Article

'Little Islands of Empathy': networked stories of gender diversity and multiple selves'

Son Vivienne ![ORCID]

RMIT University, Australia

Abstract

This article draws on a methodologically interesting case study called 'Stories Beyond Gender', in which a small group of trans* people collaborates in social media storytelling. Building on the possibilities manifest in other more explicitly personal-as-political genres like digital storytelling, I explore the potential of this facilitated workshop practice to establish meaningful connections across difference, forging affinities that may continue to flourish online. Furthermore, I offer some specific examples of the ways in which my own networked story-sharing online, in a zine and in an exhibition affirmed emergent complexity. I address the theme of this Special Issue by examining the ways in which social media, despite paradoxical fragmentation, can be used creatively to mobilise interest in public aspects of gender expression. However, sharing stories, especially those linked to stigmatised identities, whether online or off, is not without its complications. In the face of highly valued privacy, a lack of familiarity with ever-changing privacy settings or the affordances of specific platforms can pose an obstacle to online self-representation that stands in the way of visible civic engagement. While acknowledging that the trans-phobic consequences of online misadventures continue to be dire, I address the self-protective skills and sophisticated ways in which gender-diverse people curate emergent and past selves across intersecting social networks both on and offline. I argue that, at the intersections of post-digital and post-gender ways of being, we can observe emergent acceptance of multiple selves that are capable of being inconsistent without being incoherent. These representations exist in stark opposition to pop psychology's premise of a singular authentic 'inner truth'.

Keywords

digital storytelling, everyday activism, gender-diverse, self-representation, social media, trans*

Corresponding author:

Son Vivienne, Creative Agency, School of Education, Digital Ethnography Research Centre, Design and Creative Practice, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476, Melbourne, VIC 3001, Australia.
Email: son@incitestories.com.au

Introduction: self-representation as everyday activism

Since the early 1990s there has been sustained interest in digital storytelling as a multi-purpose tool used variously for community and cultural development, health and wellbeing, and building digital literacy. In its traditional form, digital storytelling is a workshop-based practice through which everyday folk learn to combine personal images and artwork, first-person narration, music and sound effects to make a two- to five-minute mini-documentary. In the United States, nurtured by Joe Lambert and his peers, the initial focus was self-authorship and the therapeutic benefits of a shared storytelling process, while in the United Kingdom, Daniel Meadows developed a model that took the tech (in fully equipped mobile digital labs) to regional and remote places where storytellers were coached in elegant narrative form. Their products initially found a home as interstitials on free-to-air TV – for example, *Capture Wales* on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) – (Meadows and Kidd, 2009) and more recently carefully curated web-spaces have proliferated, making digital stories searchable by theme, place, author and so on.

As a participatory practice available to disenfranchised or marginalised people with no previous media-making experience, digital storytelling affords a kind of 'everyday activism' in which personal stories shared in public spaces are used as a tool for catalysing social change (Vivienne, 2016). I have written elsewhere about the potential for stigmatised storytellers to create pseudonymous stories in ways that allow them to participate in the public sphere without jeopardising personal safety. For example, gender-diverse kids and their parents, or HIV-positive storytellers may, for various reasons, prefer not to reveal the particulars of their identity while still sharing painfully intimate insights. This capacity to selectively represent aspects of self, in rich media and visually compelling form is one of the strengths of digital storytelling. However, it must also be said that the process is technically and emotionally challenging as well as time consuming Despite having acquired digital literacies, very few storytellers produce more than one tale. Furthermore, the technical kit required – typically semi-professional edit, photography and audio recording equipment – alongside a high ratio of facilitators to participants, means that digital storytelling initiatives are most frequently auspiced by social service or educational organisations. Later I will detail some more complex limitations of the form. First, though, I will outline some of the opportunities for analysis at the junctions of what I am referring to as the 'post-digital' and the 'post-gender'.

Intersections of post-digital and post-gender

What is the value of 'post' as a prefix? Perhaps most popularly known in the context of 'postmodernism', 'post' generally modifies a noun in ways that connote 'after', 'following' or 'beyond'. In this way, it can build upon or dispense with previous definitions and understanding, in some cases simultaneously. This is often the case in uses of 'poststructuralism'. Either way, a 'new' term using the 'post' prefix is defined in relation to its predecessor, paradoxically making the new term less than wholly original. Meanwhile, terms like 'posthuman' boast multiple contested definitions (currently seven, according to Wikipedia), and disciplinary distinctions can obscure any similarities. For these reasons, I use both 'post-digital' and 'post-gender' in playful ways intended to provoke interrogation rather than define boundaries of meaning.

I regard our current moment as 'post-digital' in that, for most people in most places, we can no longer be regarded as being distinctly 'online' (or 'virtual'), compared with 'in real life' (IRL) or 'embodied'. Even as we sit in a geographically located space, we are accompanied by digital selves or traces, represented on/in various devices (mobile phones, ATMs and the like) across time (past, present, future), space and place (from platforms like Facebook to simultaneous small and large screens in various geographic locations). Nathan Jurgenson (2011) coined the term 'augmented
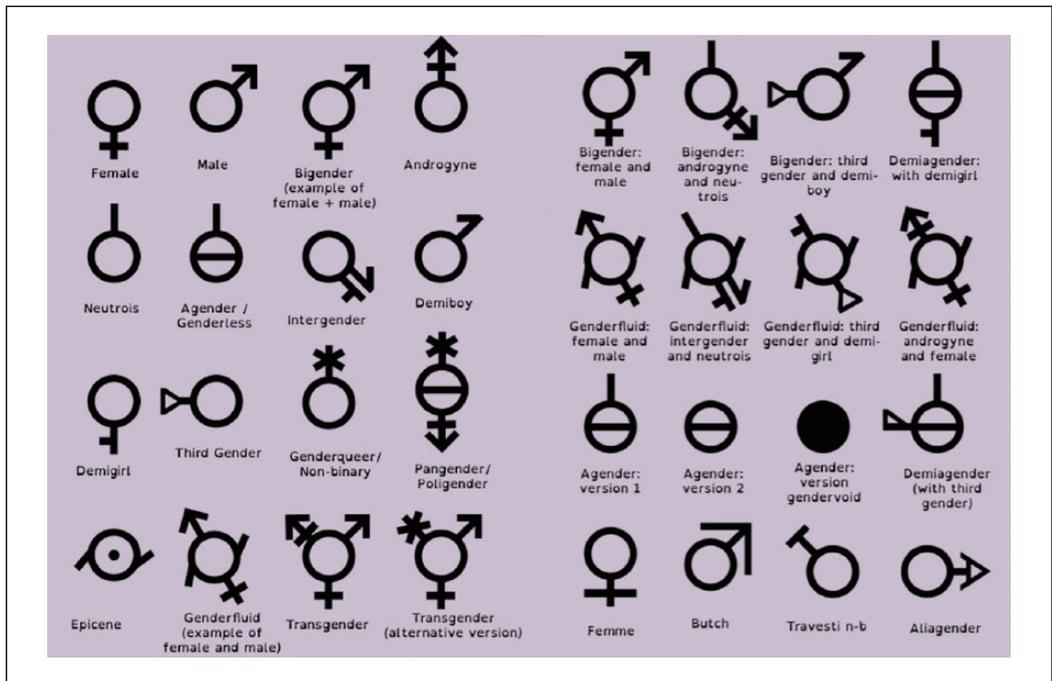
Figure 1. Tumblr taxonomies of gender.
Source: Age of Shitlords (2016).

reality' to dispense with what he regarded as a false binary; however, the term has failed to gain traction in popular usage, perhaps as a result of its overlap with the specific technology in which a digital interface overlays a real-time image of a real place. Further, despite popular recognition of the complex ways in which being on and offline are interdependent, arguments in which the two are represented as fundamentally distinct and different persist. Therefore, while I argue that we are already essentially post-digital, I also acknowledge that this is a largely theoretical stance. The value of post-digital as a concept lies in the space it creates for thinking through emergent ways of and categorising being. It also has practical applications in terms of understanding concepts like 'digital citizenship' as a suite of skills that allow us to curate multimedia and longitudinal performance of selves (see more on digital citizenship from a variety of perspectives in Isin and Ruppert, 2015; McCosker et al., 2016).

Post-gender theoretical frameworks clearly build on ideas put forward by Judith Butler (2004) among others (for contrasting disciplinary perspectives see Dvorsky and Hughes, 2008 and Nicholas, 2014). However, beyond abstractions, our current moment is one that is bursting with pragmatic post-gender ways of being – both actual and potential. Schoolyards and Tumblr are replete with multiple iterations of gender fluidity, intersectionality and non-binary identities, evident in taxonomies like those represented in Figure 1.

New and overlapping categories of gender, beyond male and female, are routinely critiqued as being arbitrary and/or trivial, yet increasingly are recognised in law and policy with opportunities to self-define as 'other/both/non-binary' and so on. Being post-gender in these ways affords analysis of other apparently rigid identity categories, including race/ethnicity and class. When will we
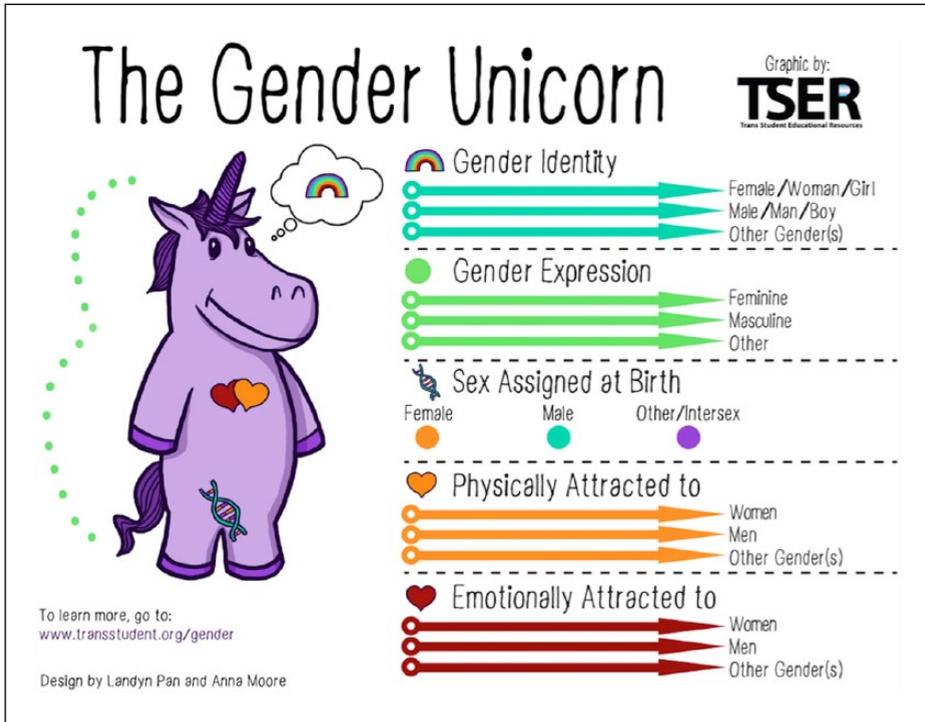
Figure 2. The gender unicorn.

arrive at a time in which social capital, rather than being correlated with coherence, will be awarded for the fluidity and/or continuums like those affirmed in Figure 2?

Methodology

In this article, my analysis of examples of post-digital and post-gender ways of being draws on ethnographic action research and is illustrated through reference to a case study in social media storytelling. Action research intentionally allows for multiple iterations and reframes of a research trajectory according to shifts that take place in the research landscape, often prompted by research participants as co-researchers. Ethnography in this case makes reference to both my own self-identification as a member of the community of research and the length of time spent 'hanging out'. Between 2012 and 2015, I facilitated a series of workshops under the banner 'Stories Beyond Gender' for and with trans and gender-diverse people in Adelaide, South Australia. In addition to playful embodied activities, ranging from face-painting to dressing up, we experimented with curating our self-representations in a web-space, an exhibition, a zine and a World Café (Brown and Isaacs, 1995; Hurley & Brown, 2009). I describe these in more detail elsewhere (Vivienne, 2018). The Stories Beyond Gender initiative was funded by the Department of Communities and Social Inclusion as community and cultural development, with objectives articulated in arts, health and social change. The initiative is an illustration of everyday activism in which participants hope to catalyse social change (a notably difficult to quantify concept) through sharing their personal stories in public spaces. Qualitative analysis of storytelling, combined with rich detail described in

Figure 3. *The Advocate* reports on TSA policy in 2015.

interviews, offers some measure of impact; however, perhaps more recognisably, social change was quantitatively evident in substantial law and reform that took place in South Australia during the period of the workshops. While it is virtually impossible to causally correlate story-sharing with legislative change, this was nevertheless a strategy widely used by the queer and gender-diverse community in campaigns for changes to IVF laws, recognition of same-sex parents and gender-change on birth certificates, and most recently marriage equality (which was finally achieved in Australia in late 2017).

In terms of personal change, I might also add that my role in facilitating workshops and inter-views allowed me space to affirm my own gender identity, and in 2016, I took advantage of legisla-tive change to become one of the first people in South Australia to change their birth certificate and passport to 'non-binary' and 'X', respectively, notably without the requirement of onerous medical intervention or lengthy approval processes.

Embodied #enby – sharing stories of boundary crossing

Shortly after acquiring my non-binary passport, I travelled to the United States to attend several conferences. I had read the online accounts of gender-diverse people speaking of their fears in crossing national borders of countries where their gender identity was 'unauthorised'. In many stories, their visible 'trans-ness' attracted affronting queries and intrusive body searches. In par-ticular, I was captured by a 2015 article in *The Advocate* (Ennis, 2015) on contentious TSA policy (Figure 3).

Essentially, 'transportation security officers' make an assumption of gender based on external normative presentation, in combination with a binary gender category noted in one's passport. If there is an 'anomaly' (e.g. a person with an 'M' in their passport appears female or vice versa), the security officer is entitled to undertake an invasive and time-consuming body search. Previously, as a person with an 'F' in my passport, the fact that my body scans female, with notably absent penis, rolled in my favour. Now accompanied by an 'X', which is not a gender category currently available in the United States, I wondered what gender presentation – masculine or feminine – might be cause for 'alarm'. I worried about conflict and missing my flight connections. Despite these concerns, I was buoyed by awareness of my relative privilege and the safety net I could invoke if need be. I am white, amicable, well educated, of average appearance, and mostly clean and tidy. While conforming to neither male or female gender presentation may be cause for confusion, triggering alarm, these privileges roll in my favour.

I blogged about the experience of travelling overseas with a non-binary passport as an interesting case study in post-digital post-gender ways of being, and a manifestation of everyday activism. My body is rendered digital via data records of my gender identity while a body scan produces a digital trace. However, I am not wholly constituted by that shadow, that data or my physical body – rather, I am all of these things. My presence at the borders between countries catalyses new awareness of gender complexity among fellow passengers, airline staff (am I 'ma'am', 'sir' or – my preference – 'doctor') and security personnel. It also generates responses in my body: fear, excitement, anger, tiredness. I transition back and forth across borders between genders and between worlds, but am I 'trans' enough? When and how do I 'pass' and when should I step up and call out incorrect assumptions of my identity?

While travelling, I had the opportunity to facilitate a group discussion on this very topic. It was attended by around 30 people, consisting of young and old, transgender, cisgender and in between, as well as allies, partners, parents and friends. To my delight, the session illustrated the many ways by which we all resist and conform to other people's assessments of our identities. Parents of trans kids, for example, reported experiencing guilt when they allowed other parents to assume their child was cisgender. Similarly, trans activists felt guilt when, in everyday environments like supermarkets, they were read as cisgender. The similar ways in which we all choose to challenge or comply with expectations, depending on context, evoke our familiarity with multiple and fluid self-representations. While the conference took place in a physical space, the Washington Convention Centre in Seattle, there is an online trace of discussions in an archived conference website, my blog, tweets and other participants' vlogs, and the new Facebook friendships that emerged. I argue that these networks, and the continual navigation of borders that shift, are key components of post-gender, post-digital ways of being, catalysed and archived by social media and digital tools.

Digital storytelling vs social media storytelling

My overseas conference presentations focused on the specific affordances of digital and social media storytelling for gender-diverse people in the Stories Beyond Gender initiative, and in the following I outline some differences and similarities in these forms.

In its traditional workshop-based format, Digital Storytelling produces a brief (2–4 minutes) rich-media (narration, music, images or video, sound effects) story. These stories are finite, with a beginning, middle and end. As narratives, they aim to be affective (and often persuasive) and coherent, in order to appeal to the widest possible audience. They are therefore limited by their inability to be updated with emergent identities – or, as Giddens (1991) puts it, as 'ongoing' stories of self:

> The existential question of self-identity is bound up with the fragile nature of the biography which the individual 'supplies' about herself. A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor – important though this is – in the reactions of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going. The individual's biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing 'story' about the self. (p. 54)

In earlier work, Goffman (1963) highlights the difficulties of inhabiting an identity (or identities) that fall outside a social understanding of 'normal', and notes that they are frequently disqualified from social acceptance. Not only are gender-diverse people stigmatised by not conforming with gender stereotypes, we are held to impossible standards of coherence. Unlike transition from child to teen to adult, in which one might 'normally' perform wildly incoherent versions of self, gender transition, or refusing classification, or moving back and forth across categories, is not 'typical'. Giddens' later work, while focusing primarily on sexuality rather than gender, nevertheless highlights the possibility of alternate social conventions that are more accepting of difference:

> A combination of imbalanced power and engrained psychological dispositions keeps dualistic sex divisions quite firmly in place; but in principle matters could be organised quite differently … Sex differences will continue for at least the near future to be linked to the mechanisms of the reproduction of the species; but there is no longer good reason for them to conform to a clear break in behaviours and attitudes. Sexual identity could become formed through diverse configurations of traits connecting appearance, demeanour and behaviour. The question of androgyny would be settled in terms of what could be justified as desirable conduct–and nothing else. (Giddens, 1992: 199)

The matter of how androgyny might be performed in a socially acceptable manner (and here I recall my concern of how to be 'read' as non-binary in order to not cause alarm at US border control) was not adequately resolved by either Giddens or Goffman. They were, of course, also writing at a time that pre-dated the Internet, which has afforded greater visibility of multiple selves and proliferating categories of gender.

My point here is that compared with traditional digital storytelling, social media storytelling takes place in multiple forms and spaces. A burgeoning body of Internet scholarship examines the ways in which people perform different aspects of self simultaneously across different platforms. Increasingly, young people restrict their Facebook status updates to material that is palatable to family members, while Twitter is in some cases reserved for political interests, and Tumblr has a reputation for being queer friendly and a space for discussing social justice issues. It would be a harsh critic indeed who considered these presentations of self as inconsistent or incoherent. Furthermore, the concept of the filter bubble highlights the ways that the same platform might appear completely different depending on who one follows – for example, Tumblr is also known for amateur porn and NSFW (not safe for work) content. Consequently, social media storytelling is by nature fragmented and always partially concealed, affording both pseudonymous self-representation and carefully curated versions of the self. The potential to only reveal the best aspects of the self often manifests in arguments that hold social media to be 'inauthentic', but I argue that notions of authenticity are themselves out-dated. Authenticity is merely tenor or tone of voice rather than a demonstrable inner truth, and like post-structuralism, social media reveals the significance of context as an arbiter of 'truth'. In being intentionally incoherent, social media storytelling celebrates the complex and always-becoming fluidity of contemporary life.

Case study: stories beyond gender as web space exhibition and zine

As a case study, Stories Beyond Gender is an exemplar of post-gender post-digitality. Here I wish to explore the multiple forms and spaces utilised by the storytellers who were involved sporadically over an 18-month period. Early workshops explored the intersections of self-representation online and in person, and consider differences and similarities with trans* and gender-diverse representations mediated by mainstream media. Caitlyn Jenner, Jazz Jenner, Aidan Dowling and Laverne Cox were of particular interest as celebrities who engaged actively on social media. As a group, we explored platforms and devices that were new to some of us, and after a phase of initial curiosity, in which participants set up profiles on Tumblr, Instagram and Twitter, most people returned to familiar places and Facebook dominated. After some time and a variety of creative activities, including making short vox pop videos, and writing songs, poems, short stories and twitter *haiku*, it was collectively decided that we needed one space to archive our work. We researched cheap or free web-design platforms like Wordpress, Blogger, Ning, Wix and Weebly in search of a 'skin' that was elegant and easy to use by a variety of bloggers and audience members. In this move, it is interesting to note our shift from somewhat chaotic, difficult-to-search 'incoherence' towards a curated, yet complex and diverse, single space.

Much later in the workshop process, following some regional outreach and collective facilitation of a World Café, participants discussed other ways by which our creative works and storytelling might be distributed to audiences. In person, our acquaintances responded positively to our web space but few ever posted comments, and many storytellers were frustrated by a lack of affirmation. 'It feels like we're yelling into a void', was a comment that was widely agreed upon. We decided to produce a zine version of our artworks and launch it at an exhibition, to coincide with the annual Feast Festival of queer culture and community in Adelaide. In a transition from born-digital creations, this iteration involved cutting and pasting printed photocopies, or framing photographic prints of our work, and all the incumbent issues of resolution, aspect ratios and file formats.

Despite the barriers presented by the 'making material' of our digital artefacts, we found that the experience of walking side by side with audience members through a curated exhibition of our anecdotes, or hearing their accounts of sharing the zine with friends or family members, offered us a completely different sense of connection with audience. Here, we were drawn back to analysis of the digital dualisms that we hoped we had surpassed; material representations are, of course, different from virtual ones, but we wondered why the differences (and similarities) are significant. This is a question I still find difficult to answer and, as always, the response depends on context. What is the purpose of the connection – is it targeted and persuasive, or accidental and arbitrary? Are the impacts on audience members measurably different? In the following, I turn to analysis of one particular example of a meme that was created in the Stories Beyond Gender workshops.

Funny mirrors

One of the Stories Beyond Gender activities focused on memes as a means of disseminating ideas that challenge overly simplistic renditions of gender. Sarah K. Reece (2013) produced several images that they shared online initially, and later printed for the exhibition and zine (Figure 4).

We approached meme-making by trialling a variety of free apps that allow for a simple overlay of text on image. While we discussed the ways in which humour (a typical element of memes) might support virality, in this instance we were less concerned with facilitating the movement of an image across broad audiences (which is uncontrollable in many ways) than with the production of a beautiful artefact that was pleasing to the storytellers. Again, it is interesting to note that the parameters of 'success' are retained by the artist rather than measured by audience impact.

Figure 4. *Funny Mirrors*, created by Sarah K. Reece.

Sarah's simple close-up of an eye (Figure 4) is confronting when viewed on a large scale in an exhibition, especially when positioned alongside actual mirrors that reflect attendees passing by. Sarah's textual challenge invites viewers to consider the ways we construct our understandings of self through imagining how other people see us, and implies that this might not be the way we see ourselves. While a mirror reflection is presumed to be accurate, it is just one way of understanding self. Sarah's work is particularly interesting in that they identify as gender-queer, bisexual and multiple, and use they/them/their pronouns. A piece Sarah wrote to accompany their work in the exhibition states,

I understand my world through writing and art.

I share to break down stereotypes, to show that however strange someone like me may seem at first, I am like everyone else, simply human, facing all the same joys and challenges in my own way. I share to claim my own truths, tell my own stories, because people like me are so often voiceless, so often written about rather than heard.

I live openly as a multiple (a group of parts or selves) and am passionate about promoting inclusion, support and opportunities for people who experience multiplicity.

I'm openly bisexual/pansexual – this orientation persists despite the gender of whoever we are currently with, or when we are single! i.e we are not straight when with a guy, lesbian when with a chick, or asexual when single.

I have some unusual experiences around hearing voices and psychosis which I manage with intense art making, support at home, and a minimum of fuss. I used to collect diagnoses.

There's both a tension and a freedom in living so publicly. I know that some of who I am and what I've come through bewilders people. Without honesty, we're left with myths. I also know there are many people out

there with these experiences who feel the way I once felt – so profoundly alone it was like being the very last one of my species. Loneliness like that can be life-threatening. I challenge cultural taboos about what should remain private and unspoken, and in doing so other people find they are not the only one. This shifting of the ground between private and public, exploring taboos and exposing my very personal experiences in ways that support community and connection is a key aspect of my art practice. (Reece, 2013)

The complexity of Sarah's self-representation is evident in everything they create, and the rich depth of hyperlinks in a regularly updated and expansive website offers space to illustrate these intricacies. While Sarah has also featured in short video works akin to digital stories, these tend to focus on one aspect of their identity (e.g., their role as a mental health professional) or an issue, as in their recent TED X Adelaide talk, *Emotionally Safer Sex*. Importantly, it is all of these artefacts, en masse, that offer a nuanced insight into Sarah's identities, rather than any one image, blog post or video in isolation.

Significance: now and in future

Despite the possibilities of social media storytelling, the fragmented nature of dispersed content makes it difficult for an audience to discern a clear take-away meaning. On an individual level, fragmentation can be problematic for individuals because how can one sustain a unique 'brand' if identity is, in and of itself, complex and changing? Fragmentation may appear liberating for collectives who, under these circumstances, need not be constrained by agreement or unity, but there is a paradoxical difficulty in 'staying on message'.

Thus, while fragmented storytelling may allow for more diverse collective and personal representations, when lobbying for change the nature of prioritising particular issues or needs over others still leads back to divisiveness and discord. For example, in the recent marriage equality campaign in Australia (and previously in the United States and elsewhere), members of the queer community who were staunchly anti-marriage or in favour of polyamory were 'thrown under the bus' or silenced by campaigns that emphasised monogamy and family unity (Cheadle, 2013; Copland, 2015).

So how can social media storytelling be used effectively as a tool for everyday activism? Arguably, as in any complex discussion undertaken in any space – public or private – the onus can shift from the speaker to the listener when it comes to discerning connections between disparate points. While a speaker can summarise the through-line of a complex argument (or identity), an audience's capacity to understand that apparent inconsistencies may not be mutually exclusive will enhance their comprehension. In other words, opposing perspectives may coexist and, just like gender and the virtual/real divide, binary frameworks may not be the most useful structures for understanding complexity. A viewer at the second exhibition of Stories Beyond Gender, located in an urban community centre, frequented by participants in sewing, computing and English classes, noted the following in our visitors' book:

> This project sets up little islands of empathy giving visitors the chance to delve into various forms of the 'other' aside from mainstream gender identification until you may be brought to the question what does identity on this level do except plant you into forms of stratification and underlying alienation towards those who don't share your kind of identity …

'Little islands of empathy' speaks to the singularity of each artwork, each poem and each storyteller, as well as to the way they are geographically located within the same archipelago. This viewer also articulates something of the way the exhibition made them feel. They are prompted to

ponder nuances of gender and, as they move through the journey of the exhibition, they question the purpose of our routine and everyday meaning-making. Rather than binary simplicity, they seem to err towards multi-conceptual frameworks like interdisciplinarity and intersectionality, with their shared emphasis on the significance of relationality and context. Arguably, as in any complex discussion, the onus to discern connections between disparate points must shift from the speaker to the listener. Audience capacity to critique and evaluate may also rest upon capacity to understand that differences may not be mutually exclusive. In other words, opposing perspectives may coexist and, just like gender and the virtual/real divide, binary frameworks may not be the most useful structures for understanding complexity. As our exhibition viewer goes on to summarise, 'Finally all different forms of self blend into a wonderful kaleidoscope of variety, enriching your possibilities!'

Notably, our collective decision to replicate the born-digital creative content of Stories Beyond Gender as both zine and exhibition amplified audiences for our stories of gender diversity. The meaning made of these stories is arguably different according to where and when and how they are viewed. Here, I imagine the granular distinctions emerging not only from reaching different audiences, but also from special contexts. Viewing such stories in a community centre, compared with a queer cultural festival or a zine in your doctor's waiting room, or a website that you stumble upon or, alternatively, are directed to by an acquaintance, comes with context that adds a dimension or a flavour to the stories. This may seem self-evident; however, when considering the ways in which fragmented social media, as content, context and mode of storytelling, dominates our everyday lives with such ubiquity, the potential for increased understanding of identity as multiplicity becomes apparent.

Conclusion – new ways of being?

Significantly, the intersections between post-digital and post-gender ways of being that are evident in social media storytelling reveal the complications that are central to contemporary self-representation. When identities are judged by capacity to project 'authenticity', there is a tendency to occlude any aspects of self that might appear inconsistent. Hence, we see educators and recruitment specialists encouraging young people to 'clean up' or edit their social media profiles for audiences of the lowest common denominator and in order to be palatable to employers. This focus on a continuous and coherent self has dramatic and punitive repercussions for people who change dramatically throughout their life journeys – for example, people who transition gender, whether once, twice or routinely. As I noted earlier, while transitions from childhood to teen to adulthood, with all their incumbent experiments in identity, are deemed 'normal', other transitions across apparently finite categories invoke accusations of treachery and deceit. Can we imagine a world where change and multiplicity are celebrated? Registration forms might offer multiple categories for self-identification and service providers might engage with clients in a way that accommodates diversity from the very start. These imaginary futures catalyse a larger discussion about the value of categories and measurement, especially of difference' however, that is beyond the remit of this article. My argument here is less ambitious and instead draws attention to the new ways of being afforded by social media storytelling as a suite of practices that continue to evolve.

Acknowledgements

ORCID iD

Son Vivienne https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0467-0602

References

Brown J and Isaacs D (1995) 'World Cafe History'. Non-Profit Organisation. *The World Cafe*, 1995. Available at: http://www.theworldcafe.com/history.html.

Butler J (2004) *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge.

Cheadle H (2013) After gay marriage, why not polygamy? *Vice*, 30 March. Available at: https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/yv57em/after-gay-marriage-why-not-polygamy (accessed 2 February 2018).

Copland S (2015) Comment: If love is love, why exclude the polyamorous? *SBS*, 30 October. Available at: https://www.sbs.com.au/programs/article/2015/10/29/comment-if-love-love-why-exclude-polyamorous (accessed 2 February 2018).

Dvorsky G and Hughes J (2008) *Postgenderism: Beyond the Gender Binary*. Hartford, CT: Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies.

Ennis D (2015) Goodbye, 'anomaly' – TSA's new word for trans bodies is 'alarm'. *The Advocate*, 23 December. Available at: http://www.advocate.com/transgender/2015/12/23/goodbye-anomaly-tsas-new-word-trans-bodies-alarm (accessed 15 August 2017).

Giddens A (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity.

Giddens A (1992) *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Goffman E (1963) *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Hurley T.J, and Brown J (2009) 'Conversational Leadership: Thinking Together for a Change'. *The Systems Thinker* 20, no. 9: 2–7.

Isin E and Ruppert E (2015) *Being Digital Citizens*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.

Jurgenson N (2011) Digital dualism versus augmented reality. *The Society Pages*, 24 February. Available at: http://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2011/02/24/digital-dualism-versus-augmented-reality (accessed 20 November 2013).

Meadows D and Kidd J (2009) '"Capture Wales": The BBC Digital Storytelling Project'. In *Story Circle: Digital Storytelling Around the World*, edited by John Hartley and Kelly McWilliam, 91–117. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

McCosker A, Vivienne S and Johns A (eds) (2016) *Negotiating Digital Citizenship: Control, Contest, Culture*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Nicholas, L (2014) *Queer Post-Gender Ethics: The Shape of Selves to Come*. Genders and Sexualities in the Social Sciences. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Reece SK (2013) About Sarah K Reece. Available at: https://sarahkreece.com/about-sarah-k-reece (accessed 3 February 2018)

Vivienne S (2016) *Digital Identity and Everyday Activism: Sharing Private Stories with Networked Publics*. Communication for Social Change. London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Vivienne, S (2018) 'Between Firefighting and Flaming: Collective and Personal Trans* and Gender-Diverse Social Media'. In *Digital Intimate Publics and Social Media*, edited by Robards B, Dobson A, and Carah N. London, U.K: Palgrave Macmillan.