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"Reflecting Forward" on the Digital in Multidirectional Memory-Work Between Canada and South Africa
Réfléchir à l'avenir : la place du numérique dans le travail de mémoire multidirectionnelle entre le Canada et l'Afrique du Sud

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Article abstract

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"REFLECTING FORWARD" ON THE DIGITAL IN MULTIDIRECTIONAL MEMORY-WORK BETWEEN CANADA AND SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT. We explore the place that the digital can occupy in teachers' peda-gogical practices around social justice and especially how memory-work can deepen and enhance teacher practices. Like Walter Benjamin, we see memory as being a medium for exploring the past and where the digital provides greater opportunities for teachers to work productively across geographical contexts that are wrestling with issues of social justice. We argue for the po-tential of Michael Rothberg's notion of multidirectional memory as a logical direction in which to pursue notions of cross-border, transnational productive remembering facilitated by digital means. We also pose a number of ques-tions we see as critical for working through and "reflecting forward" on issues central to digital scholarship within the context of multidirectional memory.

RÉFLÉCHIR À L'AVENIR : LA PLACE DU NUMÉRIQUE DANS LE TRAVAIL DE MÉMOIRE MULTIDIRECTIONNELLE ENTRE LE CANADA ET L'AFRIQUE DU SUD

RÉSUMÉ. Nous explorons la place que peut occuper le numérique au sein des pra-tiques pédagogiques des enseignants œuvrant en justice sociale et particulièrement la manière dont le travail de mémoire peut approfondir et améliorer ces pratiques enseignantes. À la manière de Walter Benjamin, nous considérons la mémoire comme un moyen d'explorer le passé ainsi qu'un endroit où le numérique offre aux enseignants des possibilités accrues de travailler efficacement au cœur de contextes géographiques aux prises avec des problématiques de justice sociale. Nous soutenons que le concept de mémoire multidirectionnelle développé par Michael Rothberg a le potentiel et constitue la voie logique pour mieux saisir les notions de mémoire productive transnationale et transfrontalière, à l'aide des outils numériques. Nous exposons également un certain nombre de questions que nous considérons fondamentales pour trouver des solutions et réfléchir à l'avenir en ce qui a trait à des problématiques propres à la recherche numérique dans le contexte de la mémoire multidirectionnelle.

Language has unmistakably made plain that memory is not an instrument for exploring the past, but rather a medium.

(Benjamin in Assmann, 2011, p. 153)

Where thinking suddenly stops in a constellation pregnant with tensions, it gives that constellation a shock.

(Benjamin in Rothberg, 2009, p. 43)

Scholarly publications tell the story of data.

(Borgman, 2007, p. 225)

Teachers are the primary "memory agents" in schools, ranging from their role in selecting which texts, approaches to text and projects become the focus of student learning within the curriculum, to the fact that teachers often come to occupy a space in the memories of former students (O'Reilly-Scanlon, 2001) and also need to contend with their own memories of learning, schooling and the curriculum (Pinar, 2011). Teachers also stand at the front lines in integrating technology into the curriculum, developing students' "21st century" skills (UNESCO, 2008). As co-authors, we have all been teachers (elementary or secondary) and are now teacher educators while also being educational researchers; our research regularly brings us back in contact with students and classrooms. We also share an abiding interest in memory in Benjamin's (1999) sense of its being a medium, and have been exploring this interest primarily through actively engaging teachers (ourselves included) in autobiographical and biographical forms of memory-work. Our memory-work projects have primarily been located in two places: Canada and South Africa, with some of us working mostly in Canada and some of us mostly in South Africa. In Canada, one key focus has been Canada's history of relations with Indigenous peoples, especially the legacy of residential schooling, while in South Africa, the focus has mainly been on the effects of HIV and AIDS on rural school-ing in a post-apartheid context. Our work has been framed by social justice issues of race and/or gender. Sensing their interrelatedness, we have looked for opportunities to bring this work together through, for instance, a research collaboration on partnerships in education, which resulted in a symposium held in Durban, South Africa in 2007 and an edited book on self-study and social justice (Pithouse, Mitchell, & Moletsane, 2009), but most notably through a Productive Remembering research workshop held at McGill in 2008, which resulted in two co-edited collections of papers —*Memory and Pedagogy* (Mitchell, Strong-Wilson, Pithouse & Allnutt, 2011) and *Productive Remembering and Social Agency* (Strong-Wilson, Mitchell, Allnutt, & Pithouse-Morgan, 2013). These conversations helped us to begin to collectively develop our ideas around memory as a medium for "productive remembering" as phenomenon and method. However, it was only when we embarked on talking about research that each of us had been conducting separately in relation to teachers, students and the digital that we could envision generating "digital dialogue" (Wegerif, 2006) between teachers in Canada and South Africa, and in so doing link

this dialogue to our previous memory work, through what we provisionally called digital memory-work (Strong-Wilson, Mitchell, Morrison, Radford, & Pithouse-Morgan, 2014).

We are interested in exploring the place that the digital can occupy in teachers' pedagogical practices around social justice and in particular, with how memory-work can deepen and enhance teacher practices. As democracies, both Canada and South Africa are haunted by glaring examples of their "present pasts," with apartheid continuing to having an impact on South Africa 20 years after the first democratic elections, and the Idle No More movement testifying to unresolved intergenerational issues from Canada's shameful legacy of Indian residential schools.[1] At the same time, there is also a multidirectional flow between the two countries in relation to these shared histories. Following Canada's example of establishing the reservation system, South Africa established the Group Areas Act in 1950, which legally enforced apartheid. Canada, following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in South Africa beginning in 1996, established its own structure in 2008, the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Both countries continue to share a shameful present in relation to sexual violence amongst Indigenous girls and youth women.[2] And yet, the contexts are also positioned very differently with respect to questions of social justice and post-colonialism, with South Africa living out the post-effects of colonialism as apartheid in what is meant to be a post-apartheid state, and Canada wrestling with its status as a settler colonial society and the ongoing legacy of its fraught relations with Indigenous peoples, which have crystallized around residential schools. What would be the educational usefulness of bringing together these shared and simultaneously vastly different political contexts?

The field known as "memory and pedagogy" is concerned with transformation: with how critically engaging with the past / one's past can change the future (Mitchell et al., 2011). Memory studies emphasizes that our relation to the past is about how we live in the present, where memory (remembering / forgetting) entails "working through" the past to avoid repeating injustice or trauma (Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003; Simon, Rosenberg, & Eppert, 2000). Memory-work refers to a set of practices, typically collaborative, that help participants connect personal memories to larger social, political or economic issues and thus work through those issues in ways that engender a deeper commitment or consciousness (Haug, 2008a, 2008b; Haug et al., 1987; Strong-Wilson et al, 2013). We originally coined the phrase "digital memory-work" to articulate an interrelationship between digital media and memory-work that we saw as pending yet imminent, in which digital media would be used to both explore as well as represent memory-work. In so doing, we drew on insights from various fields, including the emerging field of digital memory (Ernst, 2013), linking this with the burgeoning literature on teachers' responsibility to meaningfully integrate digital media in classrooms. We see the potential of digital forms of

memory-work to help promote teacher agency and lead to transformation in classroom practices through teachers leveraging digital tools (e.g., wider range of resources; online dialogue with a broader group of teachers) to access the past so as to investigate social in / justice. "Digital critical pedagogies" is the term we have been using for teaching approaches that can move theorizing (memory-work) to practice (changes in a teacher's pedagogy).

Given that the project data will primarily be in digital form, the question posed by the *MJE / RSÉM* special issue around scholarly representation is highly germane to our thinking through of the project. How might working with the digital in the context of memory-work challenge our present boundaries around what constitutes representation in scholarship and potentially contribute to new insights in research and practice? A preliminary question concerns the implications of setting in motion a "constellation" of memories (very possibly difficult and traumatic) through memory-work with teachers across the two country contexts. What theoretical framework(s) can support the use of digital dialogue for productive forms of remembering that can lead to social agency?

SECTION ONE: MULTIDIRECTIONAL MEMORY-WORK AND THE DIGITAL

Multidirectional memory-work

Multidirectional memory is Michael Rothberg's (2009) alternative to a "zero-sum" (p. 3) game in which memories compete for space and attention within the public sphere. In the wake of the Second World War, but only really beginning in the 1960s with the highly publicized Eichmann trial, personal testimonials and stories of violent injustice began to be unleashed (Rothberg, 2009). Susannah Radstone (2000) has noted the central place of Holocaust memories in shaping the nascent field of memory studies. Rothberg begins his second book by citing literary critic Walter Benn Michaels' exasperation with the public space given over to the Jewish Holocaust in the US Holocaust Museum on the Mall in Washington DC. What about what Americans did to Black people?, Michaels asks. Rothberg uses Michaels' observation as a starting-point for proposing a different reading of post WWII history and thus a different trajectory for memory studies. Whereas Rothberg's first book (2000) focused on the study of literary representations of the Holocaust, in particular those that he called "traumatic realism," in his second book (2009), he delves more deeply into questions of representation — of what kind of story is being told and whose story is being told — by re-envisioning the Holocaust through a lens of decolonization, in which the Holocaust is one (albeit a central) piece of a larger canvas marked by struggles for freedom against violent injustice. How does he arrive at this point? The key elements of his argument are germane to seeing multidirectional memory as a logical direction in which to pursue notions of cross-border, transnational productive remembering facilitated by digital means.

What are those key elements? The notion of multidirectional memory is based on relatedness through juxtaposition; methodologically, it resembles pastiche in the sense that it brings together histories that might otherwise seem unlikely "bedfellows" (Rothberg, 2009, p. 18). It does this by arguing first that memory, "while concerned with the past, happens in the present" (p. 4). Memory occupies a present space that memory studies has tended to characterize as a space of contestation (Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003), in which memories compete with one another to be seen and heard (e.g., counter-memories vs. dominant narrative ideology; counter-memory vs. counter-memory). What we do with the present space, though, suggests Rothberg, is for us to imagine and re-shape; memory as "present past" is ultimately future-directed. Building on that argument, Rothberg argues for memory as a form of work, but on the largest possible canvas so as to allow for "dynamic form[s] of contiguity" (p. 3), with memories intersecting with one another, coming from and moving into different directions. Multidirectional memory is "concerned simultaneously with individual and collective memory" and has focused "on both agents and sites of memory, and especially on their interaction within specific historical and political contexts of struggle and contestation" (p. 4). Whereas multidirectional memory-work might be beginning to sound like memory studies' version of multiculturalism, Rothberg is careful to emphasize the specificity of histories, which remain intact; the overriding metaphor (borrowed from Walter Benjamin) is of elements being brought into "constellation" through being juxtaposed. The constellation (within Benjamin's thinking) produces shock; this shock or "arrest" produced by the constellation is what can lead to consciousness and potentially, social action and change (Strong-Wilson, Yoder & Phipps, 2014).

Multidirectional memory does depend on a comparative approach to memory, but one in which difficult and traumatic memories come to the table on an equal footing; this required Rothberg to come to terms with the place of the Holocaust within multidirectional memory. He develops an argument, begun in his earlier book (Rothberg, 2000), against seeing the Holocaust as a unique event. Based on his re-reading of key authors on the subject of the Holocaust (e.g., Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism,* Rothberg, 2009 but also Adorno's famous dictum that no poetry was possible after Auschwitz Rothberg, 2000), Rothberg re-positions the Holocaust within the global effects of colonization and imperialism. He draws attention to the fact that Holocaust memory occurred during the same period as movements for de-colonization but where Holocaust memory has played, and continues to play, a pivotal role in provoking, granting permission for, and even drawing attention to "the articulation of other histories" (p. 6) that pre-date as well as post-date the Holocaust itself.

As such, multidirectional memory relies on both "collective" as well as "shared" memory (Rothberg, 2009, p. 15). Shared memory is predicated on the mediation of memory through networks of communication and refers to

individuals' communicating about memories of an event; it is built on a "division of mnemonic labor" (Margalit cited in Rothberg, 2009, p. 15). Following Halbwachs' classic conceptualization of memory as simultaneously individual and collective (individuals provide the "locus" for remembrance but memories are filtered through living with others and in relation to collective frameworks, Rothberg, 2009, p. 15), multidirectional memory is collective in that "it is formed within social frameworks"; it is shared memory in that it is "formed within mediascapes" that depend on a division of labour (p. 15). Rothberg (2009) has argued that multidirectional memory goes further than either shared or collective memory in highlighting the "displacements and contingencies" (p. 16) that accompany re-telling memories and where those memories take on an "affective charge" through becoming part of a larger constellation or "network of associations" (p. 16). The locus of memory-work is thus shifted as the work is determined in relation to associations and triggers across contexts that cannot be anticipated or foreseen in advance (p. 16): Benjamin's tensions "where thinking suddenly stops in a constellation," giving "that constellation a shock" (Benjamin, as cited in Rothberg, 2009, p. 43).

But what is the purpose of such multidirectional memory-work? Although he writes about history, Rothberg comes out of English Studies. He has been primarily interested in questions of representation. The entire argument of his first book on traumatic realism and the Holocaust rests on his critique of what he often refers to as narrative "continuity" (Rothberg, 2000, p. 229) and that Alice Pitt and Deborah Britzman (2003) (in education) have called "lovely knowledge" (p. 766). Such stories are the bedtime ones with the happy, tidy ending that we may wish to hear but that, especially in relation to trauma and difficulty, we know cannot be true — and that in their inauthenticity, can be harmful and misleading. The key characteristic and insight of what Rothberg (2000) has called "traumatic realism" (as a new genre of Holocaust story) is how it wrestles with the ways in which the Nazis deliberately and perversely yoked the everyday with the extreme. Traumatic realism might be considered as one possible form for multidirectional memory as it depends on interrupting continuity in favour of producing Benjaminian shocks.

Our key question then asks: what kind of pastiche story might be told by bringing together histories as diverse as Canada's and South Africa's? Multidirectional memory begins with dissimilarity "since no two events are ever alike" (Rothberg, 2009, p. 18). Its method lies in constructing links between "disparate documents" (p. 18) and thus, on focusing "intellectual energy on investigating what it means to invoke connections *nevertheless*" (p. 18; italics added). It is that "nevertheless" that discloses multidirectional memory's reliance on the association (which is an old association) between memory and imagination and, in another leap, that despite its "dark subject matter," of being "written under the sign of optimism" (p. 19). One of the main positive goals of multidirectional memory is of "re-framing justice in a globalizing world" (Fraser

cited in Rothberg, 2009, p. 19), thus the need for a comparative approach, like the one proposed in our memory-work project involving the digital.

Multidirectional memory-work, the digital and scholarship

"E-research encompasses a disruptive set of technologies with the potential to revolutionize the social sciences," says Christine Borgman (2007, p. 206), even as she points out that the term "new" is often bandied about but as yet rarely explained (p. 30). Fundamentally, scholarly communications, whether in formal settings (publications) or informal ones (conferences), "tell the story of data" (p. 225) no matter what form that data takes, from biological specimens to pot-shards from an archeological dig to responses to interview questions — to digital objects and artifacts. How will we know what is new? Dutton and Jeffreys (2010) suggest that we take our cue from our everyday lives, where digital devices have brought about fundamental transformations in how we do things. We might expect the same for research, they maintain. The term digital scholarship encompasses research on digital media as well as scholarly communication that uses digital media, says one go-to collaborative e-source that has successfully infiltrated academe, namely Wikipedia. Most research is presently "on" digital media, in the sense of being "about" it. As yet, there are few examples of the use of digital media to present, or represent, research or act as a host / site for research. This dilemma was one encountered by one of the co-authors who encountered insuperable challenges in the representation of her doctoral research on avatars (Morrison, 2009), compelled at the time (by the expected format of the dissertation) to bring avatars from their virtual spaces (their screen homes) to paper. She found that studying avatars designed for dynamic use in online spaces on the static world of a printed page was akin to studying the cinematic contributions of James Cameron by reading his movie scripts and ignoring the visual spectacle.

As a social and shared phenomenon, digital media has become an integral part of our everyday lives (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006, 2008). This has happened in a variety of ways (oral, visual, written) using an increasing array of devices (digital cameras, cell phones, iPods, tablets). The emerging field of "digital memory," based on the idea of the archive as dynamic, comes out of the recognition that memory is not the same for all time and changes according to the context (Huyssen, 1995; Radstone, 2000). Digital memory scholars note that what distinguishes digital memory from classical notions of memory as storehouse is that the present has become more accessible as well as moves more quickly into becoming the digital past (Ernst, 2013). This makes digital memory open to transformation and reinvention (Bouchardon & Bachimont, 2009) but also to being readily forgotten. As Haskins (2007) points out, "large quantities of digitized materials does not translate into a usable past" (p. 419). We live in a digital age of "perfect remembering" with little consciousness or discussion of how and what to remember — or how and what to forget (Mayer-Schonberger,

2009). The ubiquitous — but mobile — presence of digital media has raised challenging questions for the place of remembering and forgetting within society as well as within scholarship. As Borgman (2007) points out, "many of the assumptions about content and context associated with physical artifacts and print do not hold in distributed, digital environments"; rather, "digital objects often are malleable, mutable and mobile" (p. 263). To date, the most cited and debated article in the journal *Memory Studies* is Connerton's (2008) "Seven Types of Forgetting." This due to his fifth type, "annulment", which Connerton ties to the rise of new media. Arguing for the need for erasure, Connerton states: "the concept of discarding may come to occupy as central a role in the 21st century as the concept of production did in the 19th century" (p. 65). This debate was started by Andreas Huyssen (1995), who argued that technology threatens to dissolve the space we know as memory while Radstone (2000) has begged to differ, seeing possibility in a cultural preoccupation with, and working through of, memory through the new medium of the digital.

Multidirectional memory-work would invariably involve the use of those digital tools that are already pervasive and ubiquitous and that are already the focus of shared as well as collective memories through various networks. Multidirectional memory-work provides a needed focus on representation — on which story is being told, by whom and how, using which digital tools to which effect and to what end — and where devising methods of multidirectional memory-work (how to approach, share and juxtapose memories across political contexts) will need to take place alongside conversations around digital representation. These conversations, we argue, are not only useful but necessary, given the shifting tides towards e-scholarship.

In the section below, we briefly describe the project that is underway but move fairly quickly into discussion of key questions and issues surrounding the digital that we foresee as highly pertinent to moving our multidirectional memory-work inquiry forward in the context of digital scholarship.

SECTION TWO: A DIGITAL PROJECT OF MULTIDIRECTIONAL MEMORY-WORK

Our project focuses on the need to increase teachers' fluency with digital media in ways that are critical and thoughtful. Memory-work has proven to be highly effective in linking theorizing with practice by embedding teachers' commitment to teaching to social in / justice first within their own histories then by sharing with other teachers (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2014; Mitchell et al., 2011; Strong-Wilson, 2008). We are interested in the approaches that Schratz and Walker (1995) describe in their book *Research as Social Change*, connecting the self with the social for the purpose of "reflecting-on-the-future" (Wilson, 2008, p. 177). Reflecting on the future involves notions of agency and "anticipatory reflection" on the teaching that is to come (Wilson, 2008, p. 180), as informed by critical reflection on the past. In so doing, we locate our fieldwork within

the kind of participatory forms of research that take account of dynamics of collaboration / collectivity (Achinstein, 2002; Kapoor & Jordan, 2009) and translation into action / practice (Marcos, Miguel, & Tillema, 2009). These forms include: teacher action research and scholarship of practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Loughran, Hamilton, Labosky & Russell, 2004); memory-work methods, social autobiography and autoethnography (Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers & Leggo, 2009; Strong-Wilson, 2008; Mitchell et al., 2011; Strong-Wilson et al., 2013); participatory visual methodologies (Mitchell, 2011); and self-study methodologies (Hamilton, 1998; Kitchen & Russell, 2012; Pithouse et al., 2009).

Our project has a dual focus in that it seeks first to create digital memory-work workshops or "digital retreats" (Mitchell & de Lange, 2013) to engage primary and secondary teachers across six sites in Canada and South Africa in investigating social injustice / the present past[3] and second, to support teachers' development of digital pedagogical approaches to social injustice. The workshops are meant to adapt to a digital context the work of Haug et al. (1987) and others exploring memory-work through: group selection of a topic or theme (e.g., "recall an early memory of social injustice"), digitally representing the memories, creating individual and shared digital artifacts, and group approaches to analysis of digital artifacts (e.g., What do our memory pieces have in common? How do differing national contexts / pasts play out? Are there certain dominant themes? What memories / pasts are missing? What do we make of these memories? What next?)

While there will be various follow-up actions to these site-based workshops, and the generation of a range of digital artefacts as data (e.g., cellphilms, i-Movies, digital stories, podcasts, classroom-based social justice projects), three that are particularly pertinent to digital scholarship are:

1. a group webinar in which teachers from both countries will meet on site but digitally screen, critique and analyze their digital memory-work with one another across sites (and consider ways to take the work forward through critical digital pedagogies);

2. a teacher blog in which, using an agreed-upon sharing protocol, transnational groups of teachers will post and respond to visual and text-based examples of their digital pedagogies (teachers will also be invited to "blog" on-going reflections on their own / others' classroom projects, reflections which will also be analyzed as digital data);

3. the creation of a digital archive.[4]

What will be critical is attention during data collection and analysis to conceiving memory-work as multidirectional and, at the same time, wrestling with these ideas in the context of exploring the capacity of digital tools to help perform memory-work as well as represent understandings that are the result

of multidirectional memory-work. Beginning in January 2015, two of the co-authors will be engaged in a pilot project, titled *Exploring digital approaches to multidirectional memory-work*, focused precisely on this: exploring and developing these tools and understandings through professional development research workshops with teachers and teacher educators.

SECTION THREE: THE FUTURE CONDITIONAL, OR WORKING THROUGH THE "WHAT-IF" QUESTIONS

Questions of "doing" — and the types of data produced by researchers and / or teachers as part of the doing (e.g., cellphilms, i-Movies, digital stories) — raise new questions about representation and the ways in which working with digital methodologies, especially those using the autobiographical and autoethnographic, in and of themselves become central to this "doing." We refer to this section as "future conditional" as a way to signpost the space (figuratively and otherwise) that we occupy in our project of multidirectional memory work using digital tools. We foresee questions, ones with no definitive answers, but which may help to chart a path forward.

Our questions are not new, some emerging from the literature and some from our previous work but where we were more focused on "the technologies of doing" and less with "the technologies of representing." In tracing the movement from an analogue model of scholarly publishing to a digital one still coming into being, Pochoda (2012) identifies several "digital affordances" that will drive change; one of these is the ability of content to more flexibly inform format:

> In the Procrustean print system, authors are compelled to fit their argument into the short-form article or the long-form text (itself falling within a limited spectrum of potential lengths). By contrast, the digital regime, in principle, permits publication in any length and in a wide and expanding variety of digital (as well as print) containers. (p. 367)

What will this new regime look like? We are not sure but we know that it will likely be different and that questions central to our own digital memory-work about the digital dialogue in and around the self and between selves are also central to our digital scholarship. Whereas digital technology began as a "sustaining innovation" for the analogue model / print-container (a model inspired by Voltaire's 1770 set of encyclopedias, Pochoda, 2012), allowing it to perform its work quicker and more efficiently (e.g., through scholars' DIY Word formatting of their manuscripts for publishers), the digital has now definitely become a productive yet "disruptive innovation" (Christensen cited in Pochoda, 2012, p. 367), "one premised on digitally inspired and digitally mediated resources and perspectives introduced at every juncture of the system" (Pochoda, 2012, p. 367).

We have found that many issues that arise are not necessarily made explicit in the resulting scholarship, but rather become buried in the sorting out of

things. This was the case for one of the authors in preparing an article for a special issue of *Sociology Online* dedicated to the inclusion of digital material as central to the representation itself. The article draws on work with community health care workers in a rural setting in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa in which the community health care workers engage in participatory analysis in co-creating a digital archive of photovoice data related to stigma and HIV&AIDS (see de Lange & Mitchell, 2012). As the author comments in a set of notes produced during the writing of the article:

> The challenges are not about the technology itself (i.e., creating hyperlinks or preparing the material for a digital realm in other ways). That is easy. But how do we first gain ethical clearance from the participants to have their data part of a public archive when they don't really have any idea what a digital archive is regardless of whether it is restricted or public? And how do we make sure that we don't misrepresent the visual data? It is one thing for us as the research team to screen a participatory video at a conference or public event– we can set the stage- although even there, decisions get made about what images to show outside of South Africa. Sometimes the visual is too explicit. Will this be a case of colonial cringe? (Fieldnotes, May, 2010)

Framed then by this reflecting forward, we offer below the following four questions as a set of "future conditional" "what if" questions and issues. While these are by no means the only questions, they are ones that seem to be particularly critical at this present juncture in the project.

Question 1: What are the challenges in addressing social justice issues through a multidirectional memory lens, across divergent geographical contexts, and using digital tools?

The central challenge is to create a productive context for the prompting of shared *multidirectional* memory-work across continents. In a post-apartheid era in South Africa, memories pertaining to social justice issues will include lingering legacies of the past such as widespread social and economic inequities, impoverished schools, and high levels of violence and xenophobia, while in Canada, social justice issues may be more related to immigration — issues such as racism and persistent social and economic inequities — and, of course, to the treatment of Indigenous peoples, including legacies of residential schools.

Given the highly visual nature of much e-material, as well as the practicalities of working digitally across geographical distances, this work will likely invoke visual images. For instance, it may demand that participants initially engage in the process of what Prosser (2012) has called "picturing atrocity" (p. 12), based on the idea of photography in / of crisis. Batchen, Gidley, Miller, and Prosser (2012) in their book *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis* are speaking of pictures of atrocity in public journalism, offering close readings of images depicting atrocities in the Congo in the early 20th Century (Twomey, 2012), the "iconography of famine" (Campbell, 2012), images of the civil rights movement in the US (Abel, 2012), through to the mushroom cloud of Hiroshima

(Hariman & Lucaites, 2012). Their work anticipates, we would argue, the types of digital representations that might also be produced in digital photovoice and participatory video projects as well as the kinds of images that teachers may have accepted on faith as trustworthy. If so, these visual representations are likely to bring particular demands in terms of critical engagement (e.g., as prompts for discussion) and then re-represented multidirectionally, perhaps through the creation (within and across geographical contexts) of "dialectical images," which rely on juxtaposition to instigate a shock or "standstill in a constellation saturated with tensions" (Benjamin in Abbas, 1989, p. 59). At the same time these images may be framed as what Brown and Phu (2014) refer to in their book of the same name as "feeling photography."

Dialectical images are often staged images (e.g., in Canada, of the photograph of a photographing of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police standing alongside a First Nations chief in front of a teepee; see Simon, 1992, p. 144). In their analysis of images produced in community-based research in rural South Africa, Mitchell, de Lange, Stuart, Moletsane & Buthelizi (2007) highlight the ways in which photos, especially those that are "staged," can be particularly provocative, raising questions about what should be used in public contexts. A photo on stigma "staged" by a group of grade nine boys, for example, depicted a boy committing suicide. Their caption for the photo, "Suicide," read: "*He can't accept that the HIV is positive. He feels he has to commit suicide because he would not like to tell people that he has AIDS*" (p. 66). Batchen et al. (2012) make the argument that photographs of atrocity (and we would argue that "Suicide" is an example) carry with them "a particular set of ethical responsibilities" (p. 15). While the authors are speaking more of media representations produced by professional journalists as opposed to community researchers using digital tools, we would suggest that the same rules should apply:

> The media (photographer) has a responsibility to contextualize and caption the atrocity photography correctly. We have a responsibility to read the image closely — perhaps not immediately to trust what we see in the image. If an atrocity has been committed, someone is responsible. This matter of responsibility gave rise to the first humanitarian campaigns that worked with atrocity photographs. Do we also have a responsibility to respond to the photograph beyond simply reading it? What is the question that atrocity photographs ask of us? (Batchen et al., 2012, p. 15)

Susan Sontag (2003) makes a similar argument in *Regarding the Pain of Others* when she observes: "narratives can make us understand. Photographs do something else; they haunt us" (p. 80). What we need to anticipate then is discussion and contextualization of images by teachers engaged in "digital dialogue" with one another across geographical contexts, and where images would serve as only one kind of prompt that would lend itself to digital dialogue; others would be films, popular culture, objects (viz., pictures of objects) as well as writing, including literary writing, by published authors and / or by the teachers (Strong-Wilson et al, 2013a).

Question 2: How do we interpret the presence of multimedia in our scholar-ship on multidirectional memory-work?

Related to the first question, when data is collected, archived, analyzed and disseminated through multimedia / digital forms, the tendency may be to privilege these accounts as more truthful or trustworthy, based on the positive social prejudice towards digital formats which are associated with relevancy and innovation. In the wake of poststructuralist frameworks, we know that truth is relational and that words, representations, and subjects are unstable and often contradictory. With autobiographical / autoethnographic research, we are also dealing with the subjectivity of lived experience. Lived experience as refracted through a multimedia format may seem to provide more direct and immediate access to experience: a first-hand, witness account. We need to be careful not take the image / visual at face value as evidence of truth, and instead contextualize it as a version of an event or experience, which we see as central to multidirectional forms of memory. We need to begin from the premise that just like print text, multimedia data forms are value laden, are subject to interpretations as diverse as those who view / listen / experience them, and may even be commercially or politically driven (e.g., by relying on particular programs or software). Also implicit in media constructs are power structures imported from the social and cultural contexts within which they exist (Fiske, 1996), which includes the power to access particular media and technologies. What this implies in multidirectional memory-work using the digital is the need to foreground process and participatory approaches to data collection and interpretation / analysis. A foregrounding of process would involve the documentation, theorizing as well as engaging of the participant in reflection on the "construction scars" (Pinar & Pautz, 1998) involved in working in / with the past before these traces disappear into the final work. Using the digital, this would mean using the blog to good effect. Through participatory processes of engaging with one another's digital "data" (viz., through memory-work across geographical contexts), teachers can be invited into a collective process of interpretation, similar to métissage (Hasebe-Ludt et al., 2009), in which the teacher authors construct narratives out of the pieces of their "pasts," read and critique one another's pieces and in which, in a digital prologue or epilogue, they reflect on the outcome as well as process. A scholarly article may also take the form of a teacher blog, in which teachers show, for instance, the process by which digital memory-work was transformed into digital pedagogies, or how digital dialogue across transnational contexts informed the creation of particular digital pedagogies.

Question 3: What is the relationship between the autobiographical and autoethnographic, and use of the web as public sphere for multidirectional memory?

One of the key issues emerging from digital scholarship is the ephemeral and mutable character of digital media, the fact that digital records cannot survive

by "benign neglect," therefore need to be curated (Borgman, 2007, p. 263). Even as we worry over the future of its traces, because they are embedded within a distributed sphere (the web), they can be keyword searched (another digital affordance) and thus become permanent, un-erasable (Mayer-Schonberger, 2009), and redistributed in another context remote from multidirectional memory; even, misused. Once the data becomes saved in digital format, even if password-protected, might it become accessed anywhere-anytime (e.g., through being shared by teachers with others)? How much depends on an individual's ability or desire (or prior knowledge) to establish privacy settings? As Jones (2012) points out,

> existing paradigms of the relationship between media and memory and as-sociated theoretical models are "inadequate for understanding the profound impact of the supreme accessibility, transferability and circulation of digital content: on how individuals, groups and societies come to remember and forget (Garde-Hansen et al., 2009, p. 3). (p. 391)

Another question is: what will teachers themselves consider as ephemeral and as "collectible" and why?

In raising this last question, we identify concerns about the private and the public. The adding of hyperlinks, for instance, is Google's attempt at a cultural institute: making available through virtual museums the last century's historical and cultural events, archived photos, manuscripts letters and first hand video testimonials. The Google "World Wonders Project," which links street view technology with UNESCO world heritage sites, represents an extension of that project. What are the implications of using digital forms of memory-work (which though collective, begin with the private and autobiographical) for digital pedagogies which are necessarily shared and public? Will we inadvertently be contributing to the creation of a virtual museum of the personal? And if yes, what will be the implications of this for future generations? We do not yet have answers to these questions, beyond creating password-protected sites.

Question 4: What are some of the new ethical challenges associated with digital representation in multidirectional memory-work?

There is perhaps no issue that is receiving more attention currently than the ethics of self-representation in a digital age particularly in the context of "self-ies" and online-bullying. While much of this work takes place within a DIY culture, what happens when it is part of a data-gathering project? What are the responsibilities of the researchers to safeguard participants, and in the case of the teachers as consenting adults, what should be the guiding principles? To gain ethical clearance for research projects from university ethics boards, it is customary to make a commitment to protect participants by ensuring confi-dentiality and anonymity. However, when participants are producers of digital artifacts such as online videos or blogs, they might well choose to "go public" as the makers or authors of their work (as discussed in the previous section).

But what about others, such as participants' family members or former teachers who might be identifiable in digital memory-work artifacts even if their names or faces are not made public? How will researchers and participants address the blurring of the lines between their roles in the research, a challenge in participatory approaches to research, but with particular dilemmas when dealing with digital data and artifacts?

Another concern is that memory-work, especially when focused on issues of social injustice, can elicit painful stories of the past that can be traumatic for those who lived through the distressing experiences and for those who are hearing about or seeing these reconstructed memories (see for example, Masinga, 2012; Mitchell, 2011; de Lange & Mitchell, 2012). While we have developed strategies for attending to the possible emotional consequences of memory-work in our face-to-face work with teachers (Pithouse et al., 2009), the public and essentially uncontainable nature of digital scholarship presents us with new, somewhat unpredictable challenges. What does this mean in relation to traditional forms of academic dissemination (even those making provision for digital scholarship) and the everyday uses that participants might want to make of their own digital self-representations?

Who will "own" the digital artifacts that are produced? With these blurring of the lines come questions of ownership, for instance, with respect to copyright and distribution. We live in a "share culture" in which the teachers involved in research projects may very well wish to share their artifacts (and perhaps those of others) with colleagues, friends, and family as well as posted online on sites accessible to many others. While we do not see this as problematic (and even potentially highly desirable), we acknowledge that when the boundaries become widened, it can be a challenge to locate impact and track distribution of the research. As "ephemera," the artifacts may potentially pass beyond the ken of the researcher. New ways to engage with distribution and archive may need to be devised in light of such digital, participatory memory-work research.

The digital setting of the research can be an occasion for addressing digital dialogism as the scene for a multiplicity of voices and perspectives *writ large*. As we know from Bakhtin (1984), dialogical texts can help us understand relations in ways that are not mechanical as they avoid authorial finality. Digital dialogical texts can further blur the lines to allow for multiple, non-subordinated perspectives. Gubrium and Harper (2013) highlight the potential of dialogic editing, something that we see as being further enhanced through access to google docs and other digital platforms.

Hence, we see the involvement of the teacher participants as crucial in developing appropriate, context-sensitive ethical guidelines for the project. We anticipate that the ethics of the project will be the subject of an ongoing conversation with our participants as the project evolves and new ethical dilemmas must be attended to. Thus, a critical and self-reflexive study of the ways in which ethical issues play out will be a key aspect of our project.

CONCLUSION

Matthews and Aston (2012) maintain that multimedia (such as, but not limited to audio, video, and digital image) is much more than a simple tool for recording and documenting research in the humanities and social sciences. It is the primary research output. Memory, as Benjamin suggests (in the opening quote), is itself a medium for sharing and communication. Multidirectional memory depends on the critical and creative generation that comes about through "constellation" across tensions. In this paper, we have sought to bring to bear the pending digital platform for scholarship to multidirectional approaches to memory-work for social justice, as we see these movements as in productive tandem but accompanied by the need to "reflect forward" on challenging questions immediately ahead. What story do we want our data to tell?

NOTES

1. Idle No More is a grassroots social movement of in Canada that was initiated in 2012 and galvanized significant ongoing public attention to pressing social and political issues affecting Indigenous people in Canada.

2. One of the current conversations that studies this shared history is located within a 6 year SSHRC and IDRC joint-funded partnership (Mitchell & Moletsane, 2014-2020) called "Networks for Change and Well-being: Girl-led 'from the ground up' policy making to address sexual violence in Canada and South Africa."

3. Session One: Collective Remembering & Social Justice Issues; Session Two: Working with Memories (including ethical issues around memory-work, the digital, & teacher collaboration); Session Three: Digital Memory-work Part I; Session Four: Digital Memory-work Part II; Session Five: Viewing & Critiquing Digital Productions; and Session Six: Envisioning Theory to Practice.

4. Our plan is to collect data based on the teachers' digital artifacts (e.g., digital stories, i-Movies, cellphilms, etc.) as well as documentation of the teachers' process (individual and collective) of working with / through the past using digital forms of memory-work, the teacher blog, and the creation of a digital archive composed of data from the project as well as links to pertinent websites. We will use NVivo to work with digital data across sites as well as draw on digitizing coding methods informed by participatory analysis so that teachers can be invited into the data analysis process through individual and group coding.

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