludlow, PhD (c) York University

Hello, and thank you for your interest in this video-elicitation interview! Do you have any questions about the consent form before we proceed?

To begin, you will watch three password-protected digital stories on Vimeo.com. After watching each story, please share your reflections on it with me. After watching all three stories and talking about them, I will ask you about your experiences of viewing the stories, the value, and the impact of viewing the stories from the perspective of your profession, and about who you think should see them.

There are no right, or wrong answers; you may ask me to repeat, or clarify the questions at any time, and you are encouraged to share your thoughts on the experience as openly as possible. I will share the link to the videos with you now, in the Skype chat window. Please know that this discussion is audio-recorded, and confidential. Your data will be transcribed using a study ID number for my research purposes.

1. What were they trying to express in this video?

EXPERIENCES

2. Tell me about one of the stories that you found most insightful in-relation to your work?
- What features make this particular story your 'favourite'?
- How did you feel while you were watching them?

3. What makes a great story?
- Could you give me some examples?

4. Overall, did you connect with these stories?
- What did you learn?
- What would you change? Do you think they did that intentionally?
- Do you think the stories are complete?

VALUE

5. What is the value of these stories to your work in the arts/digital storytelling/health care/ social services?
- So what I hear you saying is…"

6. How do these stories compare to other audiovisual material you may have seen about foster care?
- Where do you think these stories should be shown? (Eg., local news, magazines, billboards, etc.)

7. Can you compare and contrast these stories to a particular alternative?
- For example, a news segment, documentary, photo essay, etc.

8. Have you ever created video— "digital stories"— like these in the past? I.e., a documentary? Cell Film?
- If so, in what context? (eg., work, school, leisure etc.)

AUDIENCE

9. After viewing the videos, or during the process, did you think of someone who you think should see the videos?
- If you could share the videos with others, who or what groups do you think would benefit from seeing them?
- How about your local political representative? Who else?
- Who do you think should not see them?

10. How should they be shared? (Consider screenings, websites, teaching, conferences, etc.?)
- What makes you feel that way?

11. How was it to view the stories on your computer, via Skype?
- Can you say more about that?

12. How was it to watch these stories as a collection?
- Do you think someone who is working in a different field might want to see them in a different order?
- Can you say more about why?

13. How can digital storytelling affect change in your work in the arts/ digital storytelling/ health care/ social services?
- Could you tell me more about your thinking on that?
- Do you think it can affect change?
- What else needs to happen?

14. Thank you for your time and participation in this video-elicitation interview, and for sharing your thoughts and ideas with me.

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

OTHER PROBES

- Could you please tell me more about...
- Can you give me an example of… I heard you say X, do you mean this...?
- You just told me about…. I'd also like to know about…

Appendix II. Secondary Data Management

There are many types of data sharing documents, and the primary difference between a data sharing agreement and a memorandum of understanding is that a MOU is not a contract. As I had already established a strong working relationship with the partners, I chose to write a MOU that outlines the roles and responsibilities of all researchers and collaborators, and how the secondary research data will be used during and after the study is complete.

A variation on a data sharing agreement is the data management plan (DMP), which is common in the field of digital curation (Digital Curation Centre, 2020). For example, when artists share their work with curators of digital exhibits, it is important for artists and curators to agree on how the digital artwork will be used. The Digital Curation Centre website has a web-based data management plan that curators and researchers can use to create their agreement forms (see https://dmponline.dcc.ac.uk/plans/). I created one there, and when I exported the plan, I added other components that I read about elsewhere, along with the authorship guidelines on the ICMJE website. The Tri-Agency Statement of Principles on Digital Data Management also describes the benefit of creating a data sharing agreement:

> When properly managed and responsibly shared, these digital resources enable researchers to ask new questions, pursue novel research programs, test alternative hypotheses, deploy innovative methodologies and collaborate across geographic and disciplinary boundaries. (2016, http://www.science.gc.ca/eic/site/063.nsf/eng/h_83F7624E.html?OpenDocument, para. 3).

An important section that is not included on many MOU templates is the definition of authorship, and the roles of collaborators on publications. The terms about authorship as defined by “The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors” (ICMJE) (2020) defines authorship and how to acknowledge “non-authors” (2020) and I included this definition on the MOU.

Finally, the research ethics application required a brief explanation of how secondary data will be used. When I submitted the research ethics application, the MOU was ready to attach as an appendix. The MOU that I prepared outlines how the collaborative use of the data is respected and acknowledged in this research and in forthcoming publications.

Appendix III. Recruitment Tables

Terms			Participants invited
Digital Storytelling Projects	—	—	36
Digital Storytelling	and	Canada	12
Digital Storytelling	and	California	1
Digital Storytelling	and	Peru	0
Digital Storytelling	and	Chile	1
Digital Storytelling	and	China	0
Digital Storytelling	and	Michigan	0
Digital Storytelling	and	Ireland	1
Digital Storytelling	and	Cape Town	3
Digital Storytelling	and	Australia	5
Digital Storytelling	and	Germany	0
Digital Storytelling	and	Indonesia	0
Digital Storytelling	and	India	1
Digital Storytelling	and	Japan	1
Digital Storytelling	and	New Zealand	2
Digital Storytelling	and	Foster Care	1
Digital Storytelling	and	Italy	2
Digital Storytelling	and	France	2
Digital Storytelling	and	Halifax	1
Digital Storytelling	and	Amsterdam	5
Digital Storytelling	and	UK	6
Artist's Health Centre Website,	and	—	1
Toronto Western Hospital (UHN)	—		1
TOTAL			82

Table 4: Recruitment Search Terms

Platform	*n*
Instagram flyer	6
Dissertation Committee Members	7
Adoption Council of Canada	2
Personal	4
Email	11
Snowball Sample	3
TOTAL	34*

Note: Two participants from one invitation participated together.

Table 5: Recruitment Platforms and Responses.

Appendix IV. Self-Reported Demographic Characteristics

Baseline characteristic	n	%
Gender Pronouns		
She/Her/Hers	20	57.1
He/Him/His	14	40
They/Them/Theirs	1	2.9
Age Range		
Not reported	1	2.9
16-24	1	2.9
25-34	8	22.9
35-44	9	25.7
45-54	7	20
55-64	6	17.1
65-74	3	11.4
Race/Ethnicity		
Black/African American	1	2.9
African, Nigerian, Yoruba	1	2.9
European	2	5.7
European Australian	1	2.9
European British	1	2.9
European Canadian	2	5.7
French	1	2.9
Italian	3	8.6
Hungarian Jewish, Australian	1	2.9
Japanese	1	2.9
Mixed	1	2.9
Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian	1	2.9
Not reported	6	17.1
Scandinavian	1	2.9
Scottish, Algonquin, French, Huron, Métis	1	2.9
South Asian	1	2.9
white	14	40
Highest Level of Education		
Not reported	1	2.9
Some High School	1	2.9
High School and some College/University	1	2.9
6th Form to A Level GCSE	1	2.9
Undergraduate Degree	8	22.9
Master's Degree, or PhD that is in-progress	7	20
Master's Degree	7	20
Doctorate (ED/PhD)	7	20
Professional Degree (e.g., MD, LLB, JD etc.)	2	5.7
Professional Affiliation		
Arts & Health Academic*	4	11.4
Digital Storytelling Facilitator (ACC)	2	5.7
Digital Storytelling Facilitator (Independent)	12	34.3
Fine Arts	6	17.1
Health Care	6	17.1
Social Services	5	14.3
Country		
Australia	2	5.7
Brazil	1	2.9
Canada	18	51.4
Ontario	14	40
Toronto	11	32.4
South Africa	1	2.9
England	2	5.7
Finland	1	2.9
France	1	2.9
Italy	3	8.6
Japan	1	2.9
USA	4	11.4
Wales	1	2.9

Table 6: Self-Reported Demographic Characteristics

Appendix V. The Foster Care System: Rights & Social Regard of the Child

"A kid is a kid because he is what he is in little pieces. He's all broken up like a jigsaw loose in its box. He's just what we make of him and we never make more than we can use, we do what we can to try and make less. Whoever uses the pieces left over or tells him they're there? Whoever tells him that he was born with the whole of a man somewhere in him, but that half of him is never fitted, scattered on the floor?"

–From "The Inhabitants" by Wright Morris
(Dave Heath Exhibition, National Gallery of Canada, 2019/05/26)

In this dissertation, my understanding of the youth experience of foster care has grown through engagement with historical literature and data about experiences of youth in foster care. In the literature, three historical aspects of the foster care system are pertinent to the discussion of the findings in this dissertation: "British Home Children" and child migration to Canada and Australia (Amy, 2012; Plowman, 2010), the changing social perception of the "child" (Collins, 2015), and the issue of aging out of foster care without a forever home, which I will discuss briefly in this section to provide additional context in the discussion about participant's recommendations in response to my question, "Who should see the stories?". The Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County (2022) provides an in-depth "History of Child Welfare in Ontario & Guelph/Wellington" on their website. In addition to this resource, I looked at literature at the York and Toronto Metropolitan University libraries and found many books about the topic.

As I walked under the quote by Wright Morris at the Dave Health Exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada in the spring of 2019, I had recently completed my 34th video elicitation interview. The beautiful exhibition of photographs against dark green walls created a meditative atmosphere in the room. Despite being a full gallery, the room was silent. The quotes on the walls were curated thematically with Heath's photographs. The quote by Morris was placed above images of children being children—playing, smiling, and daydreaming. When reading it, I was struck by how much it resonated with what the youth participants said, often at the beginning of the workshops as they thought about what to write, that they felt as if their stories are compilations of "broken pieces". Morris effectively brings in the empathic adult perspective about "a kid". The questions at the end of the quote highlight a few questions that an adult might often think about when challenging thoughts and assumptions about how children should be, and

about our own reflections on childhood about what life could have been like. In my dissertation study, participants often commented on the youth's strength and resiliency to overcome very challenging circumstances and create a digital story, for example.

The experiences that I had as an adoptee pale in comparison to many adopted youths, and youths in care. As a co-facilitator at the workshop in Toronto, it felt natural to share my connection to this work. Soon, I realized that this was naïve; the wide-open eyes that many youths expressed after I shared that I was adopted at five days were not all signaling emotions of excitement and interest as I assumed in the moment.

After facilitating the third workshop, I wrote a poem in the waiting area at the gates of the Winnipeg airport before flying home to Toronto about a participant who I observed. Her story is true, and the experiences that she had in foster care were truly unbelievable. I was only capable of writing in a poetic style to capture the feeling that I had when hearing from a child that they lived in 29 foster care homes before the age of 18:

Glass House (For A., September 13, 2017)

Inside, I am torn to pieces
Outside, ripped from under my feet
Shoes with holes; my body, like tattered clothing,

Hair to my knees that bend
Towards the porcelain base,
Letting go—
I become red in the face

Trapped by my own existence
Ashamed, humiliated, and
Silenced, I give in.
Until hate falls from your mouth again.

I was taken because of being me
Twenty-nine times to be precise,
There are just twelve years before I am thirty,

It's time for me to feel worthy, and step in
To the promise of safety
In this new glass house.

“British Home Children” and child migration to Canada and Australia

In “The Street Children of Dickens’s London,” Helen Amy (2012) tells the story of an Irish doctor in East London named Dr. Thomas Barnardo who pushed for the development of state education so that all children would have free access to education. As a result, “state education increased enrollment from 10 to 90 percent”; however, many children were orphaned after an outbreak of Cholera and were homeless (Amy, 2012, p. 125). The foster care system in Ontario was modelled on the foster care system developed by Barnardo in Britain (Family and Children’s Services, 2022). Dr. Barnardo’s work is mentioned briefly on the Family and Children’s Services of Guelph and Wellington County (2020) website too, and as Plowman (2010, pp. 2-3) discovered,

> In 1869 Dr Thomas Barnardo commenced his work for the London poor and within a decade had established over 50 orphanages. He came to embrace child migration, and by 1930 his organisation had sponsored 20,000 children to Canada.

Soon after establishing an education and shelter system in East London, Barnardo completely left his medical practice to respond to the need to reduce the numbers of homeless children on the streets (Barnardo’s, 2022). With such a high enrollment in a short period of time, the system designed by Barnardo was not sustaining. Barnardo eventually became overwhelmed with the influx of children requiring care. This statement by Barnardo in the “Health (Third) Report” illustrates his sense of overwhelm:

> …to behold young men and women crowded together in pestilential rookeries without the least provision for decency and in such conditions of abominable filth, atmospheric impurity and immoral associationship as to make the maintenance of virtue impossible, is almost enough to fill the bravest reformer with despair. (Thomas Barnardo, as cited by Plowman, 2010, p. 3).

Barnardo’s (2022) continues to operate today, and one of its former presidents was the late Princess Diana. On their website, Barnardo’s acknowledges the advocacy that Dr. Thomas Barnardo fought for, along with the deeply unethical acts of sending vulnerable children and youth away from their home country:

> Barnardo’s was one of many children’s charities that sent some children to start a new life in Australia or Canada from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s. This was a popular policy, supported by the British government, who believed that the children would benefit from opportunities they wouldn’t have in the UK. We now know that however well-intentioned, it was a deeply misguided policy. The last Barnardo’s child to be migrated was in 1967, to Australia. In 2010 the British government formally apologised for the UK’s role in sending more than 130,000 child migrants to former colonies. (Barnardo’s, 2022, para. 15).

As a result of the high numbers of children requiring care, and the lack of space to care for them, in partnership with the government, Barnardo's sent thousands of children and youth from the UK to Canada and Australia (Plowman, 2010).

In one of the only films about child migration from the UK to Australia between (1869–1967) (Plowman, 2010; Chandler, 2011), "Oranges and Sunshine" (Loach et al., 2011), a British social worker named Margaret Humphreys works in the child welfare system and hears about children who were promised "oranges and sunshine" when they arrived in Australia from the UK, but she did not know how many children were transported.[10] Humphreys is compelled to meet former child migrants in Australia so she can tell their stories (Loach et al., 2011).

In the magazine article, "Oranges and Sunshine: Exposing a Shameful Past," Chandler (2011) highlights how well the film responds to the socioeconomic barriers that former child migrants in Australia had to face in the 1980s when this story broke, compared to when the film was made in 2011, including barriers to travel and access to records in an analogue archive. Sadly, instead of oranges and sunshine, as Chandler (2011, p. 20) notes, "…what they got when they arrived were childhoods spent in institutions where they were often neglected or abused." Near the end of the article, Chandler (2011) presents an evocative analysis of the film and states,

> …we only hear the adults' accounts of what they went through, the viewer is aware that this is not just a story about what happened to little children; this experience has shaped people's whole lives, and in many cases, while they do not play the role of victims, they are still left with questions and a profound sense of loss. (Chandler, 2011, p. 23).

Chandler's (2011) statement effectively captures the sense of abandonment and loss that former child migrants now feel, and the sentiment is also addressed in Wright Morris's question, "Whoever tells him (the child) that he was born with the whole of a man somewhere in him, but that half of him is never fitted, scattered on the floor?" The subject of this question, "Whoever tells…" is a provocative statement for Morris to write, as it signals to broader concerns, such as who is constructing this single-channel narrative about how a child should be? At the same time, it reduces the child to the single-channel narrative.

[10] The film is available on DVD at the Scott Library, York University.

In 1924, after the first World War, the social perception of the "child" changed as policies of the child welfare system changed too. Greater protections were put in-place for children and youth, such as the Children's Charter of Rights (CCR) (Family and Children's Services, 2022).[11] Upon review of the Articles on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which UNICEF is governed by, I discovered that some countries signed and ratified the Children's Charter of Rights (CCR), a legally-binding agreement, with declarations of certain criteria of certain Articles, including Canada.[12] Notably, Article 30 states:

> In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of Indigenous (sic) origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is Indigenous (sic) shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language. (OHCHR, 2022).

Canada signed Article 30 in 1990, and ratified it in 1991, with a "reservation" and a "statement of understanding" about "…assessing what measures are appropriate to implement the rights recognized in the Convention for Aboriginal Children, due regard must be paid to not denying their right…" (OHCHR, 2014). From my perspective, Indigenous children and youth should wholeheartedly be able to "…enjoy their [sic] own culture, to profess and practice their [sic] own religion, or to use their [sic] own language" (OHCHR, 2014, Article 30). In 2019, over thirty years since the signing, ratification and declaration was made on Article 30 of the UNCRC, the Canadian Government signed the UNDRIP, which affirms these rights, among others (Indigenous Services Canada, 2021).

The story of the Barnardo Home Children is a significant story in the history of the Commonwealth. At the same time, one cannot overlook the Residential School system in Canada that occurred from 1880 until the last school closed in 1996 (Canadian Geographic, 2020). Children were taken from their homes and forcibly assimilated into the catholic school system

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[11] The charter was registered on September 2, 1990, with 140 signatories and it is "…open for signature by all states at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York" (OCHCR, 2020). The UNCRC is part of the United Nations Treaty collection, and it was held in New York on November 20, 1989 (OHCHR, 2020).

[12] In 1991, the Canadian Government ratified Article 21, which is about consent to adoption by all parties, including to intercountry adoption. Article 37c, was also, understandably ratified with a reservation about "not detaining children separately from adults where this is not appropriate or feasible" (OHCHR, 2014, Article 37c).

(Richardson & Pennington, 2021a). As noted on Canadian Geographic's on-line "Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada" (2020),

> Residential schools operated in Canada for more than 160 years, with upwards of 150,000 children passing through their doors. Every province and territory, with the exception of Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and New Brunswick, was home to the federally funded, church-run schools. The last school closed in Saskatchewan in 1996. First Nations, Métis and Inuit children were removed, often against their will, from their families and communities and put into schools, where they were forced to abandon their traditions, cultural practices and languages. The residential school system was just one tool in a broader plan of "aggressive assimilation" and colonization of Indigenous Peoples and territories in Canada. (Canadian Geographic, 2020, para. 1).

Between 1950-1980, Indigenous children and youth were taken from their homes and placed into foster care in what is called the "60's Scoop" (Richardson & Pennington, 2021b). Survivors of the residential school systems who spoke at the Truth and Reconciliation hearings acknowledged "…the over-representation of Indigenous children in the foster care system…" (Canadian Geographic, 2020, para. 11). In the report, "Reducing the number of children in care" (2021), the Government of Canada co-developed new legislation to reduce the number of Indigenous children and youth in care and improve child and family services. They note,

> In Canada, 52.2% of children in foster care are Indigenous, but account for only 7.7% of the child population according to Census 2016. This means 14,970 out of 28,665 foster children in private homes under the age of 15 are Indigenous. (Government of Canada, 2021, para. 12).

In an interview with Bioethics Doctoral Candidate, Lisa Boivin, she speaks about reuniting with her biological father and painting to learn about her culture, to cope with the trauma of surviving the 60's scoop, and painting Caribou to honour her father (Richardson & Pennington, 2022c). Her father, also a residential school survivor, grew up living around, and hunting Caribou in northwest Canada. Twelve years later when he left the school and returned home, the Caribou were gone (Richardson & Pennington, 2022c). Unfortunately, thousands of children in residential schools across Canada died at the schools and were not properly buried (Richardson & Pennington, 2022b). In May 2021, 215 unmarked graves of children and youth formerly in residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia. Since then, many more unmarked grave sites have been found across Canada.

In 2005, after the death of Jordan River Anderson, a First Nations child from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba, who was not given medical care, "Jordan's Principle" was introduced, to "…to ensure that services for First Nations children are not delayed due to jurisdictional disputes" (Indigenous Services Canada, 2021). Between 2005 and 2016, funding was provided to

Health Canada by the Government to implement Jordan's Principle (Indigenous Services Canada, 2021). Yet, it was only for "…First Nations children living on reserve with multiple disabilities requiring services from multiple service providers"; as a result, no claims were filed (Indigenous Services Canada, 2021). In April 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) "…issued a remedial order… includes all First Nations children and not only those with multiple disabilities" (Indigenous Services Canada, 2021). On January 1, 2020, an "*An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (the act) came into force," and one of the criteria of this act was to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which includes provisions protecting the right to expression of culture (Indigenous Services Canada, 2021). In January 2022, the Canadian Government reached a 40-billion dollar agreement, which aims to provide… "$20 billion for compensation and $20 billion for long-term reform of the on-reserve child welfare system" to families and the CHRT and Canadian Government have until March 31, 2022, to implement the agreement (Stefanovich & Boisvert, 2022). In response to the announcement, Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, stated, "No child's life is better today than it was yesterday because of these words on paper"… "We have to see the government actually deliver this stuff" (Stefanovich & Boisvert, 2022).

The Current State of Foster Care in Canada

"Aging-out" or "transitioning out of care" (Collins, 2015, p. 20) means that the youth have reached an age of independence, according to their province or territory, and they are no longer eligible for government support. In some provinces in Canada, youth are eligible for transition-based support to extend foster care stays for youth over age 18 (Adoption Council of Canada, 2022a). However, many youths are not ready to leave home at age 21.

As the number of youths who are transitioning from care increases, society is starting to pay attention, and the ACC (2022a), among many other provincial and territorial child welfare agencies in Canada are advocating for permanent adoption from foster care before youth reach the age where they are no longer eligible to receive government support. For example, the Adoption Council of Ontario (2022) developed the "Never Too Late for Family" program to continue supporting youth who have aged out of care and who need permanent adoption.

Today, it is true that the very fact that youth are in care, makes them more likely than youth who are not in care, to be living within the low-income bracket (Hudon, 2017). Collins (2015, p. 89) describes: the "…problem of youths leaving care has been defined sympathetically". Perhaps the reason why this sentiment is expressed is due to the ways that children and youth are generally regarded in society (Collins, 2015). As Collins (2015) noted,

> Chanahan (2007 noted that childhood is framed in relation to adulthood. Children are "human becomings" rather than human beings (Holloway & Valentine, 2000, p. 5). (Collins, 2015, p. 88).

A child's instinct to reject the common sentiment of "sympathy" about their experience is challenged when they are faced with the impending end of their time in foster care and without confirmation of permanent adoption.

Despite the setbacks and barriers to accessing permanent adoption while in foster care, it is promising that youth are sharing their stories. In the American documentary film, "Foster" (Harris, 2018), a youth who was transitioning from care was struggling in college with finding a connection to her studies, and they said, "You can't always write the beginning of your story, but you can definitely write the end".

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Notes

[i] Attachment research combines the study of behaviour, systems theory, brain physiology, and direct observation (Maunder & Hunter, 2015). Maunder and Hunter (2015) describe four patterns of attachment: secure, preoccupied, avoidant, and fearful that are expressed in infancy and carry on throughout adulthood. The ideal type of attachment behaviour is a secure attachment between an infant and their primary caregiver, for example, their mother (Maunder & Hunter, 2015); it involves a mutual understanding of safety and security between an infant and mother when the mother is momentarily absent (Maunder & Hunter, 2015).

Despite early childhood experiences that adults have little control over, it is possible to unlearn insecure patterns of adult attachment, through a process of "mentalizing" (Maunder & Hunter, 2015, p. 62). This involves "…the skill of being able to imagine what is going on in other's minds and how we appear from their perspective" (Maunder & Hunter, 2015, p. 62). A form of self-compassion, the degree to which an individual can mentalize, is passed-on from parent to child, illustrating the impact of environment and early childhood experiences on one's genetics.

Conversely, insecure attachment patterns vary, and the "…severity of insecurity is more important to the impact on health, than the type…" (Maunder & Hunter, 2015, p. 93). Notably, attachment insecurity in adults is in-fact normal and it occurs on a spectrum, with some events eliciting more severe responses than others (Maunder & Hunter, 2015).

[ii] According to Malterud et al., (2015), the quality of interview dialogue depends on the interviewer's skills at interviewing, the engagement of the participant, and the rapport built during the interview. If participants are not answering questions in-depth, then interviewers either need to spend more time interviewing participants, or they need to increase their sample size to achieve higher information power (Malterud et al., 2015).