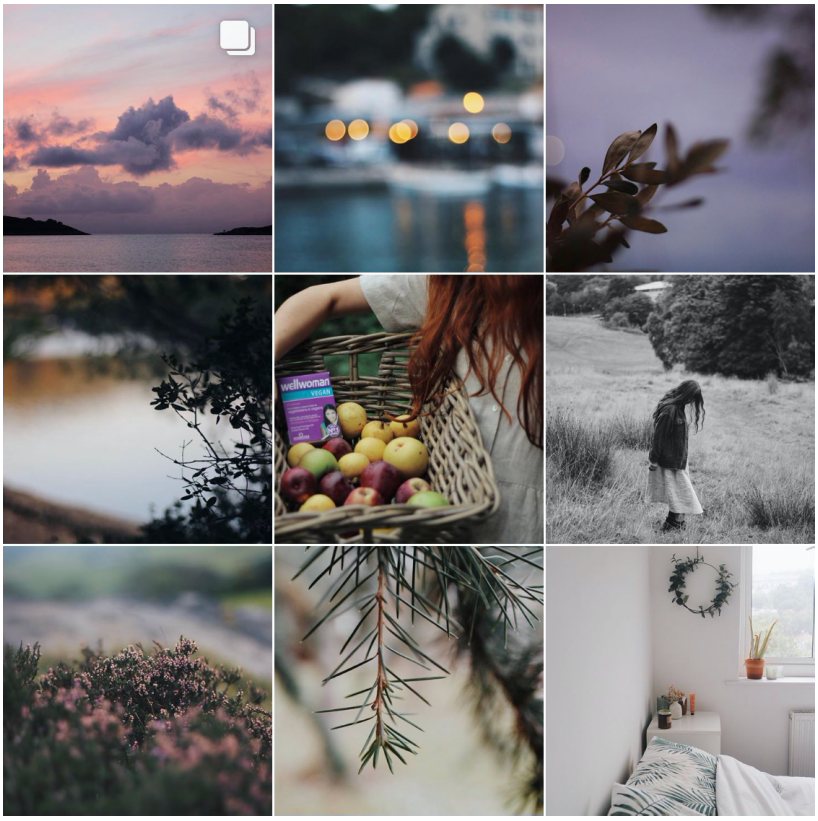


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Once upon a post: instagram as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity

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ONCE UPON A POST: INSTAGRAM AS A MEDIUM FOR STORYTELLING, CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND INTERACTIVITY

MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS AND CULTURE STUDIES

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Compulsory Plagiarism Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Date: 30 March 2021

Declaration by candidate for the degree of Masters in Arts

I, Lerato Tshabalala do hereby declare that I empower the University of Witwatersrand to produce, for the purpose of research, either the whole or any portion of the contents of my dissertation titled *Once Upon a Post: Instagram as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity*

Signature: 

Date: 30 March 2021

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Key Terms

Social Media: "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allow the creation and exchange of user generated content" (Dijck & Poell 2013: 8).

Instagram**:** Instagram is a mobile phone-based application that affords the creation and distribution of photos and videos within a social network (Becker, 2017).

Narrative: The devices and elements which are employed and work together to report a story (Fludernik, 2009).

Storytelling: The practice of selecting narrative elements and integrating them in order to communicate and report ideas, themes and beliefs to an audience (Fludernik, 2009).

Creative Expression: The use of artistic disciplines to communicate ideas, messages and experiences (Alexandra, 2008).

Interactivity: participation in an activity in such a way that the participating factors influence one another in their performance (Janlert & Stolterman, 2017).

Fiction: a detailed construction of an imaginary world (Ryan, 2007: 31).

Medium: Features and characteristics which describe the agency used to execute an idea (Manovich, 2017).

Platform: A virtual space that is based on technologies which provide a combination of other technologies, programmes and applications (Dijck & Poell, 2013).

Web 2.0: "Web 2.0 is a collection of open-source, interactive and user-controlled online applications expanding the experiences, knowledge and market power of the users as participants in business and social processes" (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008: 232).

Instagrammers: Individuals who create and distribute content on the Instagram platform.

Instagram followers: Individuals who consume and engage with content which is distributed on the Instagram platform.

Instagram users: Individuals who both create and consume content on the Instagram platform.

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Abstract

This study investigates Instagram as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity. Creative research was conducted by means of the creation of an Instagram account @pusuit4beaut which displayed narratives and content of creative expression which pertain to the desire for physical beauty in modern day society. This was a vehicle to investigate Instagram's image and video functions to explore the degree of concise narrativity and creative expression in content creation; storytelling aids; narrative structures and the affordances and limitations of interactivity on Instagram. The findings indicate that Instagram's image and video functions afford creative freedom in content creation and the concise narrativity is mostly informed by the limitations of durations of videos and the limitation of representations of scenes in images. Editing tools and Instagram Story filters aid in presenting narrative elements. The narrative structures are predominantly governed by Instagram's algorithm and interactive environment. Interactive functions alter the mechanics of content presentation and engagement.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Introduction

Since the advent of web 2.0, usage of the internet has increased rapidly. As time progressed, internet traffic continued to be saturated with video content. In 2013, it had already been predicted that by 2015, up to 90% of internet traffic would be from video content (Zhu & Li, 2013). Currently, the digital age has progressed to embrace video on demand (VoD) which was originally led by cable television and presented a variety of content for viewers to consume in their homes in the mid-70s (Mullen, 2003).

Video on demand is a system where viewers can select, amongst a wide selection of video entertainment content, what they want to watch and when they want to watch it. The digital age has enhanced VoD by having the selection of video content available across a variety of screen media, parallel to the evolutions of screen media and technological advancements.

Screen media have expanded beyond film and television screens to the variety of screen technologies currently available. Today, screen media include new media which are anchored by digital platforms. New media allows for video content to be shared and circulated on the internet, including internet technologies such as social media.

Social media are “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Dijck & Poell 2013: 8). The Web 2.0 is a virtual platform which affords the creation and distribution user- generated content (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). The creation and exchange of user-generated content has users sharing information among one another. This presents a community where users are interconnected with the reception and communication of dialogic information, thus identifying such media as social media. Social media platforms have exploded into scenes of everyday life and have become a part of daily routines in modern society.

People have their eyes on screens in the current digital age more than ever before. As a result, it is possible that there is a large audience available on social media platforms to engage and consume video content as the audio-visual has become the "language of the 21st century" (Gonzalez, 2014: 64).
Therefore, this study will discuss social media and explain their mechanics to provide context before offering an understanding of the social media platform, Instagram, as a medium for visual and audio-visual storytelling, creative expression and interactivity.

Social media

The way in which social media operates can partly be understood by comparing it to mass media logic. Mass media refers to diverse media which transmits information to a mass audience (Potter, 2020). This transmission of information is produced by media channels which are integrated into the everyday lives of a mass audience through technologies such as radio, television, newspapers etc. (Potter, 2020). The information shared with the audience contributes to the shaping of their knowledge and understanding of particular topics (Potter, 2020). Mass media operates by a set of principles created by media institutions which are reinforced and consequently become dominant in public spaces (Dijck & Poell, 2013). Mass media logic presents a central agency to distribute content in a way that defines the viewer's experience as a continuous linear flow of information. Media organisations are the producers of knowledge that is imparted to viewers whose response to the knowledge shared is restricted to channels such as writing a letter to a media organisation (Dijck & Poell, 2013). However, with social media, the flow of information is dialogic, and the production of knowledge is democratised. There is an exchange of information. All social media participants become both producers and recipients of information. Information is shared and interacted with, thus, presenting social networking in the forefront. This interactive nature of social media differentiates it from other media. In social media logic, mass media's one-way traffic between content creators and the audience is turned into a two - way traffic between users who are both creators and receivers of content (Dijck & Poell, 2013).

Social media's dialogical flow of information is shared by means of programmability. Programmability refers to the ability of a social media platform to guide its users'

interaction with information by means of calculated triggers (Dijck & Poell, 2013). Triggers are calculated with a coding system. Through a coding system, a social media platform receives and processes information, in accordance with users' interaction by the information displayed on the social media platform.
The social media platform is then able to adapt to the interactive behaviour of users by displaying information which matches their interactive behaviour pattern. Thus, with users' interactive behaviour patterns mapped out, the social media platform guides users according to the calculated possible interests and information that they are likely to engage with (Dijck & Poell, 2013).

While the social media platform maps out a guide which is suggestive of particular information, users may manipulate the information shared and steer the content by changing their interactive behaviour with the social media platform. The manipulation of information causes the social media platform to recalculate the interactive behaviour pattern and adapt to users' newly established interaction with the platform (Dijck & Poell, 2013).

Users are likely to have consistent interaction with social media applications, given that applications were first built on one of the most personal devices that people in modern society use every day; that is, cell phones. In 2008, iPhone 2.0 presented the first ever 'App store' on a cellular device, where cell phone users could install third party applications without connecting to the computer (Miles, 2014).

Applications (popularly referred to as "apps") are programmes that are designed for users by third parties, i.e., Microsoft, Instagram and Facebook. There are a wide range of applications each of which poses as a programme that carries additional functions to be used on a technological device. Each application presents a distinct programme where there are technological operations that are employed by users. Applications played a large part in revolutionising the iPhone (with 1 billion applications downloaded in the first year) and the rise of social media (Miles 2014).

The application which will be used in this study is Instagram. The technical developments of the iPhone and rise of applications has afforded the development of Instagram. However, this study will not be focusing on the technical developments of

technologies or devices generally but will focus specifically on the affordances of Instagram as a platform for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity.

The ability to use Instagram to create and creatively express messages and narratives has influenced how individuals collect and share images and videos (Becker, 2017). Therefore, Instagram can be explored as a space for the creation and distribution of narratives and the creative expression of messages, ideas and experiences.

The idea of Instagram as a narrative platform has been investigated in scholarly works with the acknowledgement of its storytelling tools and affordance for creative expression for various purposes such as branding, promotion, and documentation. However, scholarly work pertaining to Instagram's storytelling and creative functions displays little focus on Instagram's position as a location for overtly *fictional* narratives and expressions as a product of entertainment content within VoD discourses in the Digital Age.

Currently, VoD discourses, in the evolution of the entertainment industry, place a greater concentration on streaming services such as Netflix. This study inserts storytelling, creative expression and interactive technologies of Instagram into the conversation about entertainment content in VoD.

Introduction to Instagram

Instagram is a photo and video-based application where users share moments of their days, thoughts, memories, and interests in the form of a visual display of photographs and videos. Instagram founders, Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, focused on building an application where people can explore their creativity as well as document moments of their everyday life by capturing it all on their mobile phone camera (Manovich 2017). The primary philosophy of Instagram is to capture moments which contribute to visual culture, while users are mobile. This is reflected in the Instagram logo illustrated below, which references a polaroid camera and connotes instant mobile photography and documentation.



Instagram logo

The release of Instagram on the 6th of October 2010 revolutionised image making, visual culture and photography. An Instagram user can capture, edit, and publish their own images. Therefore, the different roles of image making and distribution from 19th and 20th century photography have been conflated into one application (Manovich, 2017).

Users can edit the pictures and videos which they choose to share, as well as add captions. A caption is a piece of writing that is coupled with a photo or video to further articulate thoughts or information pertaining to that picture or video. Captions may also be presented in the form of hashtags. Hashtags are words or phrases, preceded by the hash sign (#) which Instagram uses to categorise the content and activities of users into specific subject topics or to group similar interests. This categorisation is achieved through an algorithmic system. Instagram sets up its algorithmic system by suggesting sets of coded instruction which shapes how users relate and interact with the platform (Miles, 2014). Examples of these coded instructions are liking, tagging, and sharing.

Users may strategically engage in Instagram's coded instructions, thus manipulating algorithmic mechanisms, for example by liking particular content. If an Instagrammer manipulates the algorithms by concentrating on engaging with particular content to lift their visibility on the platform, he or she may gain popularity (Dijck & Poell, 2013). An Instagrammer can be considered as popular on the Instagram platform by the observation of the number of followers and engagement with his or her content.

An Instagrammer's multiple followers and frequent interactivity and engagement with his or her content presents a potentially large audience in the Instagram network.

Businesses have identified this opportunity of a large audience as an instant reach to their markets and therefore implement it in their marketing strategies. Businesses that wish to market their products and give their business exposure, identify Instagrammers who have a large following and high engagement with his or her content (Dijck & Poell, 2013). A large following presents wide reach into the market while high engagement presents a substantial traffic flow for consumers to come into contact with the advertised product. There is no set number of followers or level of engagement that an Instagrammer needs to have in order to be approached by businesses for promotional purposes (Dijck & Poell, 2013). Each business decides which Instagrammers to approach according to the needs and goals of the business. Businesses pay these users to promote their business on the users' Instagram account (Dijck & Poell, 2013). The payments vary according to the agreements made between the Instagrammer and the business. Through the promotions facilitated by Instagrammers, businesses are potentially able to gain profits in the form of sales from the advertised content due to the penetration into a potentially large market presented by the Instagrammer's wide reach of Instagram followers and influence on the Instagram platform (Dijck & Poell, 2013). In turn, Instagrammers are remunerated for their participation in businesses' marketing strategies (Dijck & Poell, 2013). Therefore, Instagram is not only a channel for sharing pictures, videos and 'connecting' with others but has also evolved into a potential remuneration opportunity for Instagrammers as they partner with businesses.

The evolutions of Instagram have been in accordance with how people have embraced its affordances strategically (e.g., from documenting to marketing). However, mobile technologies serve as the foundation of the affordances of Instagram as a social media platform.

History of Instagram

Instagram was first created for the iPhone after Apple released their iPhone 4 in June 2010. The iPhone 4 had both a front and back camera (480 pixels and 5MP respectively) which was a high - resolution camera for mobile phones at the time (Manovich, 2017).

As Instagram capitalised on its revolutionary image making nature, magnifying iPhone's camera feature, consumers began to pay closer attention to the importance of mobile camera features (Manovich, 2017). The use of Instagram gave them a new incentive for investing in mobile camera quality: the key to participate in image-making discourses presented by Instagram's revolutionary culture production and visual culture. In 2012, Instagram became available on Android Smartphones (Manovich, 2017). Consequently, smartphone designs of different brands displayed the focus on quality back and front cameras.

By 2015, 3.4 billion subscriptions for smartphones were reported globally. In 2016, 2.5 trillion photos were taken and shared on Instagram with 90% of these photos taken with a smartphone. The projected number of smartphone subscriptions in 2021 is 6.4 billion or 70% of the world's population (Manovich, 2017).

Instagram also developed a limited interface website that is available for tablets and Windows 10 (Manovich, 2017). However, for the purposes of this study, the focus will be on Instagram as a mobile application.

Even though Instagram was created for the purposes of taking photos on mobile phones on the go, people have found ways to capture photographs outside of the Instagram platform with photography equipment which is more sophisticated than the cell phone camera such as professional cameras and photographic lighting equipment. These images are then transferred to their mobile devices for distribution, on the Instagram Mobile Application (Manovich, 2017). Taking edited and refined photographs which were captured with sophisticated photography equipment outside of the Instagram Application, which presents the cell phone camera as the only photography equipment necessary, and then posting those images on the Instagram Mobile Application takes away the essence of Instagram founders, Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger's philosophy of taking pictures on the go and sharing the authentic everyday experience (Manovich, 2017). However, due to the prospect of commercial advertising, which is engrained into the current philosophy of Instagram, users have created content with the effort to attract other users and advertisers to their profile beyond the casual documentation of everyday

moments. Thus, the moments captured shift from authentic to performed or staged and have an emphasis on aesthetics.

Instagram aesthetics are grounded in simplicity which draws on the ‘effortless’, ‘in the moment’ quality of its origin. As users paired the simple nature of Instagram along with paying close attention to aesthetics, the visual language of Instagram became more pronounced. The visual language of Instagram draws on ‘simplicity and effortlessness’ (Manovich, 2017).

The visual language of Instagram has been seen to influence other visual mediums. An example of this is seen in lifestyle magazine *Kinfolk*. *Kinfolk* was established in 2011 and is a typical example of Instagram’s visual culture (Manovich, 2017). The magazine displays a focus on an intentional ‘pause in a moment’ and displays a desirable version of “authenticity”. Staging authenticity in a more desirable and attractive way serves Instagram’s evolved philosophy of images captured ‘in the moment’ while keeping images appealing for a marketing agenda.

The capturing and documentation of images is Instagram’s prime function as it was its only function when it was created. (Manovich, 2017). In 2012, founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, bought Instagram and introduced the sharing of 60 second videos on Instagram in 2013 (Mattern, 2017). In 2016, the video functions included the sharing of 15 second videos, known as Instagram Stories, that other users can only view within 24 hours from the time that it was posted. Later that year, the feature of live videos was introduced (Belanche, et al., 2019). By 2018, Instagram videos uploaded from a mobile device could be up to 15 minutes long with the introduction of Instagram Television (IGTV) (Bromwich, 2018).

In April 2020, Zuckerberg announced his intentions for Instagram’s video functions to progress to the inclusion of group video calls of up to 50 callers. This was in response to the physical distancing precautions advised due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, with the aim to keep people connected (Cruze, 2020).

With social media applications such as Instagram, people can stay connected beyond physical restrictions and geographical borders. However, there are people who are excluded and disconnected from the social network of the web 2.0 due to a 'digital divide'.

The Global Digital Divide

Instagram users create a social network where they can engage with one another and share content that exceeds the barriers of distance and international borders. However, this social network and information shared is limited to individuals who have access to web 2.0. Due to unequal access to web 2.0, there is a disparity between individuals who have access to web 2.0 and those who do not. The differentiating gap between those who have access to the internet and those who do not have or have restricted access to the internet, contributes to a digital divide (Chen & Wellman, 2004).

A Digital Divide is the division of individuals from regions who have access to the internet and modern technologies and those who do not have or have restricted access to the internet and modern technologies (Chen & Wellman, 2004). This disparity is caused by socio-economic, technological, and linguistic factors, which differentiate the ability of regions to participate in the Information Age and regions that are disadvantaged in their participation (Chen & Wellman, 2004). The Information Age refers to an era where the access and retrieval of information through computer technologies has been presented in the forefront of economic and commercial activities (Castells, 2009).

There are challenges which present a disadvantage to groups attempting to participate in the Information Age. The high cost of internet access, the lack of technological infrastructure and/or support, and the dominance of the English language employed in technological communications serves as some of the barriers for disadvantaged communities (Chen & Wellman, 2004). The English language has been found to be the most dominant language used for the internet (Bokor, 2018). Invariably, the dominance of the English language on the internet excludes non-English-speaking people from full participation in the global internet network.

The digital divide indicates the broader context of the social and economic relationships between countries. In the earlier stages of the Information Age (2001), 60% of the USA population were already internet users compared to only 1.5% of Africa's population. (Chen & Wellman, 2004). The social and economic relations between countries take the form of a centre- periphery order, having the USA as the developed, metropolitan centre and less developed countries in the periphery (Chen & Wellman, 2004). There is a large difference between the resources available to developed countries that are at the core of the global internet network, and less developed countries which are consequently placed in the periphery, due to the lack of resources and skills to impactfully penetrate the Information Age.

Colonisation presented an unequal distribution of quality education, infrastructure, and skills. In present times, underdeveloped countries that were affected by the implementations of colonisation have consequently begun their efforts for internet penetration from a disadvantaged position. Therefore, the access to Information Technology as well as digital literacy skills borders on racial lines and the exclusion of previously disadvantaged groups. However, even within countries a digital divide can exist as the modern technological resources and infrastructures for internet penetration are distributed unequally across the country (Chen & Wellman, 2004). Therefore, there are groups within a country who have access to these modern technologies and those who do not. Within countries there are regions which are more developed than others and there are people from different socio-economic backgrounds, age groups and genders where different groups of people are presented with different opportunities (Acilar, 2011). Therefore, there is an inconsistency in the access of technological resources and infrastructure across a country.

Digital Divide in Sub- Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africans need to be able to have the technology available for them to diversify their modes of communication to digital connectivity. There needs to be an increase in the availability of smartphones and computers in homes and schools. The Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) collected data on the availability of radio, television, and computers in primary schools within 14 Sub- Saharan African countries in 2007 (Wallet, 2015). A sample

covering all regions of the 14 countries was used to collect the data. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) was shown to be scarce in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe did not have ICT available in more than 25% of primary schools. However, South Africa, Botswana and Namibia showed results of having more than 60% of primary schools that have access to ICT. Mauritius and Seychelles are in the lead with more than 90% of their primary schools accessing the internet (Wallet, 2015). The unequal access of ICT in Sub-Saharan African schools contributes to a digital divide across the African continent.

The use of ICT requires a secure energy source (Wallet, 2015). There are Sub-Saharan countries which have little electricity coverage. In 2013, The Central African Republic had close to 0% electricity coverage in schools. Burundi, Madagascar, Sierra, Leone, Niger, and Uganda had less than 5% electricity coverage, while South Africa had an average of 96% electricity coverage in its schools (Wallet 2015). The statistics above illustrate that there is a great digital divide within Sub-Saharan Africa. Gathering systematic data which aids the observation of the digital divide continues to be a challenge because some countries do not present the recording of ICT usage data as a priority and may also have limited resources to document such data (Wallet, 2015).

Systematic data collection that a country invests in could possibly indicate the country's priorities. According to UNESCO statistics, Sub-Saharan African countries place a focus on other objectives, consequently keeping ICT as a low priority (Wallet, 2015). An example of one of their prioritised objectives is to get more children into schools and give them better quality education by way of teacher training (Wallet, 2015).

However, it is important that Sub-Saharan countries invest in e-learning for students to establish digital literacy and decrease the Sub-Saharan digital divide. The African Union Development Agency (NEPAD) discovered that 55% of the secondary school learners who were part of the NEPAD e- schools initiative had no computer literacy (Wallet, 2015). The students' schools did not provide computer learning skills for students or for teacher training (Wallet, 2015).

Improving the digital literacy of disadvantaged groups in Sub- Saharan Africa can assist in having Sub-Saharan Africans being part of the internet network and discourses which circulate networks formed on the internet, such as the social media network. When previously disadvantaged groups, such as Africans, can participate in conversations in the social media network, hegemony is reduced, and multiple narratives and creative expressions are shared through social media's interactive technologies (Becker, 2017).

Instagram is a social media platform where users show a diversity of global narratives and creative expressions through images of their local streets, food, fashion, and lifestyle (Becker, 2017). Content that Instagrammers create, and share is read in a series of images and videos. These shared narratives and creative expressions communicate Instagrammer's lives, experiences, interests and passions. With the use of images and videos Instagrammers are able to share stories and ideas with the Instagram community who serve as the Instagrammer's audience. Therefore, Instagram serves as a storytelling and creative expression agent.

Aims

This study is aimed at investigating Instagram as a storytelling medium for fictional narratives. Hence, it will explore and investigate:

(a) how image and video functions on Instagram may serve as a product for creative expression and concise narrativity. Concise narrativity pertains to the ability to tell a clear story in summary, essentially making the story meaningful yet brief. Instagram's limited durations of videos and captured scenes in an image inform the way in which a story is reported. Instagram's image and video functions are accompanied by creative functions, therefore

(b) Instagram's functions such as boomerang, music filters, captioning and other editing tools will be investigated as storytelling and creative expression aids in content creation, and

(c) the kind of narrative structures which are informed by the presentation of the image and video functions. The structure of a narrative informs the way in which meaning is derived. The way in which meaning and information is shared and created on Instagram centres around interactivity. The interactive nature of

Instagram is a defining difference between Instagram as a medium and other storytelling media. Therefore,
(d) the degree to which interactivity may affect how the content is presented to others and the limitations of interactivity will be investigated. When content is shared on Instagram, the content travels through the engagement of other users as it circulates in the Instagram network. The way in which the story circulates may affect the way it is presented to others.

Rationale

Social media has become a mode of creating and sharing information that is harnessed into an active discourse which produces narratives. As a scholar in the art of storytelling, in this study I am interested in investigating new ways of creating and sharing stories as well as engaging in the creation of creative expression while adapting to technological developments of the world. The creation and production of narratives and creative expression through social media will be explored. In the past, the creation and distribution of content through a screening medium, such as film and television, to reach a mass audience was costly. With social media it is easier and more affordable to reach a mass audience. For this reason, social media has been chosen as the platform to conduct this study.

Social media is a part of the 21st century screening industry where content has been created for consumption on social media platforms. Digitally informed platforms have presented a greater value proposition in advertising than traditional television advertising avenues. Digital advertising revenue exceeded television's revenues from advertising in 2016 and overtook television revenues globally in 2017 (Cunningham & Craig, 2019). The success of digital platforms has introduced the revolution of entertainment content.

The production of entertainment content has been revolutionised as it is not just limited to professionally generated content, but amateurs are able to contribute to entertainment content production on social media platforms. The success of amateur content creators in their creation of content for social media has afforded them recognition that places content creators next to established players in Hollywood. Hence in 2017, a billboard on the Sunset Strip that was commonly known for the

display of Hollywood stars since the golden age of Hollywood, was promoting a YouTube documentary (Cunningham & Craig, 2019).

Thus, amateur content creators have metamorphosised into professionals of a proto industry; that is, social media entertainment. Social media entertainment is an industry where the intersection of communicative technologies and the affordances on social media to produce and distribute content has birthed a dynamic screen ecology which is founded on interactive technologies, strategies of fan-base creation, and the importance of viewer, audience, and community engagement (Cunningham & Craig, 2019).

Content creators in social media entertainment employ new entertainment methods, by means of producing and distributing content on social media platforms, as well as communicative strategies to potentially develop sustainable businesses (Cunningham & Craig, 2019).

Content creators with a large audience on social media receive remuneration for their labour in content production and distribution (Cunningham & Craig, 2019). The content created is commodified as businesses and brands approach content creators to imbed the brand's marketing agenda into user-generated content (Cunningham & Craig, 2019). With the effective persuasive power and mass audience that social media has, businesses have engrained social media into their marketing strategies.

Some South African businesses have also identified the marketing opportunities which social media present as the use of social media in South Africa continues to grow (Budree, et al., 2019). South Africa is one of the countries in the lead with the most mobile social networking users in Africa (Budree, et al., 2019). Social media applications are the most downloaded applications on major application stores in South Africa which shows the growing usage of social media in South Africa (Budree, et al., 2019). With the growing usage of social media there is the growth of a market for South African businesses to penetrate with social media marketing with the influence of South African Instagrammers with a wide reach of potential consumers.

South Africa's high earning Instagrammers include TV personality, actress, rapper, and businesswoman, Boitumelo Thulo, commonly known as Boity. Boity has a following of 4,6 million Instagram users (Instagram, 2021). According to *Sunday World* newspaper, Boity charges R68 000 per Instagram post for advertisers, as of February 2020 (Malatji, 2020). Make-up artist and award-winning content creator, Mihlali Ndimase, has a following of 1,3 million, on Instagram, charging advertisers R25 000 per Instagram post (Magadla, 2019). In 2017, YouTube had more than 300 million content creators who were remunerated for their content globally (Cunningham & Craig, 2019).

The global growth of content creators in the social media entertainment industry marks a paradigm shift in cultural production. It has presented changes in content production and has influenced trends across media industries to integrate digital technology and social networking practices into screen media. Social media entertainment has also presented an "interdependent clash on industrial cultures" (Cunningham & Craig, 2019: 33). It has altered business' marketing strategies across industries and encouraged hybrid products of entertainment, digital culture, social networking, marketing, and information.

The social media entertainment industry is a newly established industry, at a little over 10 years old, commonly marked by the acquisition of YouTube by Google in 2006 (Cunningham & Craig, 2019). Due to the infancy of the industry and the paradigmatic shift it has created in cultural production, I would like to contribute to the research of this newly established field. As a scholar of interdisciplinary arts and culture studies, who has intentions of entering the professional field of storytelling through entertainment formats, I am interested in the trajectory of cultural production and its current trends.

Social media entertainment is seen through various social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. However, Instagram is the fastest growing social media platform (Becker, 2017). Facebook is the most popular social media platform, globally (Fuchs, 2017). However, Instagram is growing at a rate which is twice as fast as Facebook. There are well over 800 million active Instagram users globally

(Cunningham & Craig, 2019). In the interest of current trends in cultural production, Instagram's title of 'the fastest growing application' presents it as a relevant platform to study. Instagram is an application which is centred around images, videos, and which capitalizes on visual presentation. Visual content on social media is 40 times more likely to be shared (Social Media College, 2018). Hence, Instagram serves as an appropriate social media platform to investigate affordances of visual storytelling.

The introduction and understanding of Instagram have been discussed in this chapter and the aims of the investigation of Instagram's affordances for visual storytelling have been outlined. The following chapter will present discussions on existing literature on user-generated content, social media and social media storytelling which serves as the literature review of this study. The literature review is followed by the theoretical framework of this study that is underpinned by Gibson's theory of affordances and limitations, and Performance Theory.

Through the lens of Gibson's theory of affordances and limitations, and Performance Theory, the study will be conducted through a creative practice which will be described in the methodology.
The limitations and ethical considerations of the methodology will also be discussed in this chapter.

In chapters three to five the findings of from the execution of the study are outlined and discussed. In the third chapter, narratology is discussed as an introduction to the findings of Instagram's affordances and limitations in the creation of concise narratives and creative expression with the use of Instagram's creative functions. This is followed by the fourth chapter which presents the discussion of findings pertaining to narrative structures in the creation of narratives using Instagram's image and video functions. The final chapter of findings is the fifth chapter where the affordances and limitations of interactivity in the presentation of content is discussed.

The study concludes with chapter six where a reflection of the study and conclusion of the findings is provided.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

With Instagram growing rapidly, more users are being integrated into the discourses involving visual production (Becker, 2017). The visual conversation is hosted by the network of creation and distribution of information in the form of visual narratives within the Instagram community (Becker, 2017). The creation and sharing of visual information are afforded by Instagram's image and video functions. The distribution of images and videos on Instagram serves as the content which users consume. Content is the agent through which information is created and distributed on social media platforms.

The content that is created and distributed on social media platforms by users of these platforms is referred to as user-generated content. The beginning of user-generated content is commonly marked by the first YouTube video created and shared by YouTube co-founder, Jawed Karim in 2005. Karim's video presented a low resolution, amateurly shot, 18 second video of himself at the zoo (Karim, 2005). This video introduced the rise of YouTube which was then purchased by Google in 2006 (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009). The acquisition of YouTube, by Google was announced by the other two co-founders of YouTube, Steve Chen and Chad Hurley, who presented the announcement by means of a YouTube video (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009). The videos created by co-founders of YouTube, Karim, Chen and Hurly video set the example of self- producing and distributing videos to communicate with a network of users: the YouTube community (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009).

The popularity of the YouTube videos by Karim, Chen and Hurley created a dramatic spike in people's interest in YouTube. YouTube users had content creation democratised; businesses had opportunity for wide-spread advertising and professional producers were able to extend their audiences by distributing trailers, teasers and behind the scenes footage of their productions. Thus, YouTube became both user-driven and industry-driven (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009).

The hybrid affordances of serving both the user and industries served as an intriguing factor of YouTube and social media platforms thereafter. The interest in social media as a platform, for user generated content and marketers' advertising, challenges traditional broadcasting and television (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009). User-generated content shifted the trajectory of entertainment and culture production.

The paradigm shift in digital culture

User- generated content became the "epitome of digital culture" (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009: 10). The crucial role of user-generated content in the growth of digital culture became so apparent that *Time Magazine* designated 'You' as the person of the year in 2006 (Dijck, 2009). This indicates that users have become recognised contributors to culture production. Users have contributed to culture production through their engagement with social media applications which afford for users to be both the creators and consumers of content. The kinds of content creation and consumption which social media affords differs according to the nature of the social media application. Some social media platforms present user-generated content which includes written texts, images and videos. In this study I will be focusing on image and video user-generated content presented by Instagram.

The influence of 20th century photography on Instagram photography

Instagram was created with a focus on mobile photography (Manovich, 2017). Therefore, the understanding of user-generated content on Instagram is central to photography history and culture. Instagram is part of contemporary visual media where distinct elements of 19th and 20th century photography have been combined and integrated into one application (Manovich, 2017). Even though this study does not focus on the technological device i.e., mobile phones, it is important to acknowledge that the conflation of 19th and 20th century photography has been made possible due to technological advancements prior to the development of Instagram application. The tools of photography i.e., the recording of images for future viewing, which were established in the 19th century, all exist within one place: the smartphone (Manovich, 2017). Similarly, the elements of 20th century photography were influenced by the technological devices of the time.

The Polaroid SX-70 camera which was produced between 1972 and 1981 influenced 20th century photography which has travelled into the 21st century's Instagram, by means of the display and exhibition of photos on the platform (Manovich, 2017). The Polaroid SX-70 produced instantly printed photos in square prints of one size, similarly to photos on Instagram where photos are shared instantly and are displayed in square frames of the same size (Manovich, 2017). Therefore, the Polaroid SX-70 camera contributed to the creation of Instagram's photo culture and is anchored further by the Instagram icon which is a polaroid camera (Manovich, 2017).

Another 20th century technological device in photography that influenced Instagram is the Kodachrome 35mm slides which were sold between 1936 and 1962 (Manovich, 2017). Kodachrome slides influenced the way photographs were shared (Manovich, 2017). Families and friends would gather to watch slideshows of memories as the small images on the Kodachrome slides were projected into large images on a blank wall or screen, creating a community to share and view images. (Manovich, 2017). The sharing and viewing of photographs in a community is similar to the way in which Instagram presents a social network i.e., the Instagram community who gather on the platform to share and view one another's photographs.

In addition to technologies' influence on photo culture is the visual language presented by a photo culture. A visual language can be understood as "systematic choices made on every visual dimension recognized as relevant for creators and audiences" (Manovich, 2017: 18). The subjects and styles presented in photographs are usually influenced by social, cultural and aesthetic values in a particular region or amongst particular groups of people (Manovich, 2017). In the approach to Instagram's visual language there are three types of styles which are influenced by the 20th century: professional, designed and casual photography (Manovich, 2017).

Both professional photography and designed photography are categorised as competitive photography (Manovich, 2017). The difference between professional photography and designed photography is that professional photography competes with other authors (e.g., commercial photographers) while designed photography

competes for consumers (Manovich, 2017). Designed photography was first introduced by advertising photography in the 1930s (Manovich, 2017). The competition for consumers has been inserted into Instagram's culture as there are users who create staged and styled content for a marketing agenda or for their content to be consumed by more users which results in the increase of Instagram followers.

The rules in the composition of professional photography pre-exists Instagram and are typical of 20th century professional photography. Such rules include having subjects well framed and displays attention to colour, lighting and focus in a photograph. With smartphones presenting camera functions which automatically apply the rules of 20th century photography, Instagram photography has been captured by smartphones. According to a study on the composition of Instagram photography it was seen that "bloggers' visual pattern of choice on Instagram corresponds to a wide shot with a full body view of the blogger against a significant background. The shot is taken at eye level angle and the predominant visual elements, the blogger and/or the product, are located in the centre of the photograph" (Ramos-Serrano & Martinez- Garcia, 2016: 1). However, A study conducted by new media author, Lev Manovich looked at 15 million images shared in 16 global cities worldwide between 2012 and 2015 and concluded that the most prevalent visual language within the Instagram community was the visual language of 'home mode' photography (Manovich, 2017).

Home mode photography is synonymous with casual photography and was introduced in 20th century photography (Manovich, 2017). Visual studies and photography scholar, Richard Chalfen introduced the 'home mode' concept in photography in his 1987 book *Snapshot versions of Life* (Manovich, 2017). Chalfen advocated for 'home mode' photography as photography which had a focus on traditional subjects such as birthdays or family holidays (Manovich, 2017). These photographs typically had subjects who were family or friends (Manovich, 2017). Therefore, the photographs were of people who were familiar with the photographer. With the introduction of the Brownie Kodak camera in the late 19th century, photography was democratised; therefore, photography was not restricted to professionals but could be practised by the 'everyday person' at home (Manovich,

2017). Chalfen referred to the participation in this amateur photography, during the time of the democratised home mode photography, as the ‘Kodak culture’ (Manovich, 2017).

The ‘home mode’ elements of the Kodak culture have influenced Instagram photography in the way in which the capturing and distribution of photographs is democratized on the Instagram platform while users predominantly share photos of life’s events that they spent with family and friends. Instagram’s tagging function anchors ‘home mode’s’ familiarity between the photographer and subjects in the photograph. Instagram’s tagging function allows Instagrammers to pin the names of the subjects in their photographs. In order for a subject to be tagged they should also be a part of the Instagram community. The difference between the ‘home mode’ of the 20th century and the ‘home mode’ of Instagram is that Instagram’s home mode has included food and objects (Manovich, 2017). Additionally, the authors of Instagram photographs range from authors in their teens to their 40s whereas the authors of 20th century photography were typically older (Manovich, 2017).

Even though ‘home mode’ is the most common visual language within the Instagram community, today, casual photographs are commonly styled with aesthetics in mind. Instagram’s evolved affordance for content creation with a marketing agenda results in Instagrammers creating content with the aim to appeal to users who are also a market for businesses. This influences the visual language on Instagram to take an approach which places importance on aesthetics (Manovich, 2017). Even if users are not creating content with a marketing agenda the discourses involving image production on Instagram have evolved to present the attention to aesthetics as a necessary aspect for members of the Instagram community to consider.

There is a vast amount of literature in sociology of culture which speaks of the connection between aesthetics preference and social status within a community (Manovich, 2017). This is not any different within the Instagram community. The aesthetic presence and choices which users make legitimizes their social status (Manovich, 2017). The approval of aesthetic presence is visible by the tracking of followers. The social network of the Instagram community acts as a system of feedback that responds to users’ aesthetic presence and choices in their activity on

the platform. Similarly, in all cultural domains, visual aesthetics and styles are the membership ticket to subcultures and signify their identity (Manovich, 2017).

In conclusion of Instagram's visual language, the casual 'home mode' language with the inclusion of aesthetics combines casual and styled approaches to Instagram photography. With the rules of well framed images, images created with the attention to colour, lighting and focus, as presented in professional photography, all three of the 20th century visual languages are presented in one photograph on Instagram. Therefore, Instagram's visual language is a combination of casual, styled and professional photography. These images enriched with visual languages have become an avenue of communication and connection within the Instagram network and has birthed an image culture within the Instagram community.

Image Culture on Instagram

Instagram images are posted by the constructed digital identities which cause Instagram images to be perceived as a "disembodied act of communication" to be widely shared with Instagram's social network (Bunce, et al., 2017: 106). Users' activities only materialize on the Instagram platform by performing these activities through their digital identities on the platform. Therefore, it is the documentation of events, by sharing images, which bears greater weight on the Instagram platform than the physical event. (Bunce, et al., 2017). Having the documentation of events be of greater importance on the Instagram platform than the physical event has led to the popular saying amongst the Instagram community: "pics or it didn't happen" (Silverman, 2015).

This accounts for a change in the way that people perceive their experiences and surroundings. Experiences are coupled with documentation and content creation (Bunce, et al., 2017). Therefore, the importance of content creation informs a constant documenting behaviour amongst users as they understand experiences to exist as images on Instagram (Bunce, et al., 2017).

The constant content creation propelled by Instagram's documentation culture leads to the frequent uploading of images. These images are intended to be read in series and are to be consumed rapidly as Instagram is typically used for daily engagement

(Bunce, et al., 2017). Each image which forms part of the series is to be part of a larger narrative (Bunce, et al., 2017). Therefore, a user's Instagram profile is like a virtual visual gallery that has been threaded by images which are displayed in a grid format.

The thought of an Instagram profile as a visual gallery has been extended to the physical world. An example of this is the Yebook Instagram exhibition in Cape Town which displayed Instagram photography (Bunce, et al., 2017). The images were displayed in a form containing 9 images along with the users' name, Instagram name and profile picture (Bunce, et al., 2017). The exhibition of Instagram images shows that Instagram images can be viewed as an alternative to traditional photography (Bunce, et al., 2017). However, contrasting to traditional photography, Instagram photography is democratised as all people who have a smartphone and are connected to the internet can participate in Instagram photography.

The democratisation on Instagram is extended further on the platform. All Instagram users display images in the same square frames and present images in the same grid formats with the same filters and editing tools available (Bunce, et al., 2017). Users are able to choose which images they want to share, when they want to share them and how they apply the Instagram filters and editing tools (Bunce, et al., 2017). Therefore, the 'ordinary person' becomes an amateur photographer who participates in the global media landscape and can be part of narration creation within the Instagram community.

The content which users create are situated in a community by the use of the hashtag function (Bunce, et al., 2017). The hashtag function categorizes content (Bunce, et al., 2017). Therefore, Instagram presents a collective culture. Instagram's collective nature indicates how Instagram capitalises on virtual connection and communication within the Instagram community (Bunce, et al., 2017).

Despite the effort to democratise contribution to the global media landscape by the use of Instagram photography with smartphones and internet, it is clear that the images which gain attraction and a following are images which display a lifestyle and resources that only the middle and upper classes have access to (Bunce, et al.,

2017). Therefore, the majority of South Africans are disadvantaged in their participation in the Instagram cultural production (Bunce, et al., 2017). Research confirms this as studies which have been conducted on social media in South Africa concluded that “social media platforms are not easily accessible for many within South Africa and Africa” (Bunce, et al., 2017).

The global north has been in a place of power in the production of knowledge, information and representation. Therefore, there has been a lack of diversity in the contribution to narratives and meaning making. However, Instagram still presents the efforts of widening the avenue for contribution to global media for South Africans as it is no longer restricted to the dominant discourses which privilege the global north (Bunce, et al., 2017).

The danger of a single story

It is important to diversify the contribution to narratives and meaning making. Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, presented a TED talk which focused on the danger of a single story (Adichie, 2009). A single story is created and perpetuated by essentialising people and repeating the essentialised narrative that presents one view and opinion about a people (Adichie, 2009). As this narrative of the one viewpoint of a people gets repeated, it begins to make it definitive for that group of people. Adichie speaks of the afro-pessimistic narrative that has popularly become Africa’s single story. She explains how easily a single story can be created and engrained into the perception of a nation or of a people (Adichie, 2009).

As a child, Adichie was exposed to books at the early age of four. She mostly read American and British children’s books (Adichie, 2009). The American and British children’s books presented characters who looked nothing like her and the people around her as these characters were Caucasian (Adichie, 2009). Adichie grew up being bombarded with ideas of western settings, contexts and cultural elements in these books (Adichie, 2009).

With the assumption that foreign western characters and ideologies were integral in the writing of stories, by the age of seven Adichie was writing stories which illuminated aspects of the western culture, even though she had never experienced

anything outside of Nigeria, at the time (Adichie, 2009). This shows how western ideologies have been dominant in the centre of literature and cultural production. Literature is bombarded mostly with western material, making African literature difficult to find (Adichie, 2009).

Even literature concerning African stories, has been commonly constructed from a western point of view for centuries. London merchant, John Lock, wrote about the experience of his voyage to Africa in 1561 (Adichie, 2009). He described Africans as “beasts who have no houses” and “people without heads” and “having their mouth and eyes in their breasts” (Adichie, 2009: [Sp]). Lock’s account is an example of the kind of contribution to African stories being told by Western people.

In the creation of a single story, such as the single story of Africa, power relations should be considered. The colonial powers, over Africa, influenced what kind of information is shared, when it is shared and with whom it is shared (Adichie, 2009). Creators of a single story strategically begin the story by narrating the effect instead of starting the story by explaining the cause. A single story starts with the failure of the African state instead of beginning with the story of colonialism that created the African state (Adichie, 2009). Western literature has presented Africa as a place of poverty, death and disease (Adichie, 2009). This pessimistic view of Africans has been reputedly perpetuated in the stories about Africans and has consequently caused ignorance in the perception of Africa.

The ignorance in the approach to African stories has created the assumption that African stories need to capitalise and perpetrate Afro pessimism further, in order for an African story to be recognized as ‘authentically African’. An example of this is seen in how one of Adichie’s professors in University was surprised when Adichie wrote of characters who were part of the middle class (Adichie, 2009). The professor urged that Adichie should write a story which carried ‘African authenticity’, as an African writer (Adichie, 2009). This shows how the label, placed by foreigners, of what is considered as ‘African authenticity’ undermines the collage of experiences which belong to diverse cultures, politics, social and economic realities of Africa.

Diversifying the African story restores the dignity that the single story of Africa strips Africans of. Single stories create stereotypes. Some of the stereotypes of poverty and disease in Africa carry truth. However, those stereotypes do not reveal the complete story of Africa.

The use of Instagram, in this study, allows for the rapid spread of a narrative across the globe, at the click of a button. The user is able to create and distribute their narrative. Therefore, Instagram allows for easy distribution of a collage of African narratives, created by Africans, on the platform. This shows the importance of one being the author of one's story as storytellers are empowered to provide meaning and share knowledge through stories.

Storytelling

Stories have a long history of being used as a vehicle of knowledge, information, lessons and have also been used as a tool for meaning making, while being a form of entertainment (Lund, et al., 2018). Storytelling is the cultural practice of reporting events in a way that show cause and effect relationships within a context (Fog, et al., 2005). Characters are used to guide the perception of the story while carrying out their different desires and motives in response to given circumstances. Stories can be told in different ways. The way in which a story is told is dependent on the narrative. A narrative is the text that is used to communicate a story (Fludernik, 2009). The story refers to the message that is conveyed to the audience (Fludernik, 2009). Therefore, the same story can be told in different ways by using different narratives to communicate the story. Storytelling is the creation of a narrative to communicate complex ideas and relationships into a comprehensible text that transmits themes and messages to an audience (Lund, et al., 2018). There is an emphasis on communication, thus intersecting cultural practices with social practices. The diversity of culture across groups of people has in turn birthed a diversity of ways of creating narratives and sharing stories.

Narrative structures

There are different ways to create a narrative which is seen in the diversity of narrative structures. Different narrative devices can afford a variety of structures in the creation of a storyline and inform the style or technique employed to construct

the storyline (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). The relationship between the organizational structure of a storyline and the technique employed to construct the storyline is governed by three organisational principles, namely, time, logic and space (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). Time refers to the order of events, including the pace and rhythm at which these events unfold. Logic refers to the causal links between the events which are typically governed by a cause-and-effect relationship (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). Space provides the context of the narrative. The way in which these organisational principles are manipulated in the creation of a narrative contributes to the structure of the narrative (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002).

The way in which the organisational principles are manipulated in the creation of a digital narrative creates a non-linear structure. Digital stories are interactive and therefore continue to evolve through the activities of the participants. Because the events of digital stories are not predestined, the order and logic of events are not dependent on one another as each participant operates independently in their activities.

Social media storytelling

Social media allows users to be participants in the creation of digital stories as ordinary people become broadcasters of their lives and interests on social media platforms. Sharing content on social media with others is the sharing of interests, thoughts and ideas. In some instances, this shared information is threaded together in a way that communicates themes which users follow similarly to the unfolding of a story. Thus, social media can be understood as a storytelling environment. Social media culture presents different kinds of narratives. However, the two most common types of narratives are personal narratives and marketing narratives (Page, 2015).

Sharing and documenting personal experiences on social media pertains to personal narrativity. The documentation of the self on social media platforms such as Instagram, is reminiscent of autobiographical photography and the paradigm shift of photography becoming accessible to the public by the introduction of the Kodak's affordable Brownie camera in the late 19th century (Fallon, 2014). In the 19th century the photographs taken still had to be taken to be processed and then the photographer had to find ways to share the photography (Manovich, 2017).

However, with the introduction of the social media environment, there is the democratisation of the contribution to culture production as each user composes and produces their own narratives to share with the public.

As users create and distribute their own narratives, social media followers interact with the distributed narrative. The interactivity of social media results in discourses evolving around distributed narratives. The social media network becomes a group of co-writers in the narrative as users interact with narratives by liking, sharing, and commenting (Lund, et al., 2018). Users' opinions are included in the way the narrative is perceived and presented.

As stories are presented and interacted with a chain of receiving and passing on, the narrative is formed. The sharing of content in the users' interaction influences what content people share and the conversations surrounding the content, thus, affecting discourses. This is where the power and influence of storytelling on social media is anchored (Lund, et al., 2018).

Storytelling is a technology of power in the world of social media (Lund, et al., 2018). Technologies of power refer to practical techniques used to influence others on social media (Lund, et al., 2018).

The power that storytelling carries presents an intersection between personal narratives and marketing narratives. Businesses have embraced the power and influence of social media by prioritising social media initiatives in their marketing strategies. Businesses have used users' personal narratives to market their brand. The personal narrative is entangled with the consumption by a potential target market and is reorganized in its presentation for a marketing agenda. Therefore, the self is commodified. The importance of social media users' stories for creating a brand narrative has increasingly been included in businesses' marketing strategies (Lund, et al., 2018).

On social media, storytelling has been used to set brands apart as the narrative created does not just highlight the product but also brings forward the stories and

experiences people have with the product. The stories presented by businesses in brand marketing is known as the Marketing Narrative.

The experiences consumers have had with the brand are embedded in a narrative which influences the perception of the brand. Brands have found that entertaining stories which are attached to their marketing strategies can assist in persuading markets to buy their products as consumers engage with other consumer's experience of the product (Lund, et al., 2018). Learning about a product from a consumer presents the consumer's experience as more authentic.

User- generated content on social media allows information to be transmitted from consumer to consumer, mimicking the verbal communication factor which underpins word of mouth advertising. Ordinary people's experiences and opinions on a product or service are perceived as authentic and creates a connection between consumers and marketers (Lund, et al., 2018). 59% of content creators on social media find Instagram as the most effective social media tool when connecting with consumers (Social Media College, 2018). Therefore, users' content production benefits commerce through a marketing agenda. Businesses are able to take advantage of users' activities on social media platforms and have users perform particular activities which benefit the business and contribute to their marketing agenda. It is common for users' activities to be performed for different agendas as users shape their digital identity.

Social media performance

According to Canadian American sociologist, Erving Goffman, a performance is an act of intentional actions that are displayed to communicate something to an audience (Calhoun, et al., 2012). Goffman observed social interactions as performances thus, referring to the world as a stage (Calhoun, et al., 2012).

The activities on social media can be considered as a performance because social media users make intentional choices about how they choose to represent themselves on social media platforms (Lund, et al., 2018). From the content that social media users share and produce, to the way they engage with other content,

users perform activities on social media which inform their roles in the social network of social media.

The roles that users assume on social media platforms become an extension of themselves as they represent themselves in a digital realm leading to the creation of the digital self (Belk, 2013). The digital self is the digital re-presentation of oneself where individuals are disembodied and then re-embodied as users in the form of profile pictures, images, videos and rehearsed speech in text form (Belk, 2013). What was previously used in pre-digital times to modify and experiment with identities such as buying new clothes and changing a hairstyle has expanded to the possibilities of re-embodying the self with a selection of various ways to represent the self. From the creation of the profile picture, name and personal narrative to editing tools such as photoshop and deleting or editing text, users are able to shapeshift their digital representations to their best or desired selves (Belk, 2013).

The selection and editing in the representation of the self on social media platforms raises the question of the accuracy in presentation of the real self in the digital self. Unlike gaming avatars which are overtly fictional, digital identities on social media are expected to allude to real life representations (Belk, 2013). Users expect that there should be identifiable similarities between the physical self and the digital self where the two identities are easily understood as one. However, the selection, editing and omission of representations on social media presents an environment where the lines between fiction and non-fiction are blurred.

Even if the representation of the real self is not accurate in the presentation of the digital self, social media companies are only interested in the activities performed by digital identities. Digital identities carry information and data that benefits social media companies (Flisfeder, 2015).

The commodification of the Self

Through the construction of the digital identity on social media, social media produces an audience that can be sold to advertisers, thus, introducing the idea of the ‘audience commodity’ (Flisfeder, 2015). The audience commodity is primarily known from television where the television programmers would produce an audience

to consume advertised content (Flisfeder, 2015). Therefore, the audience would learn to constantly engage with advertised products. Social media users are a commodity audience in the way that their digital presence and social media activity produces data which is sold to advertisers (Flisfeder, 2015). The revenue models created for social media companies capitalise on selling advertising space on social media platforms as well as selling social media data such as users' indicated interests in order to present a target market for advertisers (Flisfeder, 2015). Advertisers bombard social media users with advertised content which benefits both social media companies and advertisers (Flisfeder, 2015). In this way, the digital self which is created on social media is commodified.

The digital self is created through users' engagement with social media. Their activities are transposed into data which collectively begins to form a digital identity (Flisfeder, 2015). The creation of a user's profile and all the activities which are performed under the profile are registered on the platform and produce data. All comments, posts and activities are linked to the user's profile (Flisfeder, 2015). The activities performed by the digital self contribute to the construction of the digital self (Flisfeder, 2015). Therefore, the digital self is never fixed but is constantly modified according the activities of the user that consequently creates a constant generation of data to be commodified.

Even as the data produced by digital identities is commodified, the activity producing this data is presented as a voluntary activity as users engage with social media during leisure time (Flisfeder, 2015). Therefore, there is the exploitation of users' voluntary data production. The exploitation of users' data introduces the idea of communicative capitalism (Flisfeder, 2015). Social media promotes democracy as all users are able to contribute to the production and circulation of knowledge, cultural products and information. However, aspects of capitalism are reinforced as exploited users are central to the production of content and data which generates profit for social media companies (Flisfeder, 2015).

While there are users who are unaware that activity on social media constitutes a form of exploitation or labour, there are social media platforms which are explicitly purposed for professional networking, such as LinkedIn (Flisfeder, 2015).

Professional networking social media platforms such as LinkedIn have been useful in creating and maintaining working relationships in the current neoliberal climate which presents precarious labour in the forefront. The professional digital identity which is presented on platforms such as LinkedIn demonstrate how social media can benefit professional relationships. Therefore, social media has become a stage of self-promotion, performance and a place to commodify the Self.

Social media have also become a place where alienation between the digital self and the user is apparent. The Marxist approach to alienation presents a worker as disconnected from the products of his or her own labour (Shantz, et al., 2012). In social media the performing and staged commodified Self on social media is an alienated representation of the user (Flisfeder, 2015). The digitised self that is created on the social media platform acts as a signifier of the user. The person who is behind the digital self is understood as the subject (Flisfeder, 2015). The digital self is an alienated representation of the subject that is constructed through a process of editing and selection.

Users choose what to post, how to post and when to post. The performance of users on social media contributes to their construction of their digital selves on social media platforms (Flisfeder, 2015). Through the construction of the digital self the 'digital reputation economy' erupts as the process of self-branding is informed by the choices of the user in their digital identity construction (Flisfeder, 2015). By means of branding, the digital self is commodified further as the presentation of the digital identity acts as a branded package to persuade the social media network to invest in engaging with their creative labour in content production.

Branding the digital self objectifies the digital self as a product to be marketed as it aims to attract and persuade others within the social media network (Flisfeder, 2015). Self-branding is a common phenomenon within the neoliberal context as neoliberalism promotes individuals as entrepreneurs of the self (Flisfeder, 2015). Therefore, individuals are in charge of their own branding and their own reputation and representation within the labour market as the neoliberal individual is not governed by a social, cultural and/or professional body but operates independently.

Users need to self-manage themselves in how they choose to create, brand themselves and carry out their activities on social media platforms (Flisfeder, 2015).

Social media users have adopted the 24/7 activity culture similarly to online markets which are continuously active (Flisfeder, 2015). All users from around the world can engage with social media at any time of the day. Therefore, the labour that goes into social media network is carried out continuously, consequently producing abundant amounts of data for social media companies to thrive on as profit is generated 24/7(Flisfeder, 2015).

The interactivity of users contributes to the success of social media platforms and differentiates social media from other media (Page, 2015). On social media the data produced by users' activities is the commodity and the content consumed is also produced by users (Flisfeder, 2015). Therefore, the understanding of social media environments is underpinned by interactivity.

The experience of a social media environment is dependent on how the user interacts with the platform. How users interact with social media platforms informs algorithms which causes the platform to present a personalised selection of content according to the indicated interests. The way the users create, consume and interact with content also informs users' experiences, making the users' interaction with a social media environment pivotal to how that environment is experienced.

Affordance and Limitations

The interactions between users and the social media environment can be understood by looking at American psychologist, James J. Gibson's concept which places focus on the interactions between subjects and their environment (Gibson, 2014). Social media users are considered as the subjects while social media is considered as the environment. According to Gibson, the current interaction between the subject and the environment defines the perception of the nature of the subject and environment (Gibson, 2014). Gibson underpinned this concept as affordances. Affordances refer to what the environment offers a subject (Gibson, 2014).

Affordances place a focus on what information is currently available in the environment and how the information in the environment will inform activities (Gibson, 2014). The focus on what is available in the environment of social media shows an ecological approach. An ecological approach analyses continuous interactions within an environment (Gibson, 2014).

Gibson does not neglect his understanding of the subject in his ecological approach. Subjects carry their own meaning within a space (Gibson, 2014). The characteristics and abilities of the subject allow the subject to interact with the environment in a way that is within the range of their characteristics and abilities thus resulting to limitations (Gibson, 2014). A subject can only interact with the environment in ways that are limited to his or her abilities as subjects interact with what is available in the environment.

An environment is perceived by its affordances (Bucher & Helmond, 2018). Affordances are known to be fixed, it is the perception of the environment by the subject that can change according to how the subjects relating and interacting with that environment (Bucher & Helmond, 2018).

The environment of social media platforms is socio technological as they provide a communication network amongst users through technological devices (Bucher & Helmond, 2018). Through users' perception of social media platforms, the affordances of the platforms are shaped and shift from one user's perception to another (Bucher & Helmond, 2018). For example, end users, social media developers and advertisers perceive the affordances of social media differently. End-users perceive social media as an interactive environment in which content can be created and generated by end-user and shared with a social network. Social media developers perceive social media as data production machine to monetize while advertisers may perceive social media as a marketing tool (Bucher & Helmond, 2018).

Therefore, in understanding a social media environment by employing the concept of affordance it is important to analyse the possible perceptions of its functionality and how different users may interact with the environment.

Theoretical Framework

In understanding Instagram's interactive environment, the functionality of the platform depends on how the user chooses to use it. Therefore, understanding Instagram as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity requires the consideration of how a user makes choices in relaying narratives in their interaction with the platform. This presents Gibson's affordances and limitations as part of the theoretical framework for this study.

Gibson's Affordances and Instagram

The Instagram platform affords the creation and distribution of user-generated visual content in the form of images and videos to circulate within the Instagram network of well over 800 million active users (Becker, 2017). The visual content of Instagram followers is primarily displayed and consumed on the home page which is an interactive feed for users to scroll through like an infinite magazine where they can engage with content by the 'like', 'comment' and 'share' functions (Instagram, 2020). Instagram users operate and engage in activities on the platform under their self-created Instagram account which presents a digital self where the selected profile picture, name and content created by the user is attached to the digital self on the platform.

Users are exposed to a combination of features in order to create content and document their thoughts, ideas and experiences. Thus, Instagram acts as a blogging agent to journal events and thoughts, by means of pictures, videos and text. The primary form of content creation on Instagram is photography (Manovich, 2017). While cell phone cameras have allowed mobile photography, Instagram has afforded editing features as well as an exhibition space.

The editing features for Instagram photography are reminiscent of 20th century photography and cinematic styles as there are filters which are available with these editing properties (Manovich, 2017). There are a range of filters available to be selected by the user in the editing process. There are also more editing tools available to further edit the existing filters. The editing process also allows for a

caption to accompany images. Therefore, users are able to anchor their thoughts, to the image with text (Instagram, 2020).

These editing features have been extended to the video function of Instagram when the video function was introduced in 2013 (Mattern, 2017). Instagram allows Instagrammers to post videos through various video functions. Instagrammers may post a video on their Instagram account page. This video is limited to a 60 second duration and is available on the Instagrammer's account page for as long as he or she wants to keep it there. Videos that are posted on the Instagrammer's account page are accessed by going to the Instagrammer's profile and browsing through his or her posts.

An Instagrammer may also post a video by posting the video in the "story" category, that appears at the top of the screen of the home page. Videos posted in the 'story' category are limited to a 15 second duration. This video is only available to be viewed by other users for 24 hours. If the video uploaded is longer than 15 seconds then Instagram will automatically divide the video into 15 second clips that are posted one after another to ensure smooth continuity and have the clips appear as one, i.e., one 15 second video after another (Instagram, 2020). Instagram's use of short videos for the 'story' category enables users to document brief moments of an actual event in their lives and is reminiscent of actuality films of early film history.

The 'story' video function has unique editing tools. There are multiple themed filters to choose from. Some themed filters incorporate animation and voice changing effects (Instagram, 2020). The editing tools unique to the 'story' function also include the addition of music, tagged with the name of the song, or have an overlay of the song's lyrics in the video. One of the most popular tools of the 'story' video function is the boomerang. The boomerang tool creates a video which plays action forward and then reverses the action and does this repeatedly within the 15 second duration of the 'story' video (Instagram, 2020).

Another video function which had previously become popular and changed the Instagram interface is Instagram Television (IGTV), introduced in 2018 (Bromwich, 2018). IGTV has a category on the explore page and presents videos which are

limited to the duration of 15 minutes. This presents IGTV as the function affording users the opportunity to post the longest videos on Instagram (Instagram, 2020).

By outlining the affordances of Instagram, it is clear that there are a variety of functions which can be employed in the creation of visual media. How users experience the platform is dependent on which functions are used and how they are employed. The ways in which users performs activities and interact with the platform also needs to be considered in understanding the affordances of Instagram.

Gibson's concept of affordances will be used in understanding Instagram as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity where the Instagram platform is considered the environment and the user (both the Instagrammer and Instagram follower) is the subject. Because of Instagram's interactive nature, the perception of Instagram as a medium is defined by the users' interactions with it, with the aim of presenting narratives.

As previously stated, the concept of affordances offers an ecological approach as it focuses on what information is currently available in the environment and how that information will inform and shape activities (Gibson, 2014). Thus, this study will explore how the posting of images and videos works on Instagram as the structures that are put in place for images and videos creation and distribution will inform structures which can be employed in storytelling and creative expression.

With Gibson's consideration for limitations to be considered when understanding the affordances of a medium, one's observations and investigation of Instagram as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity will depend on one's experience in one's interaction with the medium.

In this study, limitations refer to the restrictions in performing particular functions in the user's engagement with the Instagram platform while using the platform as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity. The Instagram platform as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity will be understood by what it allows the user to do when producing and sharing narratives and ideas

through the image and video functions (affordances) as well as the restrictions presented in the structures of the image and video posting functions (limitations).

In this study, the investigation of Instagram's affordances and limitations as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity will be conducted via a practical interaction with the platform by the researcher, who will undertake a storytelling and creative expression activity. The affordances and limitations in the interaction with the platform will inform the perceptions of Instagram as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity.

In the practical interaction with the Instagram platform, I will be interacting with the platform as an Instagrammer that is an end user. According to the understanding of social media affordances it is important to pinpoint what kind of subject is interacting with the platform (Bucher & Helmond, 2018). As Instagram allows for subjects who are end users, agents of social media companies and businesses who wish to use Instagram for marketing purposes. According to affordance theory the perception of the subject informs the interaction with the environment (Gibson, 2014). Therefore, it is my perception of Instagram as an end-user Instagrammer that informs the findings of Instagram as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity.

As an end-user Instagrammer, I will interact with the video and image functions in the creation of narratives and creative expressions of ideas and messages that will be created to share with Instagram followers. Because my position in the investigation of Instagram is an end-user Instagrammer, my interactions with the platform will be limited to what Instagram can afford an end- user Instagrammer. It is the tools and information that is available to end-user Instagrammers on the Instagram platform that have been interacted with in understanding of Instagram. The interaction carried out in the investigation will be underpinned by intentional choices on the Instagram platform as per the methodology detailed below.

Performance Theory

The intentional choices made in the study's representation of narratives within the Instagram social network translate into intentional actions performed on the platform. Thus, Performance Theory underpins this study as a theoretical framework.

On the Instagram platform, users choose how they want to present themselves on social media. In their interactions with others within the Instagram social media network, users perform actions according to how they would like to be perceived by their audience (their followers).

This study draws on an understanding of performance theory as underpinned by Goffman's conception of performance as intentional actions to be perceived by others in order to communicate something in particular. Goffman refers to these intentional actions as 'expressions given' (Calhoun, et al., 2012). All intentional choices carried out in the creation of narratives with the use of Instagram's image and video functions aims to tell a particular story of the journey of the pursuit for beauty which points to Goffman's notion of expressions given.

In the conduction of this study, I performed intentional choices in how I interacted with Instagram's image and video functions with the aim of creating a narrative and creatively expressing ideas and messages. These intentional choices include the way in which I filmed, edited and presented myself in the images and videos. The presentation of myself in the images and videos is prepared and rehearsed, from the speech to the design of the image and video. The prepared and rehearsed presentation of myself introduces a staged performance in which Instagram is the stage.

As I performed intentional actions, a 'character' was formed in the audience's perception on the 'stage' of the Instagram platform with the cell phone screen framing the action taking place. According to Meisner's acting technique, a character is not played but is created through actions performed, promoting the notion that "The foundation of acting is the reality of doing" (Meisner, 1987: 16).

In my interaction with the Instagram platform, my actions and activities will inform my digital identity. The digital self is created through users' engagement with social media. Their activities are transposed into data which collectively begins to form a digital identity (Flisfeder, 2015). The creation of a user's profile and all the activities which are performed under the profile are registered on the platform and produce data. All comments, posts and activities are linked to the user's profile (Flisfeder,

2015). The activities performed by the digital self contribute to the construction of the digital self (Flisfeder, 2015). Therefore, the character is created through my actions as I interact with the image and video functions. As I post particular kinds of images and videos, my character (identity on the platform) becomes more pronounced where their identity becomes "the object of the spectator's gaze" (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998: 71).

From the outset, I have indicated on the Instagram account page, created for this study, that the content of the images and videos displayed are a performance. Therefore, the interaction received by followers, through the interactive functions of Instagram was framed into a channel to interact with a performance and not a real-life event.

Methodology

The exploration and observation of the affordances of Instagram as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity calls for a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach uses personal experience as valuable data to inform the study (Gibson & Brown, 2009). In this study, findings are informed by the creation and distribution of a fictional narrative and creative expressions in a series of images and videos on an Instagram account, as a user.

Therefore, the methodology of this study presents an artistic practice by the means of creating an Instagram account, in order to achieve findings which accompany the written dissertation. Knowledge is extracted from the findings to inform the conclusions. Having the practices of narration creation performed on the Instagram account as the basis of the knowledge for this study defines this study as creative-based research.

Introduction to Creative-Based Research

Creative Based Research is a research method which has the researcher taking part in an original investigation, in the form of a creative practice, in order to create knowledge (Candy, 2006). The results of the practice serve as a valuable basis for the researcher's claims. The claims and findings are written in a document. The

findings observed from the creative practice are referenced within the written document in order to understand and support the claims made (Candy, 2006). The findings of this study are based on the results of the practice of creating explicitly fictional stories with the use of Instagram's image and video functions due to the scarce existence of fictional stories that are primarily distributed and consumed on the Instagram platform. Existing Instagram accounts display clips of fictional stories as snippets of a larger story, similar to a trailer, aim to promote a larger story which is primarily found on another screen medium such as film or television. Therefore, with the scarcity of Instagram accounts which display fictional storytelling creative expressions as its primary channel, the creation of an Instagram account where storytelling and creative expression will be explored through image and video functions is beneficial for the achievement of this study's objectives.

As a trained theatre director, performer and scriptwriter, I am enthusiastic about achieving the objectives of the study by practicing my craft. Through practice, I can learn how to achieve the application and translation of knowledge in visual storytelling, narrative and creative expression techniques to a digital platform which is rarely explored as a medium for the viewing of fictional series in the current digital age.

Research design

An Instagram account, @pursuit4beaut, was created for the purpose of this study. The Instagram account presents a fictional series about the desire to keep up with physical beauty standards in the current social media age.

The story which underpins @pursuit4beaut is an overarching story about a young woman who is in search of achieving physical beauty for validation and acceptance in society. Through this journey of pursing physical beauty standards set by society, she is faced with multiples conflicts in her understanding of what true beauty is and how it can be achieved. Instagram's nature has content continuously developing with no end point for narrative shared. This has influenced my choice to leave the story open ended and present the story as a continuous discussion and display of the character's journey in understanding beauty and achieving physical beauty

standards. Through the episodic structure of Instagram, the images and videos created a fragmented story structure where the images and videos do not show a continuous linear chain of events linked by a cause-effect logic. However, the images and videos displays an overarching story plot of a woman in search of achieving physical beauty. This plot is communicated and strung together in narrative fragments through Instagram's image and video functions. Each narrative fragment communicates a different point in the women's journey such as conflicts or revelations in her search and desire for validation and acceptance by achieving physical beauty standards.

The intended audience for this story is young females, from teenagers to young woman who are trying to find their place in society as they grow into who they are. I made the story meaningful to the intended audience by discussing relevant topics of the pressures of achieving physical beauty standards as "the propensity to report social media as a source of appearance-related pressures is higher particularly for younger women" (Aberg, Koivula and Kukkonen 2020:2). Additionally, having aesthetics being central to social media culture (Manovich, 2017) presented the themes of this narrative and creative expression as relevant for a social media audience composed of Instagram followers. To make the nature of the project clear to Instagram users, the Instagram account created for the study was called @pursuit4beaut.

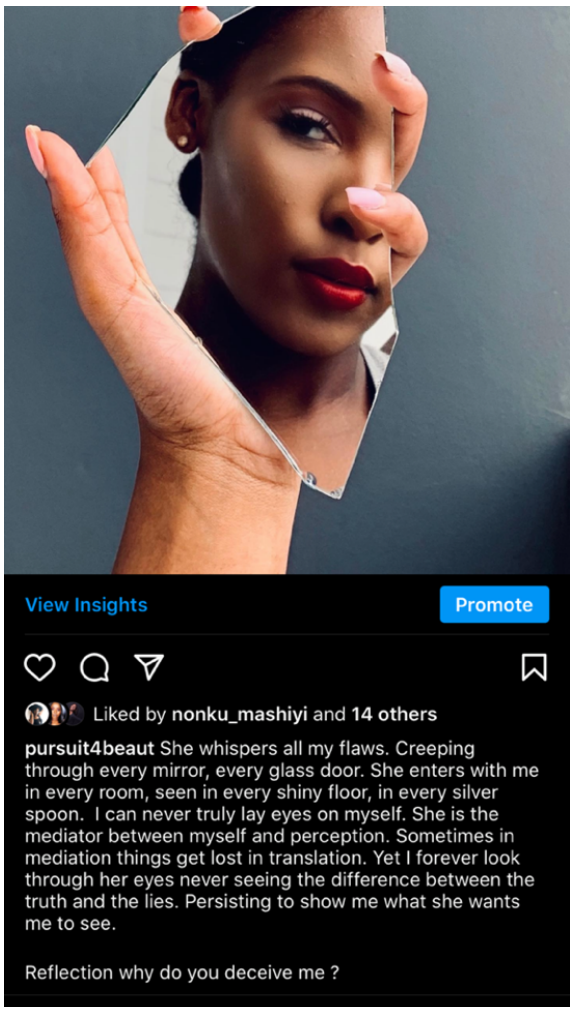
I used myself as a performer to create a fictional series of narratives and creative expressions tailored through performance in the display and illustration of stories. The story of @pursuit4beaut influenced the way I created these staged performances by using myself and own physical appearance as starting points for possible conflicts presented in pursing physical beauty standards. An example of this is using my own skin colour and hair as a starting point to create a narrative surrounding the issues of race in physical beauty standards within popular culture. Commenting on my own body and appearance in the creation of the character and placing that commentary within the story of the pressures of achieving physical beauty as a young woman birthed a character which addressed and experienced conflicts which were limited to my understanding of the conflicts and issues which have evolved in relation to my own body. From the real conflicts and issues

surrounding beauty standards which I have experienced in relation to my own body, as my body was the instrument for my character, I created imagined and staged scenarios which amplified and creatively expressed truthful origin of the conflicts expressed drawn from my own experiences.

The comparison culture presented in appearance related pressures influenced the way the narratives were created by presenting stylistic motifs of juxtaposition e.g. dark skin versus light skin, make-up versus no make-up, pain versus euphoric glamorization, nature versus man-made etc. In this study, eight different ways of creating and sharing images and videos on the Instagram platform have been explored. The study was conducted over 9 days, with all posts shared from day 2 to day 9.

This study explored the following four different ways of creating and sharing images, in the creation of a narrative:

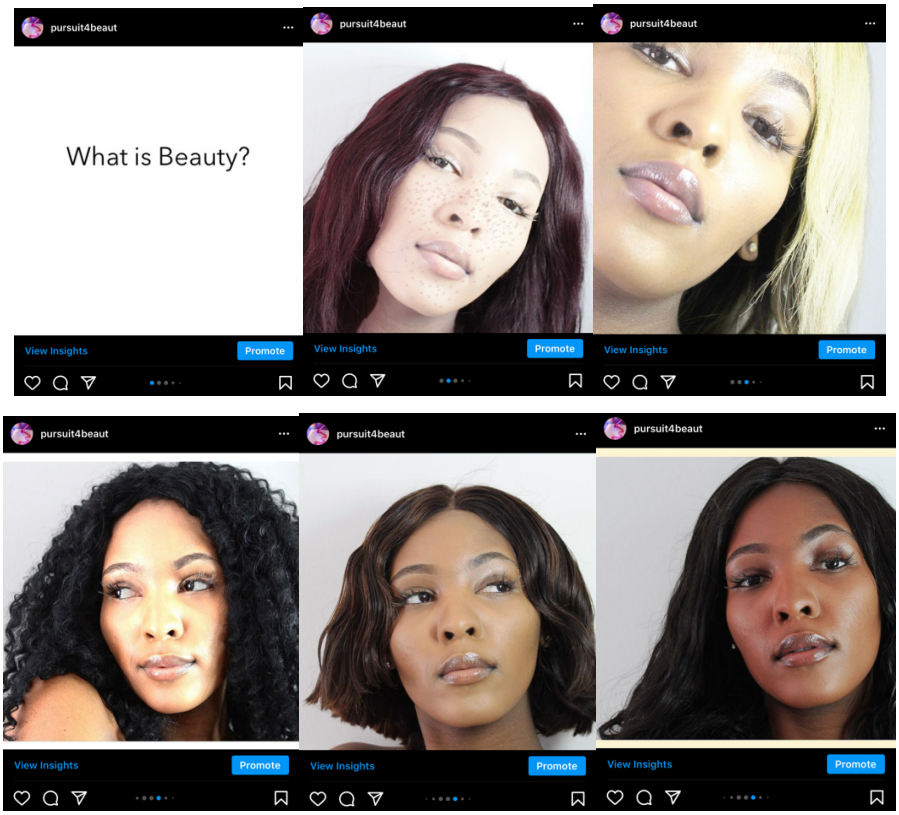
1. An image with a caption.

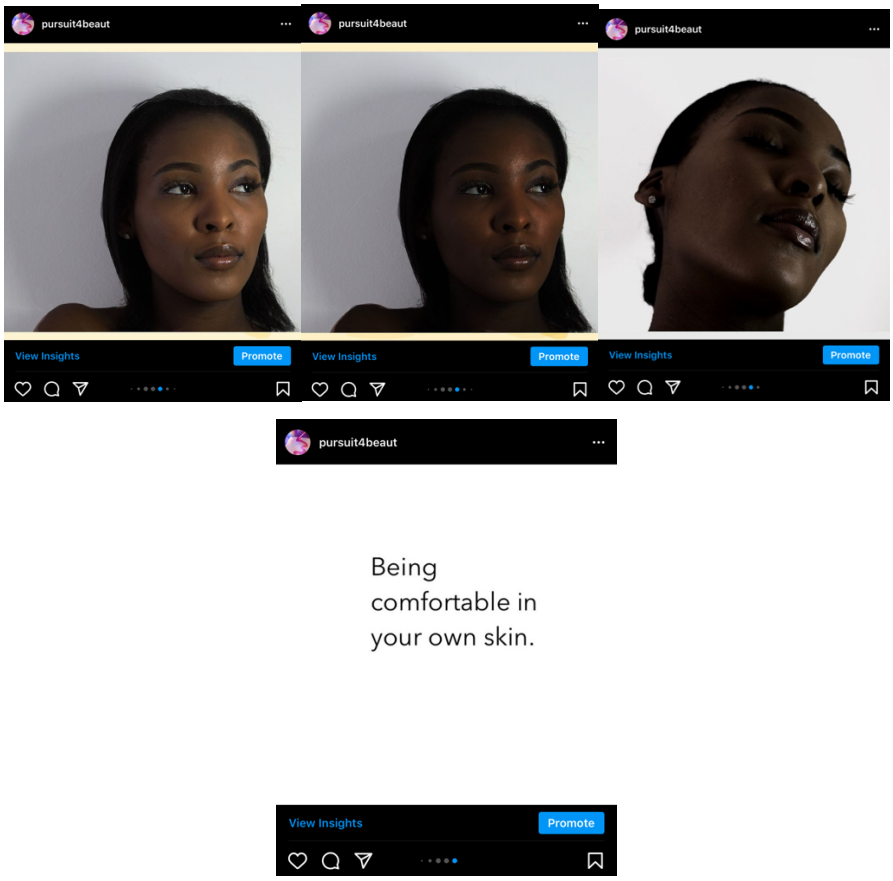


2. An image without a caption.



3. A multiple picture post of ten images where users swipe through the individual pictures, mimicking the action of turning pages of a digital book.





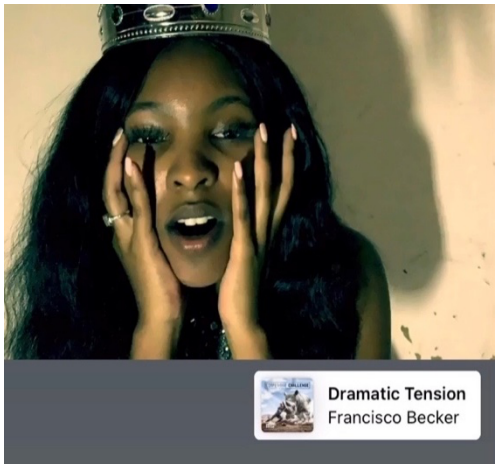
The affordances and limitations of how information is able to be communicated as a narrative informed the degrees of concise narrativity in the distribution of images on Instagram's image functions.

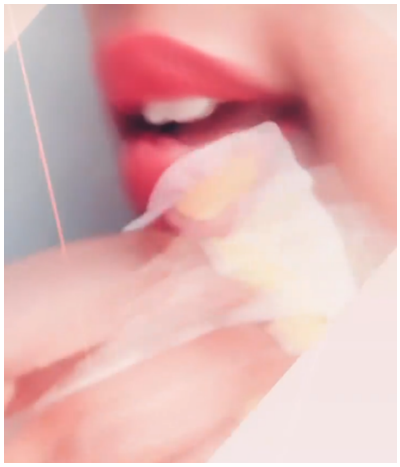
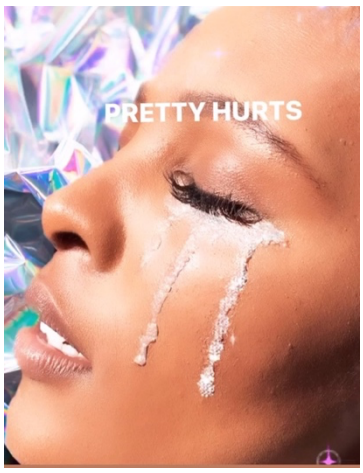
The element of concise narrativity was also investigated by exploring the following different ways of creating and sharing videos, in the creation of a narrative:

1. A video limited to the duration of 60 seconds.

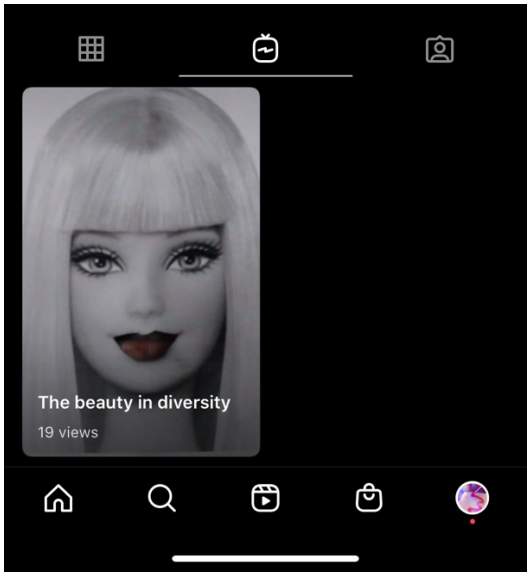


2. Three videos using the *Instagram Story* function limited to the duration of 15 seconds in which one video used the music filter, another video created with the employment of the boomerang function and the last 15 second video created from a picture and employed the lyric function of the music filter.



3. A video limited to the duration of 15 minutes on *Instagram Television* (IGTV).



The affordances and limitations in the communication of a plot through the different durations of the videos will inform the degrees of concise narrativity in the creation and distribution of videos as a narrative product on Instagram with the employment of storytelling aids available in their video functions.

In the creation and distribution of all images and videos, the presentation of the content was analysed across the image and video functions explored in this study. Each image and video function on Instagram has distinct structures in how content is presented. From the analysis of the presentation of narratives the structure of the narratives will be discussed.

As the study presents narratives on the active Instagram account, created for this study, the content was available for public engagement by other Instagram users. The way in which other users use Instagram's interactive functions of commenting, liking, and sharing, when engaging with the narrative content, will inform the findings of how these interactive functions affect how the narrative is presented to other users. The engagement of other users will also inform the limitations of interactivity with the narrative content. on Therefore, the findings are dependent on observations of how users interacted with the narrative content at the time of the study. This presents some limitations in the understanding of Instagram as a storytelling medium.

Limitations

This study employs a qualitative approach; therefore, the findings are based on the researcher's personal experience in conducting the study through the creation of narratives on Instagram. The findings in the study are not definitive in understanding Instagram as a storytelling medium.

In drawing on Gibson's affordances as the theoretical framework for the study, the findings will be skewed towards how the researcher chooses to interact with the Instagram platform in the creation of narratives. The findings on the interactivity on the Instagram platform are limited to the researcher's experiences with the interactive functions, in conjunction with the engagement of other users in the Instagram social network.

Content which circulates on the Instagram social network is temporal in nature. Therefore, the findings of interactivity in this study are subject to how others interact with the content at the time that the study is being conducted.

Ethical Considerations

As users interacted with the Instagram account created for this study, all users were made aware that this account was created for research purposes and displayed fictional and performed images or activity. In the bio of the Instagram page, which is a short text to write something about the account at the top of the account page, it was made clear that the Instagram account had been created for research purposes and presented fictional narratives.

Even though the content created for this study was fictional, it not necessary for users to undergo a debriefing process after consuming the content. Viewers who watch fictional stories through the mediums of film or television are aware that the content is not a depiction of real-life events and are called to suspend their disbelief. There is no process of debriefing after watching a fictional narrative.

The narratives were created by me as the performer and the use of props. With the Researcher being the only performer in the narrative products created, there were no participants in the study.

All content created and distributed in the creation of fictional narratives did not include material or storylines that are considered as obscene, politically offensive or threatening to other users. The use of censorship in the creation of narratives adhered to Instagram's community guidelines.

Because the Instagram community is fundamental in Instagram's functions, the aim of investigating the effects and limitations of Instagram's interactivity includes the report on users' interactions with the narrative content. All interactivity that others had with the content created for this study was voluntary. Therefore, the findings from investigating the effects and limitations of interactivity were authentic, thus, providing a more accurate account of the interactive nature of the Instagram network.

On Instagram, the interactivity that other users may have with content by commenting, liking and sharing (with the mention of the owner of the content) is

displayed on the user's account who owns the content. The user has control over what is on his or her Instagram page, including how the comments are managed. Instagram gives options to delete comments, share comments, report comments and pin comments (a function which has content with pinned comments appearing at the top of the user's Instagram account page) (Instagram, 2020). This control, over the management of interactive functions on users' Instagram account, suggests a sense of ownership for users in the management of the comments attached to their content.

In addition to the affordance to manage comments, Instagram's data policy states that "public information can also be seen, accessed, reshared or downloaded through third parties" (Instagram, 2020). All Instagram users need to agree to the terms included in Instagram's data policy as per the terms and conditions for the use of the platform. The data of users' interactivity was collected and shared in the study. After the study all data remains stored in the online data base of Instagram.

All data collected from the interactivity of users has been anonymised as any reference made to interactions with the content created for this study does not disclose the name of the interacting user. In addition to this, any quotes of interactions have been paraphrased so that data cannot be traced to the user.

Once the study had been conducted, the Instagram account created for the study was closed. This ensures that strangers will not have access to the content or engagement users have had with the content after the study has been conducted.

CHAPTER THREE: CONCISE NARRATIVITY AND NARRATIVE CREATION ON INSTAGRAM

Narratology

Narratology is also known as narrative theory, which refers to the study of elements which pertain to a narrative (Fludernik, 2009). All people are narrators in their daily lives. An example of this is seen in daily conversations where people recount experiences and share them with others. Literary scholar, Gerald Prince (Fludernik, 2009), supports the notion of narratives created by recounting events as he defines a narrative as "the recounting of one or more real or fictitious event(s) communicated by one or more narrators" to an audience (Fludernik, 2009: 5). Therefore, every report on events by people is a narrative.

Narrativity is ingrained in how people process information, therefore, it is intrinsic to human beings (Fludernik, 2009). According to research the human brain is constructed in a way where it processes and understands complex relationships in the form of a narrative (Fludernik, 2009). Narratives have also been significant in understanding history and origins of a people or cultures (Fludernik, 2009).

Narratives are formed by the intricate relationship between the cause and effect of events. According to French literary theorist, Gerard Genette (Fludernik, 2009), the understanding of narratives can be broken down into three categories. The French word *récite* is understood to be the narrative act of the narrator (Fludernik, 2009). This pertains to the action which the narrator employs in the performance of the story. *Récite proper* is referred to as the narrative text or utterance of the story (Fludernik, 2009). This can be understood as the diction and words used in the fabric of the storytelling as well as the script and the written form of the story. Lastly, *histoire* is the story the narrator tells in the narrative (Fludernik, 2009). The story refers to the message, meaning and themes presented while the narrative is understood as the vehicle to transport the story.

The narrative action and the narrative text (also considered as the narrative product/medium) can be conflated into an understanding of a narrative discourse (Fludernik, 2009). Therefore, there is a distinction between the narrative discourse

and the story as it is the narrative discourse which reports the story. The distinction between narrative discourse and the story accounts for how the same story can be told in many different ways (Fludernik, 2009).

The ability to employ different ways of sharing the same story allows for a rich and textured understanding of a story as different narrative discourses are able to capitalize on the characteristics (affordances) of their mediums in order to enhance particular points of the story and fill in the gaps where other mediums did not afford the same enhancement of the story (Fludernik, 2009). Therefore, an array of narrative discourses contributes to a woven and integrated understanding of the story.

Since the same story can be told in various different ways, the creation of a narrative involves selection (Fludernik, 2009). The narrator needs to select which methods he or she would like to employ in the narrative discourse. It is the choices of the narrator or author and the essence of a story that needs to be told which informs the narrative discourse. The essence of the story can also be understood as a fable which derives from the Russian term *fabula* (Fludernik, 2009). Russian formalists of the 1920s and 1930s introduced the idea of a fable as the most basic level of a narrative where the essence of a story is derived from any kind of narrative discourse (Fludernik, 2009). Once the author knows what story needs to be told, he or she can make narrative choices on how to achieve the storytelling.

According to American film critic, Seymour Chatman, a narrator can achieve storytelling by going beyond the traditional understanding of narratives as a written product and can apply the commonly literary understanding of a narrative in storytelling to other media texts (Fludernik, 2009). A cinematic narrator and a traditional narrator (who communicates through written text) have the same role in the creation of a narrative. Both cinematic and traditional narrators are mediators in the presentation of the story as they both make choices on how to communicate the story through a narrative discourse (Fludernik, 2009).

The composition of the narrative for both a cinematic narrator and a traditional narrator are similar. Some of the important elements in narration creation includes the plot of the narrative. The plot refers to the sequence of actions in the narrative (Fludernik, 2009). Sequences of events are made up of cause-and-effect relationships which present a conflict in the story. Conflict in a story creates suspense for the audience where the audience members are called to mentally or emotionally engage with the story. There are different ways of composing narratives as storytelling is integral in society and is a social and cultural practice. However, many different forms of narratives present conflict in a story as a way to account for a success in a story and get the audience to be invested in the outcomes of events (Fludernik, 2009). The conflict is commonly resolved with catharsis in Aristotelian structure of a story which advocates for a beginning, middle and end in the composition of the narrative (Fludernik, 2009).

Another important element in narration creation is the relationship of cause and effect. A cause-and-effect relationship is when one event in the development of the narrative, is dependent on another event. Thus, the narrative develops as a domino effect. The relationship of cause and effect in the composition of the narrative distinguishes a narrative from a non-narrative (Fludernik, 2009). Narratives present cause and affect relationships whereas a non-narrative has no cause-and-effect relationship between the elements of the story (Fludernik, 2009). An example of a non-narrative is a list of items (Fludernik, 2009). Here, there is no cause-and-effect relationship between the items on the list in how the list develops, thus, it is not included in the understanding of a narrative.

In the understanding of a narrative, literature and culture professor Monika Fludernik identifies a ‘real’ narrative as a narrative which consists of human protagonists where all characters are placed within a specific time and place as a narrative is a representation of a world in the story (Fludernik, 2009). There are narratives which have animals or inanimate objects as characters in a story where the animals and objects are personified. The personification of animals and inanimate objects as characters, in a narrative, nods towards a ‘real’ narrative which advocates for human protagonists. The characters in a ‘real’ narrative each have goals and desires which informs their impulses and actions in the unfolding of the plot. The conflict of goals

between characters creates conflict in the action of the narrative. A narrative can have more than one character; however, the narrative text commonly strategically encourages the audience: to focus on the emotional and psychological journey of the protagonist (Fludernik, 2009). Therefore, the narrative is presented to the audience through the lens of the protagonist's experiences. Having the audience being exposed to the story through one lens provides a focus unfolding of developments and allows for a cohesive structure to be followed that is built into the composition of the narrative.

The composition of a narrative consists of a narrative structure that has two layers (Fludernik, 2009). The first layer is the world that is represented in the story (Fludernik, 2009). The world which is presented in the story may pertain to a narrative genre. The world of story carries the genre of the story. Genres are imbedded with suggested structures which accompany the unfolding of the story (Fludernik, 2009). The second layer is the medium in which the representation takes place (Fludernik, 2009). The medium informs the possibilities of choices that the narrator can make in the creation of the narrative discourse and stylises the voice of the narrator.

The voice of the storyteller can be carried through the narrative in different ways. Some narratives have a prominent narrative figure which makes for an overt narrator (Fludernik, 2009). An overt narrator is clearly identified throughout the telling of the story with their presence noted in the unfolding of the story (Fludernik, 2009). An overt narrator may not be a character in the story but are placed in the story with the sole purpose to narrate (Fludernik, 2009). Therefore, there is a story within a story, thus, presenting a narrative frame where there is the event of the narrator telling the story and the events of the story which is being reported (Fludernik, 2009).

However, some narrators are characters in the story and explain the story primarily through their subjective lens. This is referred to as a personalized narrator where the narrator speaks from their character's point of view (Fludernik, 2009). Film narratives use voiceovers, or a sequence inserted at the beginning of the film in order to show that the story is being narrated from a personalized narrator which is also known as a first-person narrator (Fludernik, 2009).

According to the narrative typologies of Franz Karl Stanzel the first-person narrative stays apart from the story and only has the purpose of carrying the story to the audience which pertains to a character authorial narrative (Fludernik, 2009). The character can also be a narrator where the character narrates and reports back on the events which are unfolding in the story (Fludernik, 2009). When the character in the story is also the narrator of the story, the roles of narrator and character morph into one (Fludernik, 2009). In some instances, minor characters in the story can be narrators placed as peripheral first-person narrators who are looking into the world of the main characters and reporting the events which unfold (Fludernik, 2009). The notion of an outsider of a narrative is extended in authorial narratives where the story is told from an external perspective. This kind of narrator looks at the development of the story from above knowledgably take on an omniscient figure (Fludernik, 2009).

As the narrator exposes the audiences to the developments of the narrative the time that it takes for the narrator to present the story to the audience and the suggested duration of the events in the story may differ (Fludernik, 2009). For example, it could take a narrator 1 hour to share a story which pertains to events which occurred over 3 years. The literal duration of the narration of the story is referred to as the story time and the duration of the unfolding of events within the story is the discourse time (Fludernik, 2009). It is very important that the audience has a clear understanding of the timeline of events in the story and that the narrator finds a way to use techniques and methods to show the time within the story within the story time that the narrator has with the audience.

The relationship between the way that the narrator shares the story, with clarity of the discourse time, and the story time given to relay the story to the audience affects the pace of the story (Fludernik, 2009). In most cases the discourse time and the story time are not of the same duration. For example, if a character in a story goes to sleep for a full night the narrator will not likely narrate the scene of the sleeping character for the duration of a full night's rest in the story time. The bigger the difference is between the discourse time and the story time the faster or slower the pace of the story will be. However, there are some stories which have identical discourse time and story time (Fludernik, 2009). This is known as isochrony. Here

the time which is taken for the events to unfold is the exact time that it takes to share the story (Fludernik, 2009). Theatre is an example of a medium which employs moments of isochrony as there are moments which give the audience the impression that the action is taking place right in front of them.

Therefore, there appears to be no mediation in the presentation of the story in theatre as it seems that the story is unfolding live before the audience without the audience being conscious of the narrator (Fludernik, 2009). This unmediated presentation of events is also known as reflector mode where the action is directly reflected before the audience (Fludernik, 2009). Mediation in storytelling refers to the narrator who carries the story to the audience (Fludernik, 2009). Even though in theatre it appears as though the story is directly conveyed to the audience without a noticeable narrator, the story is being strategically carried to the audience. The mediacy in figural narrative consists of the illusion of immediacy where the action is unfolding before the audience (Fludernik, 2009). There is a narrator that is concealed behind the perspective and actions of the character (Fludernik, 2009). The narrator's perspective in the telling of the story is discretely folded into the mentality, motives and actions of the character. The characters then become a vehicle of the narrator's perspective.

The production team are responsible for choices in how the story is told through several elements of the creation of the story. These choices are made during rehearsals, therefore, the final product which is performed for the audience is embedded with the production team's mediation.

By going to theatre to watch a performance, the audience is aware that what they are watching is a narrated performance and are called to suspend their disbelief. However, the way that the performance is carried out in a way appears as though the action is organically unfolding before the audience and masks the audience's constant awareness of a mediator (Fludernik, 2009).

The audience's conscious awareness of a mediator in the presentation of a story affects how action is rendered (Fludernik, 2009). Whether the action is told with the narrator being a prominent figure in the telling of the story or is shown in a live

unfolding of the story with the illusion of unmediated action is the defining difference between the teller mode and reflector mode (Fludernik, 2009). The reflector mode is not limited to visual mediums such as theatre and film but can be seen in written stories by means of direct speech where the speech is presented as the character's direct words and thoughts (Fludernik, 2009). Gerard Genette's theory of narrative advocates that the voice of a story is determined by who speaks. Therefore, the voice of the story pertains to the characters in the story or first-person narrators. This view of the voice in a narrative does not recognise that voice of the narrator which of a figural narrative situation where there is an illusion of immediacy. Because the narrator is not seen and heard they are assumed to not have a voice, however the language of the story is imbedded with their stylistic choices. Genette's theory concerned with the first-person narrator.

The audience is typically called to follow thoughts and developments of one protagonist who retains the readers focus in understanding the developments of the story in the novel (Fludernik, 2009). However, in figural narrative situations there are one or more reflector characters play important roles in the unfolding of the story (Fludernik, 2009). Here, the organization and structure of the unfolding of events needs to be constructed well enough for the audience to follow the journey(s) of the character(s) in the display of the performance. The perspective of the story can be from a teller mode where the narrator is the driving force behind telling the story and guiding the audience through the character's journey or it can be told from the reflector mode where the actions of the character tell the story (Fludernik, 2009). Fludernik proposes that the perspective of a story can also be impersonal such as a camera eye, creating a neutral arrative situation (Fludernik, 2009). The camera eye perspective has a lack of emotional involvement (Fludernik, 2009). However, every gaze has a position and shows a perspective in the world of the story. The angle and approach at which the camera eye captures the narrative positions a perspective which is portrayed to the audience. The audience experiences the narrative through the perspective that they are shown which influences their experience and meaning of the story. This shows the power of the gaze as introduced by Michel Foucault. Foucault presented the concept of 'the gaze' as a tool of power. Foucault's concept of 'the gaze' surveillances objects and can be used to create knowledge in the perception of objects (Foucault, 1963)

The narrative is considered as the object where information is communicated through a narrative language. The language in storytelling is both the medium and the object of representation (Fludernik, 2009). In the stories created on Instagram for this study, the medium of Instagram is explored. The images and videos created from Instagram's affordances become the object of representation where the story is consumed by the audience who are Instagram followers.

The nature of content consumption, on Instagram, presents a vast variety of content distributed from different Instagrammers that is displayed simultaneously on the platform (Instagram, 2020). Instagram followers engage with multiple contents in fragments that can be consumed quickly (Instagram, 2020). Therefore, Instagram followers are able to engage with multiple Instagram accounts without spending too much time on one piece of content. The conciseness and efficiency in which content can be consumed on Instagram is regulated by the structures of how content can be created and shared through the image and video functions.

Content can be created through the use of images where images created by Instagrammers are posted one by one on the Instagram feed. Multiple images in one post are limited to 10 images (Instagram, 2020). The images may be accompanied by captions which presents limitations in how much text can be included in the presentation of images. Content can also be created through videos. All video functions have a limitation of the duration of the videos with the shortest maximum duration on the video functions at 15 seconds and the longest maximum duration of the video functions at 15 minutes (Instagram, 2020). These image and video structures which present limitations in the consumptions of images per post and video duration limitations ensure that the content is concise. The interactive functions accompanied with the content also present methods of engaging with content with speed. An example of this is double tapping onto a video or image on the Instagram feed in order to engage the like function (Instagram, 2020).

The conciseness and efficiency in the consumption of content on Instagram introduces the concept of concise narrativity in this study. In the creation of narratives, as Instagram is investigated as a storytelling medium, the narratives will

be limited to the way in which images and videos can be consumed on Instagram. Therefore, the content that is created in this study needs to convey a story within the affordances and limitations of how content can be presented across the Instagram's different image and video functions. Each image video function presents its own set of affordances and limitations in the conciseness and efficiency of how the content is consumed.

Having the creation of concise narratives specific to the affordances and limitations of Instagram's different image and video functions introduces a key concept of medium specificity in the study. Medium specificity refers to the distinct qualities that a medium affords and denotes the nature of the medium (Bucher & Helmond, 2018). As this study focuses on Instagram as a medium and its affordances and limitations of storytelling and creative expressions, the conduct and findings of the study are specific to Instagram and provide and understanding of Instagram as a medium.

In understanding Instagram as a medium for storytelling and creative expression, the content created and distributed on the Instagram account created from the study displays narration in order to convey a story and creative expression. Instagrammers can be considered as narrators as narration is understood as the recount of events that is shared with an audience, according to Gerald Prince (Fludernik, 2009). Instagrammers document events through images and videos and share this documentation with Instagram followers. However, a narrative reports a story with the use of cause-and-effect logic (Fludernik, 2009). The audience is able to synthesise meaning of events in how one event may lead to another. In the creation of a narratives in this study, the events reported in the creation of a narration considers a cause-and-effect logic between the events in order to convey meaning which tells the story of a women's emotional and psychological journey in pursuit of achieving physical beauty.

The audience interprets the meaning of the story through the perspective of the storyteller as the perspective of the storyteller influences the way in which events are reported and understood. My point of view as the storyteller and author of creative expression presented the pursuit for physical beauty as a desire that presents pain, frustration and act of striving. My viewpoint as a storyteller consequently influences

the audience's gaze. The audience's gaze refers to the lens in which content is presented. The gaze presents information that is guided by the point of view that influences the perception and meaning of the information (Foucault, 1963). The audience's gaze does not present physical beauty as an ideal that is effortless and natural to achieve similarly to beauty commercials but presents physical beauty as a frustrating chore to up-keep.

The audience's gaze affects how the audience interacts with content. The meaning that the audience extracts from their gaze informs their engagement with the content. Engagement with content on Instagram is anchored by its interactive functions. Interactivity is a pivotal aspect of how content is consumed on Instagram and separates it from other storytelling and creative expression mediums. Instagram presents distinct interactive functions that Instagram followers employ as feedback for the content presented. Instagram's algorithms also cause certain content to be presented to specific Instagram followers according to their interactivity (Milan, 2015).The interactive affordance in the investigation of Instagram as a medium is explained in further detail in chapter five.

The investigation of Instagram as a storytelling and creative expression medium was carried out by having Instagram followers interact with images and videos narratives and messages which were created on an Instagram account created for this study. The Instagram account was called @pursuit4beaut and dealt with topics and themes which explore the standards of physical beauty. These images and videos were created for the consumption of Instagram followers.

Findings

The affordances and limitations of each of the image and video functions were investigated in the creation of concise narrativity. The additional functions of boomerangs, music filters and some of Instagram's other editing tools have been explored in the creation of these narratives to investigate how they serve as storytelling aids in character construction, conflict set up and resolution, narration, manipulation of the gaze, cause and effect relationships, etc.

Image Functions

1. Image without caption

   When an image is posted on the Instagram account page, it is consequently displayed in the Instagram feed. As an image is displayed on the Instagram feed it is presented on its own, amongst a variety of other content created by other Instagrammers. But on the Instagram account page, the image is presented as a square puzzle piece of a larger narrative (the account page). The square images act as an expression of the larger narrative which continues to unfold piece by piece.

   The larger narrative is created by a grid display format where images are placed as equal sized squares in rows of 3. The grid display affords a tiled display of images where each image can be understood in isolation and is also perceived as a whole. The equal sized squares form a pattern which is perceived as a whole. Having all Instagrammers' images displayed in equal sized squares democratises the display of images across the Instagram community. The democratisation of the display of images allows for images to be consumed in the same way and presents Instagrammers as equal contributors of content creation and distribution.

   The sequence of the images on the grid are displayed according to the order of time in which the images have been posted, in reverse chronological order. The most recent image posted by the Instagrammer is presented as the first image in the grid, positioned at the top left of the grid. Instagrammers are not able to manipulate the sequence of the images displayed in the grid. As Instagrammers select an image to post they are directed to a preview of how the image will be displayed in isolation, however, Instagrammers are not able to get a preview of how their selected images will appear in the display grid. There are external applications to Instagram which can help Instagrammers plan how images will appear on the Instagram grid such as *Inpreview*. External applications such as *Inpreview* are linked to Instagram's distribution page as the external application directs Instagrammers to Instagram's

distribution page to post images once Instagrammers are satisfied with the sequence of images on the grid. Instagrammers are then able to plan the sequence of the images. However, once the images have been posted on Instagram, the sequence of images cannot be manipulated or changed unless Instagrammers delete selected images.

In this study, the larger narrative of the Instagram account explores the desire for physical beauty. Even though the images accumulate to form a collaged narrative on the grid, each image is understood separately when it is posted. The image without a caption that was created for this study is presented below.



Creation of the image narrative

In the creation of a narrative image, it was important to create an image that read as a story. A story needs to be made up of cause-and-effect events experienced by characters (Fludernik, 2009). In the narrative image created for this study, I created an image of a bare hand, with no jewellery, no long nails or anything that symbolises beauty, that is reaching for beauty products. In this image the non- beautified bare hand is the character while the event is the reaching for the beauty products which serve as the character's desire. The absence of 'beautifying' elements such as accessories and colour cause

the character's attraction to the colourful beauty products. The use of the sun ray peering through the plants and shining on the beauty products shows the glorification of the beauty products which anchors them as a desire.

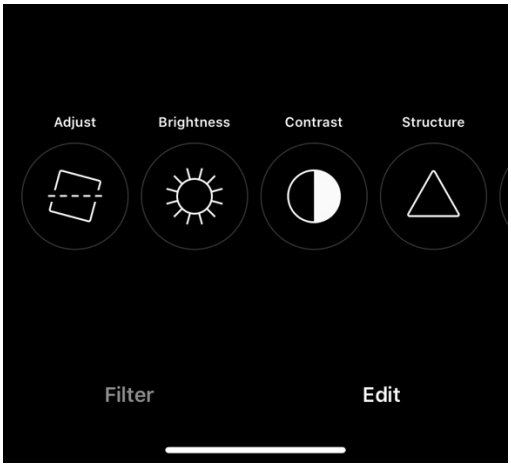
The juxtaposition of the black and white image of the hand and surroundings against the coloured beauty products presents the conflict of the character and their desire existing in two different worlds. The juxtaposition of the black and white and colour also communicates that artificial beauty is more desirable than natural beauty.

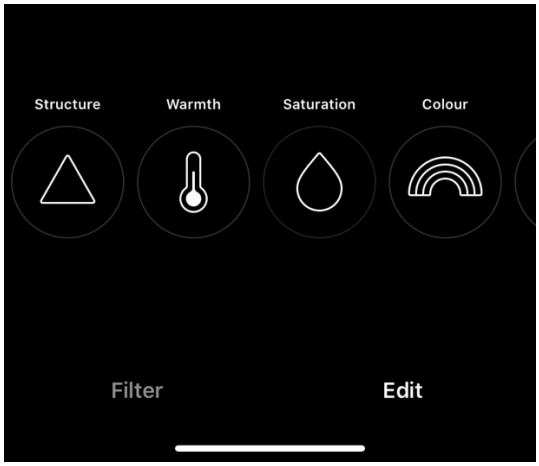
Editing Affordances on Instagram image function

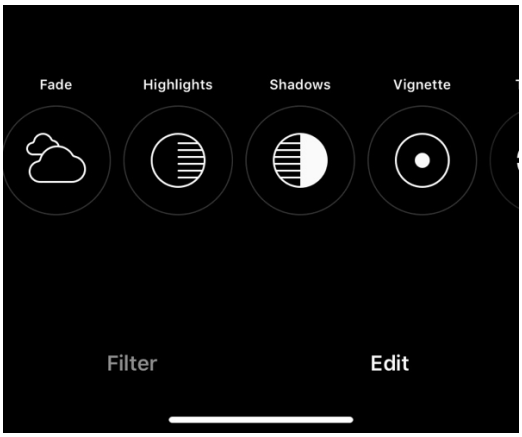
In my creation of the image narrative, I manipulated the characteristics of the original image in order to enhance the story of the desire for beauty by creating the juxtaposition of black and white and colour. The juxtaposition of black and white and colour was created with editing tools outside the Instagram platform. The Instagram image function allows users to take pictures by accessing their cell phone camera through Instagram but also allows for users to post pictures which already exist from their photo album. Therefore, users are not limited to the editing tools on Instagram but may edit and manipulate their images with other editing tools, including those on the device on which the Instagram platform itself is accessed.

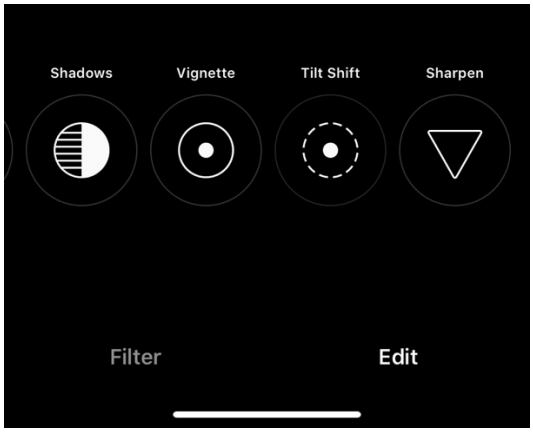
Even if an image has already been edited out of Instagram and is accessed through Instagram, the image may be edited further using Instagram's editing tools. In my creation of this narrative, I edited the image further by employing Instagram's contrast and sharpening features available amongst the editing tools presented in the image functions.

Instagram's editing tools for images reference professional photography editing tools. The image editing tools, including filters are presented below.


Adjust
Brightness
Contrast
Structure
Filter
Edit

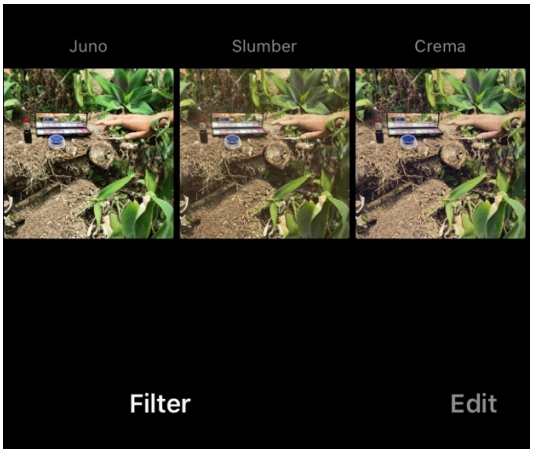

Structure
Warmth
Saturation
Colour
Filter
Edit

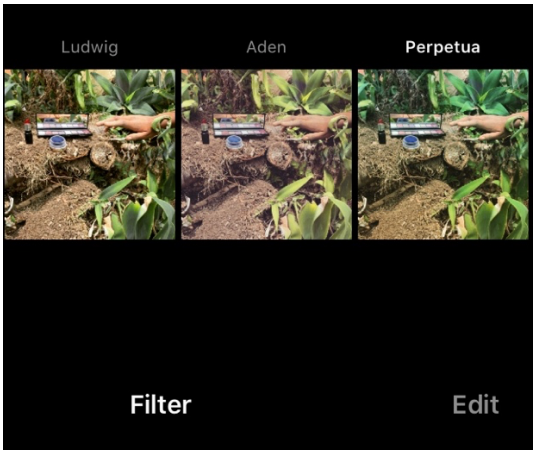

Fade
Highlights
Shadows
Vignette
Filter
Edit


Shadows
Vignette
Tilt Shift
Sharpen
Filter
Edit

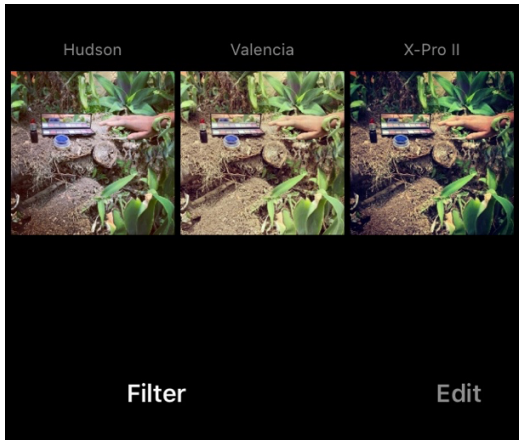

Normal
Clarendon
Gingham
Filter
Edit


Moon
Lark
Reyes
Filter
Edit

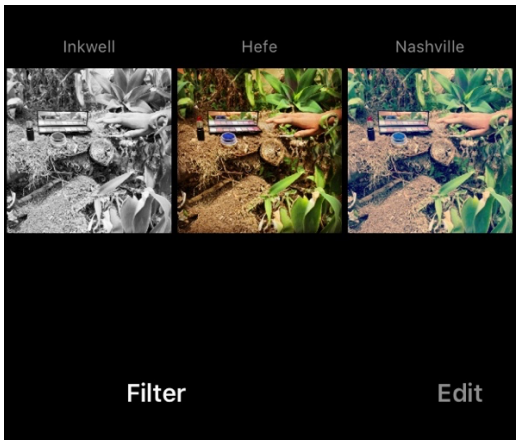

Juno
Slumber
Crema
Filter
Edit


Ludwig
Aden
Perpetua
Filter
Edit









Editing tools allow for the storyteller to design the lens through which the audience views the image, thus introducing the perspective in which the narrative elements are perceived and understood. Perspective pertains to functions which afford editing techniques and camera aesthetic effects which alter the mood and/or attitude in which the audience perceives the narrative image. By manipulating some characteristics of the image, the storyteller can employ the editing tools in a way that serves the story that is being told, by characterising the atmosphere and style of the narrative while also drawing the audience's eye to certain elements of the story by highlighting those elements through editing tools as the image is perceived by the audience.

In the editing process for the image with no caption, I used editing tools to create a story. This juxtaposition of colour and black and white was applied during editing by having the beauty products in colour against a black and white environment in order to present artificial beauty as more attractive or

desirable than natural beauty. Not only does the juxtaposition of colour and black and white construct the position of the artificial beauty as more attractive than natural beauty but it also introduces conflict between the two ideas as they co-exist in the same space. The coloured beauty products exist in the black and white environment of nature and does not fit in with the environment. This introduces the idea of artificial beauty intruding onto the territory of natural beauty. Instagram's contrast and sharpening functions were used to further enhance the juxtaposition of the colour and black and white in order to punctuate the conflict and positions of the artificial versus the natural.

The character who is the bare hand is also perceived as being a part of the natural environment which resembles natural beauty as the hand is also presented in black and white, similarly to the black and white environment. Therefore, the character presents natural beauty but desires artificial beauty as the hand is seen reaching out for the colourful beauty products. The display of the character's desire has been anchored by an editing tool which was used to place the sunray shining onto the beauty products. The editing choices of the coloured beauty products and the sunray shining onto the beauty products cause the character to be attracted to the beauty products which signify artificial beauty.

Therefore, the editing tools used in the creation of this image assist in communicating a story about the conflicting choices between natural beauty and artificial beauty and a character's desire for artificial beauty contrasting to her natural surroundings which are presented as dull and less desirable.

<u>Limitations of concise narrativity of an image without a caption</u>

An Instagram narrative is read as a captured moment in action. An Instagram image is limited to convey a scene in a story in one captured moment in a way that communicates an event within a story, similarly to tableaux. A tableau is defined as figures that create a still image of a scene of a story. An image of Instagram is able serve as a scene that is part of the story which can be presented through the grid of images on the Instagram account page. An Instagram image is a narrative part of a whole narrative (Instagram account

page). The Instagram account page is compiled by the profile information and images which are arranged and displayed in the display grid. When numerous images are placed, one after an another, each image is able to communicate an event within the story and contributes to the progression and unfolding of the story. Therefore, the image without a caption created for this study is a scene presented within the story of @pursuit4beaut. The story on Instagram account page develops in similarly framed and structured scenes that are standardised by the square frame structure of images on the Instagram account page. Therefore, square framed scenes that can be used to develop a story serve as Instagram's structural limitations in concise narrativity when creating an image without a caption.

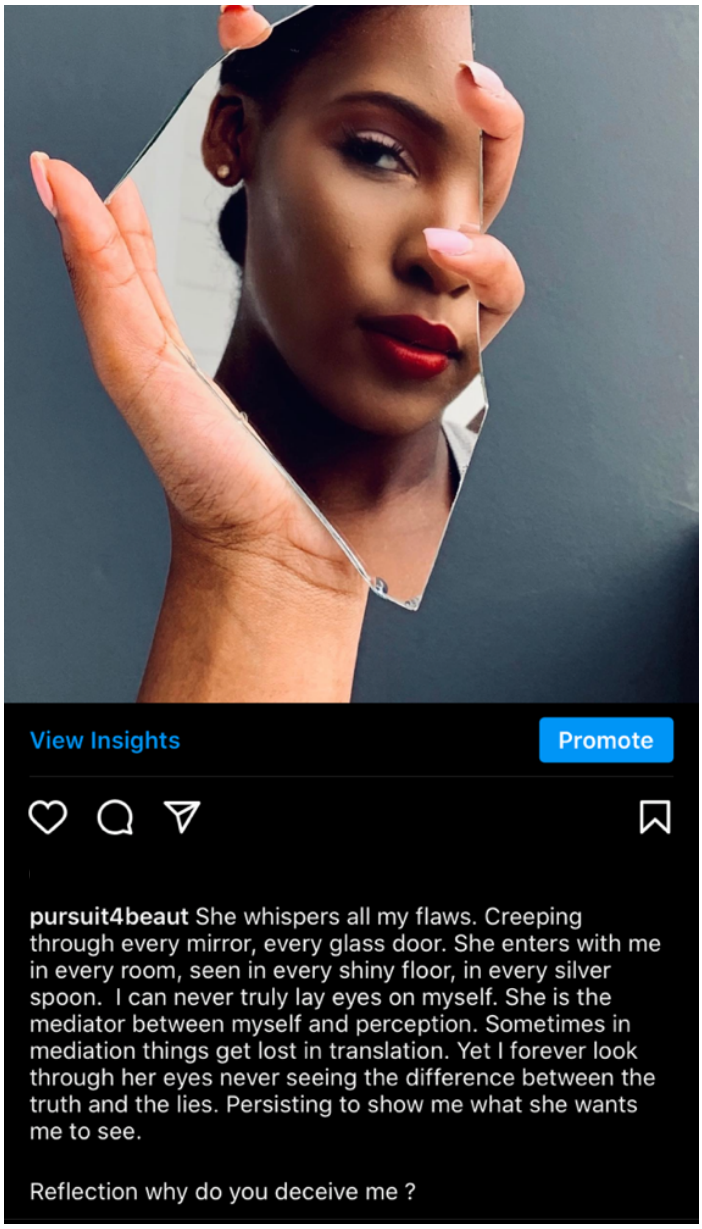
How Instagrammers choose to create the content of the scene in the story of his or her Instagram account page is at the Instagrammer's discretion. Instagrammers can create the contents of their image in any way they like as they are the authors of their Instagram account page. However, Instagram also presents limitations in the creation of content which are imposed by the policies seen in the Instagram community guidelines. Instagrammers are limited to creating content which is stipulated in the Instagram community guidelines. The Instagram community guidelines state that the content that Instagrammers create should not include images or videos that are obscene, politically offensive or threatening to users.

The limitations of concise narrativity are reduced on Instagram's image functions with the inclusion of a caption.

2. <u>Image with a caption</u>

   The image with a caption has the same affordances in the creation of the image narrative as discussed above. The difference between the image and the image with a caption is the written text which gets presented with the image. Therefore, in the discussion of the findings of an image with a caption, I will focus on the affordance and limitations of the caption and its anchoring role when juxtaposed with the image in the creation of a concise narrative. In

my discussion of the affordance of the caption I will be discussing the image with a caption that I created for the study which is presented below.



Creation of image with a caption narrative

The image consists of a woman's hand clasping a broken piece of a mirror with the reflection of a woman with what appears to be a proud or confident gaze. This image tells the story of a woman proudly looking into the mirror. The caption, which is the written text displayed beneath the image, acts as the extension of the story. The caption extends the meaning of the story

established in the image as the caption tells the story of the haunting of this woman's deceitful reflection.

Affordances and Limitations of a caption on an image

The caption anchors the meaning of the image as both the image and the caption are understood as one bi-media text. Visual texts' meanings such as images are up to interpretation from the visual cues and signs that the author of the story creates. However, written text is compiled with words that have precise definitions, unless written in an ambiguous style, that conveys meaning which more accurately reflects the author's intended meaning. Therefore, the text anchors the meaning and guides the intended perception of the image. The caption changes the way that the image is perceived. Looking at the image with the caption in mind, the image is no longer just a story of a woman proudly looking into a mirror, but the woman reflected in the mirror is now understood as a deceitful reflection which haunts the woman the hand belongs to. The hand and the mirror are now understood as opposing characters, presenting conflict.

Therefore, a caption is seen to advance the understanding of the story as the fuller meaning of the story is realized by the context the caption provides. Through one image and a paragraph a story is able to be told, presenting a concise narrative. The use of the caption is a useful tool if the author of the story wishes to ensure more secure direction to the intended meaning of the narrative instead of having the meaning of the narrative loosely changing from one perspective to another. The meanings of images are dynamic and do not carry meaning in a one-way process from the author's intended meaning of the image to the individual (Curtin, 2009). The meaning of an image is formed by "complex inter-relationships between the individual and image" that is facilitated by culture and society (Curtin, 2009).

The anchoring of an image with a caption limits the multiplicity of meanings a viewer can assign, thus limiting the story. The meaning of the image alone does not objectivity depict one meaning (Curtin, 2009). Instagram followers who see the image may produce a connoted meaning of the image from their

perception and understanding of the elements of the image that is framed by their cultural conventions. With the inclusion of text, additional signs are attached to the image which produces the intended meaning and guide the way in which Instagram followers decode the fuller meaning of the bi-media text.

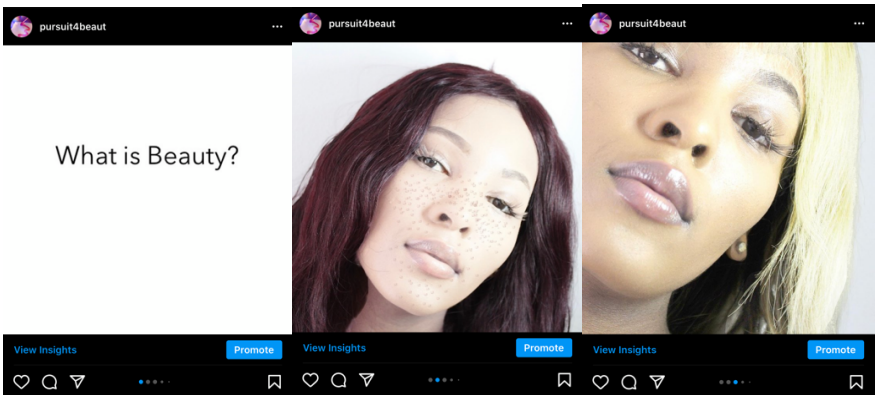
However, the use of the caption to extend the meaning of the story is limited to 2 200 characters (Brown & Tiggemann, 2020). That means the storyteller needs to carefully consider how to convey the information of the narrative and anchor the intended meaning within 2 200 characters. This further exemplifies the concept of concise narrativity as a key characteristic of Instagram.

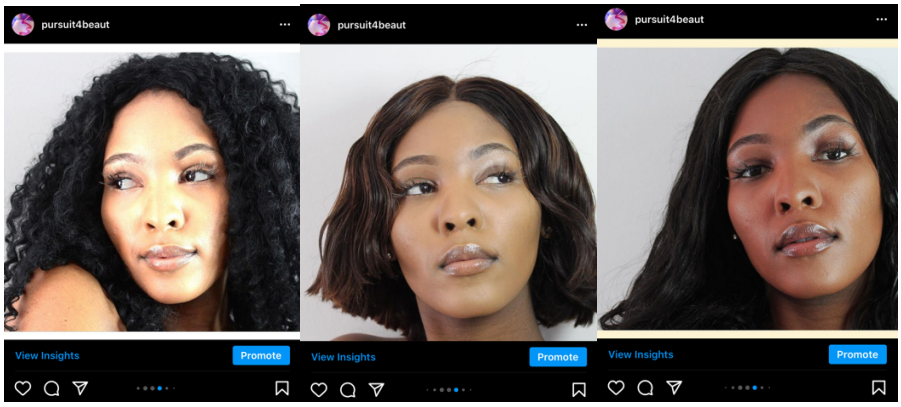
Instagram image functions do not only allow the extension of a narrative by means of captions but also allow users to extend narratives through multiple images by means of the multiple image post.

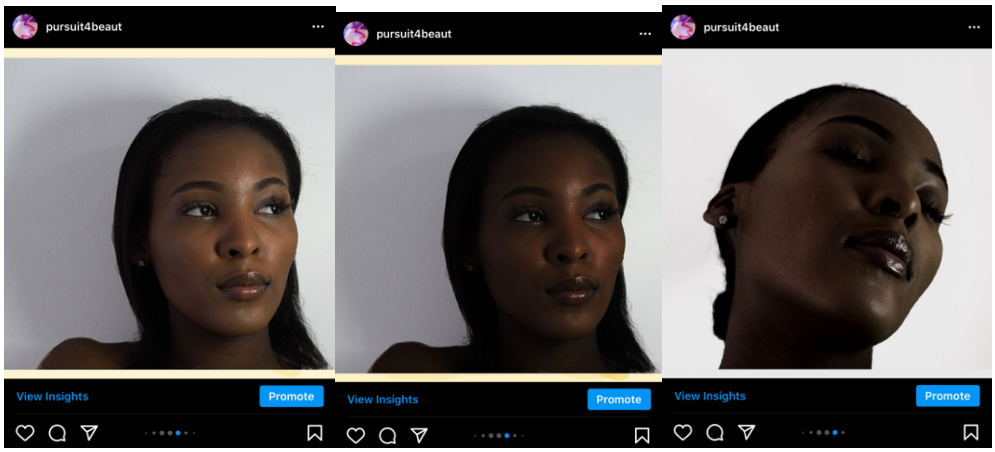
3. Multiple image post

   The multiple image post function allows for a maximum of 10 images to be posted. The images are presented as one post which consists of 10 episodes in an image series. Therefore, in the creation of the narrative using the multiple image post function, the author of the story is aware that the multiple images are presented as one series and therefore constitutes one narrative.

   In my creation of a narrative using the multiple image post function, I presented a series about beauty not being confined to a specific race and conveyed that beauty can be understood by feeling beautiful in your own skin i.e. racial identity. This series unfolded across 10 images which displayed one woman exploring different hair and skin colours as both skin colour and hair are signifiers of race and are implicated with the connotations of beauty.

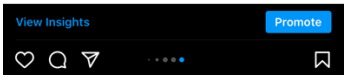








Being
comfortable in
your own skin.



Creation of multiple image narrative

I used the first and last frame of the multiple image post as bookends which served as the beginning and ending of the narrative respectively. I used the 8 frames in between as the middle of the narrative and presented a progression in the unfolding of narrative by presenting the exploration of skin colour from light skin to dark skin accompanied by the exploration of hair colour and textures. The change in hairstyles in the progression of the light skin to dark skin images was used to anchor the racial commentary on setting beauty standards according to race.

Affordance and limitations of multiple image post

The multiple image post allows for the captured moment of a narrative from a narrative image to be extended and show a progression in events. However, these are not linked through causal logic but by an associational one. Therefore, a series of captured moments of a scene are linked together. The progression of events through the multiple images allows the author of the narrative to provide users with the structure in which the narrative should be consumed. The author sets the order in which the multiple images are presented and gets to control how the narrative unfolds over 10 narrative units and should be consumed through 10 “episodes”. The structure of the multiple image post serves narrative conciseness in the way that it restricts the narrative to unfolding within 10 frames. The narrative is organised into equal parts and the revelation of information to the audience is controlled as through presentation in 10 parts that the audience consumes one part at a time. Because the multiple image post is interactive, the audience is can control the pace at which the narrative unfolds. Users, who serve as the audience, swipe through the images and therefore control when they are exposed to the next narrative unit as they swipe to the next frame, having the narrative unfold statically.

The multiple post image tells a story about a character who is on a quest to discover the meaning of beauty by experimenting with different racial identities as conversations of beauty have previously included discussions of race by presenting some races as more beautiful than others. The character

is constructed by the repetition of the same woman who is presented as the subject in each image and is thus considered as the protagonist of the narrative. There is repetition in the presentation of the same woman; however, she is presented in different skin tones. Therefore, viewers are made aware that her skin tones have been edited or artificially changed in the series of images as skin tones are not commonly known to naturally change as drastically as the range of skin tones presented in the series of images. The first image in the series of the multiple image post sets up the context of the quest for the meaning of beauty through the question that is posed to the viewers “what is beauty?”. Therefore, the edited or artificial changes of skin tones are located in the discourses of beauty and include the conversations about race and colourism in the ideas surrounding beauty. The issue of race in the discourses of beauty present conflict which stems from the effects of colonialism resulting in ideas such as some races presented as better than others and colourism. Therefore, the meaning of the conflict is located in cultural and societal factors presented in the discourses of beauty and race.

The first image which poses the question “What is beauty?” causes the character to explore what beauty is by presenting herself in different skin tones which connote different racial identities. By exploring skin from the lightest to the darkest skin tone there is a progression in the journey from ideas of beauty which relate to race that commonly presents lighter skin as better than darker skin and causes the character to explore further into the racial ideas which see darker skin as being further away from beauty -- until she discovers that beauty is found in being comfortable in her own skin.

In contrast to the static storytelling element of narratives created by Instagram’s image functions are Instagram’s video functions which present motion pictures.

Video functions

The introduction of satellite television in the mid-70s caused the electronic medium to become one of the main elements of audio-visual entertainment as its “technology of immediate transmission set the stage for globally networked audio-visual information and communicate transfer in real time” (Spielmann, 2006: 57). Videos were created with the technical requirements and affordances of television as a foundation which is seen in video aesthetics which use processors, synthesisers and analogue computers (Spielmann, 2006).

The immediacy that video affords and its potential for processing produces the idea of a medium for images that is different from other time based media such as photography and film (Spielmann, 2006). A video produces an image that is constantly changing, therefore, it I best understood as transformation image (Spielmann, 2006). Videos are electronically recorded, and are then transferred to another device and finally transmitted to a monitor (Spielmann, 2006). However, the cell phone video allows for videos to be recorded and displayed all on one device. The Instagram video functions have been built on the technical affordances of a cell phones which have a camera to capture both images and videos.

In this study the following video functions were explored and their affordances and limitations in concise narrativity and creative expression.



1-minute video

Soundtrack: Freestyle 4 by Kanye West (Instrumental)

1. 1 minute video

   The video function that allows users to create and post videos on their Instagram account page is consequently displayed on the Instagram feed as well. This video is limited to the duration of 1 minute. Instagram affords users two ways to create the 1-minute video.

   Affordances and limitations of 1-minute video

   Instagram's 1 minute video function presents the affordance for users to create the video by accessing their cell phone camera through the Instagram application and recording the video. Once the user has completed recording the video, the video is automatically transported to video editing features, thus, users are afforded editing tools for their videos. However, the video editing features are limited to the 27 filter options which were displayed in the image functions above, with the addition of a trimming editing feature where users are limited to only trimming the beginning and end of the video. Therefore, users are unable to trim and cut different parts of the video and put them together. The video editing features also include the option for users to select the frame of the video that they would like to have as the thumbnail of the video.

   The second way Instagram affords the creation of a 1-minute video is by allowing users to access an existing video in their cell phone photo album via the Instagram application. Here, users are afforded the opportunity to create and edit the content of the 1-minute videos outside Instagram. Therefore, the creation of the video is not limited to Instagram's recording and editing features. The affordance of the 1-minute video function which allows users to access their photo albums on their cell phone expands the borders of creativity as it gives users the freedom to create narratives in the way they want without restricting the users to Instagram's recording and video editing features. Therefore, the predominant limitation of the 1-minute video on Instagram is the duration of the video while the affordances allows users to record and edit videos in any way they wish through any video recording and editing tools available both within and outside of Instagram.

I found it useful to create a video for this study that is not restricted to Instagram's recording and editing features as I was recording myself as I performed. Instagram's video recording feature requires Instagrammers to hold their finger on the recording button throughout the whole recording of the video which restricted my performance abilities in the creation of the video. This caused me to explore Instagram's ability to access existing videos in the cell phone photo album through the application.

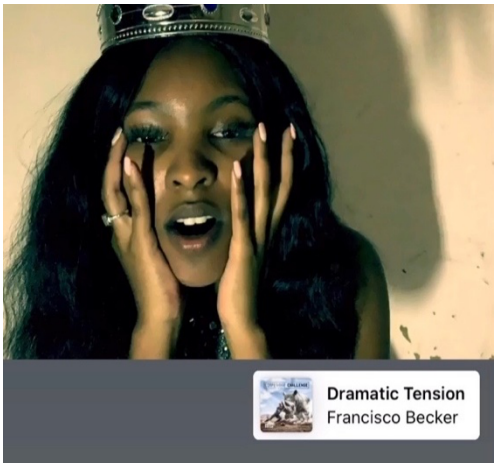
I recorded a video on a video camera placed on a tripod that allowed me to record without having to hold the camera. I recorded the performance of a story about a girl who is scrutinising her body image with the desire to take a perfect 'selfie' image. The audience only views the character and the story unfold in a distorted mirror which highlights the character's distorted view of her body image. The character is introduced to the viewers as she appears in the frames of the distorted mirror looking at herself. The longer she looks at herself, the greater the conflict that is established between herself and her body image as she picks and pulls different parts of her body and spits at her reflection growing increasingly frustrated with what she sees in the mirror. Therefore, a cause-and-effect relationship is established as looking in the mirror causes the character to scrutinize her body. The character identifies parts of her body that she does not like which causes frustration. The more she sees the imperfections of her body the more frustrated she becomes as she desires to take the perfect 'selfie'. The reflection is the antagonist, and the audience does not get to see the protagonist but understands that the protagonist is there as a reflection in the mirror which cannot exist alone. The video ends at the climax of the conflict as she hurls a drink at the mirror.

The video was edited on a separated editing application with the use of jump cuts, jumping from one part of the timeline to another as seen in the images below. The jump cuts in the editing process of the video afforded for the conflict in the story to be heightened as it carries the viewer from one conflicting moment to another, rapidly and increasingly intensifies which escalates the tension presented in the story.

The video editing also included adding a soundtrack which provided an eerie backdrop to the confrontation and conflict the character had with her body image. Jump cuts and the inclusion of soundtracks are editing tools that are not available in Instagram's video editing features for the 1-minute video. I used these editing tools in order to create the illusion of the action taking place over a longer period of time in the discourse time of the narrative than the 1-minute story time. The manipulation of discourse time is useful in concise narrativity and was also useful in escalating the conflict in the story.

Instagram's video editing features are limited to very little manipulation in the editing process. The presentation of the time presented in the video is limited to the time of presented in the recording of the video. Therefore, the discourse time and the story time are the same, presenting isochrony in the narrative. The video editing options do- not allow the manipulation of time in the discourse time and only allow the manipulation of how long the video is by trimming the video within the 1-minute duration restriction.

The affordance that Instagram offers to record and edit a video outside of Instagram to be distributed on Instagram shows that Instagram's 1-minute video function does not limit users to Instagram editing tools. Users are afforded other editing tools as a storytelling aid as they make creative choices to express their narratives. 1-minute is limited time to introduce a character, their desire, cause-and effect relationships and the conflict presented in the story, therefore, the story unfolds rapidly and presents a story with a fast pace and rhythm.



15-second video

2. 15 second video

The Instagram story video function allows users to create videos which are limited to the duration of 15 seconds per video. In the exploration of this function, I created a 15 second video to post using the Instagram story function. The video I created is a video that shows make up being drawn towards a woman dressed as a princess which leads to her transformation of a bare face to a full face of make-up. This video shows the creative expression of beauty and transformation. Playing dress up and putting make up on is a common idea in the exploration of beauty. The way in which the make-up products are depicted to move on their own towards the woman, present make up products as having their own agency. The agency of the make-up is extended as the make-up products crawl up to the women's face and instantly transform her face into a full make up look without the makeup being manually applied. The agency of make-up that is presented in this video communicates an idea of the power of make-up and its ability to transform individuals.

Affordances and limitations

In the creation of the 15 second video, I discovered that Instagram affords the creation of an Instagram story videos in two ways. The Instagram story function allows for the access to the cell phone camera in order to record the

video. The Instagram story function also allows for Instagrammers to access existing videos from their phone's photo album from the Instagram application.

I created a stop animation video to shows the gravitation of the make-up moving on its own. Having access to existing videos allow users to have creative freedom in the way that they create their 15-second videos. The stop animation editing was created on an editing application separate from Instagram. Once I was able to access my previously made video from the Instagram story function, I editing the video further using Instagram story editing tools.

I used the music filter to select a soundtrack for the video. When selecting a soundtrack for the video there is a search bar for the user to enter and search the music of their choice. Users are then able to select which 15 seconds of the song they would like to include in their 15 second video.

The 15-second video created for this study begins with the dragging of make-up products which move in one direction without the viewer seeing where it is moving to. The make-up products then climb onto the woman. As she touches her face a transformation takes place where her bare face transforms to a full make up look in a second. The use of the soundtrack created suspense in the leading up to the big revelation of the transformation. The soundtrack provides dramatic tension and is characterised by staccato violin sounds which rapidly builds up to a climax where the transformation in the video is revealed. With the Instagram story allowing users to select which 15 seconds of the song they would like to include in the video I was able to strategically align the time of the climax in the story with the transformation in the video. The climax of the soundtrack heightens the spectacle of the revelation of the full face of make-up. Therefore, the music filter here assisted in the atmosphere and spectacle of the creative expression of beauty and the power and transformation of make-up displayed in the video on the Instagram story.

The Instagram story is made up of the 15 second videos afforded by the Instagram story function. Users are limited to creating 15 second videos in the Instagram story function, however, they can create multiple 15 second videos which will compile all their 15 second videos, created in the last 24 hours and display these videos as narrative fragments in users' Instagram stories.

Once one 15 second video has played users are automatically directed to the next 15 second video if the user has more than one video in their Instagram story. Once users have gone through all the 15 second videos of a user, they are automatically directed to the next available user's stories which has been detected by the algorithm as an account of indicated interest based on users' interactions. The display and viewing of Instagram stories are limited to 24 hours. After a 15 second video has been displayed for 24 hours it is automatically deleted unless the Instagrammer saves the video as a highlight which will be accessed from their account page and not from the Instagram story function.

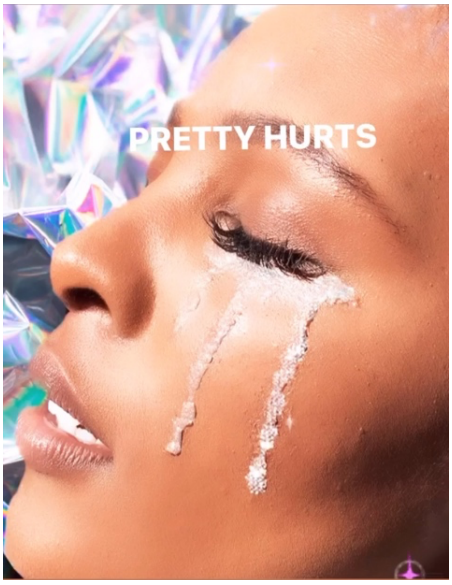
The 24-hour period that displays the Instagram story affords for Instagrammers to create Instagram stories which are perceived as independent from one another and there is no causal link or continuous thread carried through the content after 24 hours. Every 24 hours Instagrammers are afforded the ability to create a thread of new Instagram stories. Instagrammers who wish to have their stories exist beyond the given 24 hours are able to save the Instagram story as a highlight. However, this saved Instagram story is limited to being displayed on the Instagram account page and is removed from Instagram stories. Therefore, Instagrammers are limited to creating episodic content which does not have a cause-and-effect relationship beyond the 24-hour window of a display. The Instagram story function also allows for videos to be created out of still images

3. <u>Instagram story with image and music filter</u>

   The Instagram story function allows users to post either videos or still images. Both the videos and images are displayed as a video of 15 seconds. In the

creation of the Instagram story with the use of an image and music filter, I accessed a photo in my photo album through the Instagram story function.

The photo displayed the image of a woman with glittered tears. This image tells the story of the glamourisation of pain for beauty as shown below.



IG story with music filter

The creation of the glitter tears was done on photoshop. However, the photo was edited further using Instagram's editing functions on Instagram story. There are several filters which are available on Instagram's story function in the editing tools.

Affordances and limitations

Some of the filters on the Instagram story function are animated as they are accompanied with moving elements. An example of these animated filters was applied to the image. The 'sparkles' filter was applied to the image. This filter is accompanied with moving sparks to create the effect of the image sparkling. The 'sparkles' filter heightened the glamourisation of pain and beauty which was communicated in the narrative of the image as the woman in the image was now presented as desirable or of beauty as she sparkles in her pain. This shows that the Instagram filters are able to contribute towards the atmosphere and themes presented in the original content. By altering the

presentation of the image with the use of filters, users are able to manipulate the tone and style of the image. The filters are able to introduce new themes or extend existing ones.

Once I had layered the image with the 'sparkles' filter, I layered the image narrative with the music filter editing function. I selected the song *Pretty Hurts* by Beyonce. The song is about how damaged one's inner self becomes in the pursuit of beauty and excellence of one's physical appearance as one is crushed by unrealistic beauty standards.

In the selection of music in Instagram's music filter, users are able to layer 15 seconds of the lyrics of the song that they have selected to be included in the video. I selected the chorus of the song where the main message of the song is repeated and overlaid the image with the lyrics of the song. The lyrics of the song appear in sync with the music similarly to karaoke captions. This brings attention to each word as it is sung; in doing so a story is narrated through the music. Without the music the image shows a woman with glittered tears and does not constitute a story, however, with the music and the lyrics the meaning of the image is anchored, and a story is narrated. The meaning of the song now presents the image of the woman with glittered tears as a character who desires to live up to external standards of physical beauty but is conflicted by the damage of her inner self in pursuit of that physical beauty, similarly to what is expressed in the lyrics of the song. Therefore, the song and lyrics afford narration and context of the image in the concise narrative.

The lyrics act as written text in the narrative image as the image and lyrics are displayed together with the attention drawn to each word of the written text. Having the lyrics of the song moving over a static image presents the lyrics and music as a point of focus as the viewers' attention is drawn towards the moving lyrics which are written over the image, thus bringing attention to the meaning and narrative communicated.

With the lyrics being brought to the front while the image is sent to the back presents the lyrics in the foreground and presents the image as a background

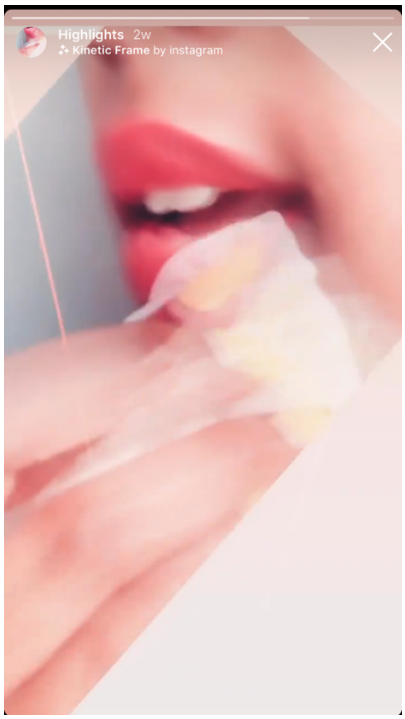
which accompanies the written text. The last Instagram story video function investigated in the study was the boomerang function.

4. Video with Boomerang function

   The boomerang function which is available on Instagram's story function presents an affordance where the user films a 15 second video through a boomerang recording setting. Once the video has been recorded it plays the action in a back-and-forth motion repeatedly.

   Affordances and limitations

   The boomerang function on Instagram does not afford video editing but rather affords for video recording. An Instagrammer cannot post a video that has already been made and then apply a boomerang effect to the video. The boomerang function is the only Instagram video function that limits Instagrammers to record the video with an Instagram recording setting and cannot be applied to a pre-existing video.



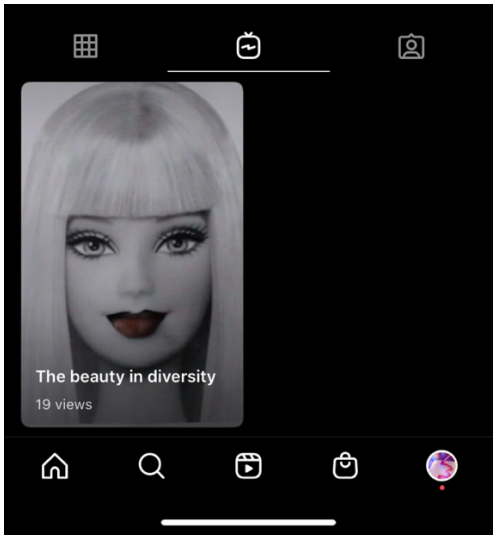
Boomerang video

In the creation of the boomerang video indicated above, I recorded the removal of red lipstick. Because the action plays back and forth the removal of the lipstick is played forward and then reversed, placing the removed lipstick back on the lips. The back-and-forth motion of the video displays creative expression of moving between two realities which reveal different results: lipstick on or lipstick off. The jumping back and forth between two different results simulates the back-and-forth journey of decision making when weighing two different results. Therefore, the boomerang video expresses the weighing of two options constantly going back and forth posing the question "lipstick on or lipstick off?".

The boomerang effect shows the doing and the undoing of an action. The boomerang video is limited to one action that gets played back and forth. The two different results of the forwards and reversed action provides two realities. It transports viewers between two realities and juxtaposes these realities by playing them back-to-back repeatedly.

All videos that are distributed on the Instagram story function are limited to a duration of 15 seconds. This is the shortest duration of videos in Instagram's video function. In contrast to this is the longest possible duration presented in Instagram's video function, that is videos created for Instagram television.

5. <u>15-minute video on Instagram Television (IGTV)</u>
   Instagram television is an Instagram video function which allows the maximum duration of 15-minute videos.



Instagram Television video

Affordances and limitations

The Instagram television video (IGTV) function is used by uploading an existing video from users' cell phone photo album which is accessed from IGTV. The video for IGTV cannot be recorded using any of Instagram's video recording functions. Therefore, users are limited to create their own videos outside of Instagram. There are no video editing features available on Instagram for the content of the video. However, users are able to select the frame which they wish to be presented as the thumbnail of the video. The thumbnail is also accompanied by the title of the video which users create as well. Because IGVT does not afford video recording or video editing tools in the creation of content, it acts solely as a distribution channel for content. All content distributed using the IGTV function is limited to a maximum time duration of 15 minutes.

In my creation of content for IGTV, I created a 15-minute video which was about taking the time to pay attention and notice the beauty in differences. The video begins with a monologue about the struggle of keeping up with beauty standards. The monologue is performed with masks of different celebrities and beauty icons in popular culture. The remainder of the video includes shots of a variety of different plants and flowers to highlight diversity found in nature and shots of my recorded drawing processes as I use drawings as illustrations in my narrative which are accompanied by the

narration of voiceovers. The voiceovers are executed in a conversational style where beauty, comparison and diversity are discussed. Altogether the video acts as a creative expression and commentary on the importance of diversity in discourses surrounding beauty.

The length of the video afforded me the opportunity to explore the inclusion of different scenes and different mediums such as drawing as an illustration tool in the storytelling. Because IGTV affords Instagrammers freedom to create their own videos and make their own choices in their content creation outside of Instagram, the way in which content is created depends on the Instagrammer. However, in my creation of the IGTV content, I found that because IGTV allows for the lengthiest videos in Instagram's video function, for the creation of a concise narrative and creative expression, IGTV affords the most chapters i.e., scenes or parts to the narrative. The pace of the narrative is able to be slowed down in the unfolding of narrative fragments. More and detailed information is also able to be given in comparison to some of Instagram's other video functions such as the 15 second video or the 1-minute video. Therefore, IGTV is effective in presenting depth in a discussion or presenting detailed information about a particular topic or a process.

Conclusion of Findings

Images

All images that are posted on the Instagram account page are displayed in a grid format where images are placed as equal sized squares in rows of 3. The grid display affords a tiled display of images where each image can be understood in isolation and is also perceived as a whole. Each image is limited to a square framed structure. The equal sized squares form a pattern which is perceived as a whole. Having all Instagrammers' images displayed in equal sized squares democratises the display of images across the Instagram community. The democratisation of the

display of images allows for images to be consumed in the same way and presents Instagrammers as equal contributors of content creation and distribution.

In the creation of a narrative, Images afford the representation of a scene that is part of a story, similarly to a tableau, and does not constitute of a story on its own but can present elements of narrativity such as characters, desires, space and time. Instagrammers are afforded the option to capture and edit pictures outside of Instagram, therefore they are not limited to Instagram's editing tools, while being able to distribute their previously edited image on Instagram. Instagram's picture editing functions reference 20th century photography and present Instagrammers with the choice of 27 filter options. Editing allows the storyteller to design the lens through which the audience views the image, thus introducing a point of view. Editing tools may allow the representation of conflict. An example of this is seen in the juxtaposition of the black and white and colour editing technique in the image without the caption, created for this study. When captions are attached to an image, the caption affords the anchoring of the intended fuller meaning of the image which is understood as one bi-media text. Since images afford the representation of a scene, the multiple image post function affords a progression of which are presented in chronological order and afford causal links between the image scenes which are limited to 10 scenes.

Video Functions

Instagrammers are able to access existing videos from the Instagram platform or they can access their camera through Instagram and record a video. Therefore, Instagrammers are afforded creative freedom in how they go about creating videos of creative expression or narratives. The only video function that cannot allow Instagrammers to access existing videos is the boomerang function. The boomerang effect affords the creative expression between two realities in time. The boomerang function is a video recording function, while the Instagram Television (IGTV) video function is a distribution function and does not allow Instagram to record videos.

The most dominant limitations presented in the video functions are the time durations which each function affords. More specifically the 1-minute video allows for limited time to develop a narrative which results in quickened pace in the revelation of information and the development of events. In contrast to this, Instagram Television (IGTV) affords the slowest progression in events amongst all video functions. The pace of the narrative is able to be slower in the unfolding of narrative fragments. More and detailed information is also able to be given in comparison to some of Instagram's other video functions Therefore, IGTV is effective in presenting depth in a discussion or presenting detailed information about a particular topic or a process.

The Story function presents the shorted maximum duration of a video at 15 seconds and displays these 15 second videos for a 24-hour period. The automatic clearing of Instagram stories which have been on display for the last 24 hours, presents Instagram stories as independent from one another as there are no causal links presented from the Instagram stories between the stories every 24 hours. This limits Instagrammers to create episodic content on the Instagram story function. The use of filters in the Instagram story function affords the contribution to atmosphere and themes presented in the content. The music filter presents songs and lyrics affords narration and context in a concise narrative.

In the Investigation of how Instagram's image and video functions can be used to create a narrative presents challenges as there are several interpretations of what a narrative is. For example, computer game designer Chris Crawford (Bartalesi, et al., 2016) speaks of interactive storytelling by presenting the understanding of a narrative as "a high-level structure with a focus on causality and does not consider temporal or spatial relations" (Bartalesi, et al., 2016: 3), while literary critic, Gerard Genette, identifies order, frequency, duration, voice and mood as the elements which underpin the definition of a narrative (Bartalesi, et al., 2016). Therefore, the understanding of Instagram as a medium for storytelling is limited to one's understanding and interpretation of a narrative. However, I have found that the creative freedom it affords, by allowing Instagrammers to create content outside of the Instagram platform to be distributed on Instagram, allows Instagrammers to

creatively express messages, interests and ideas with very little limitation on the kind of content that can be created. Therefore, Instagram affords the creation of narrative while also affording the communication of messages and ideas through creative expression. The limitations in the creation and distribution of content are mostly presented in the structures of the content and how it is consumed.

CHAPTER FOUR: STORYTELLING STRUCTURES ON INSTAGRAM

In this study, storytelling structures refers to the way in which the events of a story are organised (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). There are various ways that a storyteller can explore the organisational structure of a story. Different narrative devices can afford a variety of structures in the creation of a storyline and inform the style or technique employed to construct the storyline (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). The relationship between the organizational structure of a storyline and the technique employed to construct the storyline is governed by three organisational principles, namely, time, logic and space (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002).

Organisational Structure of a Narrative

The organisational principle of time in the construction of a narrative has been fundamental in the Russian formalists' understanding of narrative construction (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). Russian formalists understand narrative construction in terms of the *syuzhet* and the *fabula* (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). The *syuzhet* is the way in which the story is organised and is responsible for the organisational principle of time (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). The fabula is the material of the story and is made of narrative fragments which are arranged together (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). The fabula is a chronological summary of the story (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). Therefore, the understanding of the story is understood in a linear manner. However, this does not mean that the events are presented to the audience in chronological order (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). The author makes a choice of the order in which the events should be presented (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). The *syuzhet* organises the way in which the events of the story unfold and sets the duration of the events (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). An event is an action taking place in a certain time and place. Therefore, the *syuzhet* presents the time that the events take to unfold and the pace and rhythm in which they unfold.

Pace and rhythm are important to consider in the organisational principle of time. The pace in a story is the speed at which a narrative element of the story occurs (Cutting, 2016). An example of this is the speed of the exchange of words in the

dialogue between characters, whereas the rhythm pertains to the pattern created from the speed and time at which the narrative elements of a scene or the story unfolds (Baetens & Hume, 2006). Therefore, rhythm is made up of different patterns of pacing as one narrative element leads to another and events are created.

The way in which one event leads to another pertains to the logic of the story (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). The logic of a story presents links between the events of the story (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). Logic can also be understood as the cause-and-effect relationships within a story (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002), and such causal logic is the most commonly used in storytelling. The audience is guided through the unfolding of the story and the audience's consumption of information presented in the fabula is steered by the logic (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002).

The space in which events unfold anchor the logic of the story as space refers to the physical settings or social context in which the story unfolds (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). Therefore, the space in which a story unfolds secures the meaning in the understanding of the story. There are social and environmental factors which provide external contexts such as a socio-political or socio-economical background of a narrative. The external contexts of a narrative provide the circumstances presented by the storyteller at the time that the story was being created. External contexts can but do not always affect the material of the story. An example of the effect of external contexts in a story is seen in the play, W*oza Albert!* which was written as political protest during South Africa's apartheid era*. Woza Albert!* is a satirical South African play about the second coming of Jesus Christ who is known as Morena, during the apartheid era. The play is made of 26 episodic scenes which contain themes that confront the inequalities and injustices of the apartheid era (Simon, et al., 1981). An example of this is seen in the references made to apartheid laws such as the Pass Law or the Bantu Education Act (Simon, et al., 1981). Therefore, it is seen that the external context of South Africa's apartheid has been used by the storyteller to influence the internal context of the play. The internal context refers to the world of a story. This is also known as the diegetic world a story. Internal contexts refer to the time and place in which the events of the story unfold i.e., where the fabula is situated (Decortis & Rizzo, 2002). Understanding the context i.e., space in which a story evolves anchors the logic of the story and aids in the structure of the story.

Digital storytelling structures

Digital storytelling refers to a narrative that has been presented with the use of digital technologies and affords a multimedia presentation of a narrative with the use of digital elements (Alexander, 2017). The first computer networks towards the end of the 20th century presented tools which have influenced the presentation of narratives and act as the first wave of digital storytelling (Alexander, 2017). Computer tools presented software such as *Hypercard* and *Storyspace* which could be used to author narratives (Alexander, 2017). With the introduction of the internet more authoring tools were presented where hypertext proceeded as part of digital storytelling (Alexander, 2017). The introduction of web 2.0 presented the second wave of digital storytelling as web 2.0 afforded social media which allows all users to be authors and contribute to storylines. The first wave and second wave of digital storytelling platforms present a wide concept of what digital storytelling is as digital technologies continue to advance and evolve (Alexander, 2017). However, the notion of a digital story remains in the technologies used to present the story and is not specific to the content of the story.

Since digital storytelling refers to the presentation of the story, the content of the story may be structured similarly to any other narrative. Therefore, digital storytelling structures may present a variety of narrative structures such as linear, episodic, layered, circular, non-linear etc. However, the development of digital technologies and the web 2.0 have afforded storytelling structures which are interactive and give the audience choice to change and manipulate storylines. Not all digital stories are interactive. Because digital stories are concerned with the digital presentation of the stories, a story may be presented on a website, for example, where users consume the content the way it has been created and cannot manipulate or interact with the content with the story. The engagement with the content capitalises on the consumption of the story and not interaction. Therefore, a digital story can preserve its structure without presenting an interactive quality.

However, the interactive and democratic nature of social media content, afforded by the development of web 2.0, sets social media storytelling apart from other mediums of storytelling and has become a large part of digital storytelling (Schneider, et al., 2003). The interactive quality of narratives on social media refers to the way in which users can manipulate content with the addition of microcontent which can be presented in the form of comments (Reidl & Bulitko, 2013). Some forms of social media content afford users the ability to contribute to content through various other interactive qualities. Another example of interactive storytelling afforded by the advancement of technology is digital gaming where the player's choices manipulate the way in which the narrative unfolds. Interactive content presents narratives which continue to evolve by the activities of the participants and can produce non-linear storytelling structures (Schneider, et al., 2003). Therefore, non-linear narrative structures in digital storytelling can be caused by the result of interactivity but can also present content which was already created as a non-linear narrative structure as there are digital stories which preserve the structure of the content and are only presented with multimedia and digital elements. In understanding non-linear storytelling, it is useful to understand linear storytelling.

Linear storytelling

Linear storytelling structure refers to a narrative structure which conforms to the classical model of the 19th century chronological structured narratives where events of a narrative unfold one after another in the order that the events occurred (Isaacs, 2005). Hollywood studio films in the 20th century are famously known for creating linear structured narratives of classical narrative cinema (Isaacs, 2005). Even though there were film directors in the 20th century such as Orson Welles and Alfred Hitchcock who had created films that diverted from the classical model of linear structured narrativity, the studio films of the 20th century are known for linear storytelling (Isaacs, 2005). However, not all 20th century films are limited to the linear employment of a storytelling structure (Isaacs, 2005).

The linear storytelling structure presented the introduction, development and denouement as the construct of classical narratives (Isaacs, 2005). The choices made in how the story unfolds and the way in which the film would be edited were

made with the focus on producing an illusion of reality (Isaacs, 2005). The illusion of reality in films is referred to as verisimilitude where the characters, conflicts and details of the story are realistic within the context of the film (Sánchez-Escalonilla, 2013). Hollywood productions reflected the conception an of 'American reality' by displaying resolutions of narrative closure which were achieved by the unfolding of cause-and-effect relationships (Isaacs, 2005). Cinematic choices in relation to lighting, editing, costume, etc. were made according to what would serve the story being told (Isaacs, 2005). In the execution of realism, the narrative devices such as cinematic techniques do not distract the audience from the story being told as the story is supposed to give the illusion that it is unfolding before the audience as in real life.

The audience immerses into the world of the film as the audience views the film in a dark room and the spatial configurations of the cinema space have the audience situated in a way where they are not made aware of the other audience members in the room as all audience members are seated opposite the screen and facing the action (Isaacs, 2005); this is similar, to the spatial configurations of 19th century theatres with a proscenium arch that frames the action taking place directly in front of the audience. This is unlike spatial configurations which make the audience member aware of other audience members such as an amphitheatre. The awareness of other audience members reminds the audience that they are watching a performance. Therefore, the spatial configurations of a cinema that has all audience members facing forward, in a darked room with a large screen serves as an aid to have audience members suspend their disbelief (Isaacs, 2005). Having the audience suspend their disbelief is a characteristic of realism (Isaacs, 2005).

In contrast to the suspense of disbelief in the genre of realism, content consumption on social media becomes an extension of the audience's reality. Instagram has extended the notion of creating performances which depict reality as users document their lives, and the creation and consumption of the content is incorporated into users' daily activities, thus becoming a lifestyle. Users are not transported into a different world and are not asked to suspend their disbelief. Instead, Instagram users consider social media content as an extension of their reality (Alamäki et al, 2021).

With contemporary films in Hollywood the film would be seen by hundreds of people in focus groups in some cases and receive input from these viewers before showing the film to the studio executives (Isaacs, 2005). This foreshadows the collaborative nature of social media where the result of the content is imbedded with the views and opinions of other users. Contemporary film in Hollywood began to diversify their narrative structures from the linear structures.

Non-linear Storytelling

The digression from linear structured narratives in film began with the introduction of new punk cinema (Isaacs, 2005). In the understanding of new punk cinema, it is important to consider the notion of *auteur.* The *auteur* theory was introduced by French film directors, Francois Truffaut and his colleagues from *Cahiers du Cinema* (Isaacs, 2005). It then became the pinnacle of the French new wave (Isaacs, 2005). The films which the French new wave presented were made in response to the classical narrative structures which dominated French cinema in the mid 19th century (Isaacs, 2005). An example of this is seen in French director Jean-Luc Godard's film *Breathless* where the protagonist broke the 4th wall as he speaks directly to the camera (Isaacs, 2005). Having an actor directly address the audience brings cinematic self-awareness as the audience becomes aware that they are not watching a real-life scenario unfold naturally before them but that what they are watching is a performance (Isaacs, 2005). Addressing the audience directly is a method used to break away from classical narrative formats presented by the realism genre across mediums. An example of this is seen in the work of theatre practitioner Bertolt Brecht. In Brecht's approach to epic theatre, actors speak directly to the audience and employ the alienation technique by having actors speak in third person (Brecht, 1991). In this way the audience was made more consciously aware that what they were watching is performance.

Works which challenged the linear structures of the classical narrative became more apparent in new punk cinema. Film director, Quentin Tarantino fractures the frame in his film *Pulp Fiction*. The narrative frame or *syuzhet* references 19th century realism cinematic tradition where the structure of the narrative calls for cause-and-effect relationships to result in narrative closure where all that is posed to the audience in

the beginning of the film is concluded at the end (Isaacs, 2005). However, Tarantino fractures the narrative frame through the character of Amanda Plummer at the end of the film where he demonstrated narrative reflexivity by the means of Plummer's revised lines (Isaacs, 2005). The fracture of the narrative frame displays that a story is the result of narrative framing and can be revised and changed.

Another contributor non-linear cinematic storytelling is Christopher Nolan who embraces non-linear structures through the use of jump cuts and experiments with aesthetics which present a juxtaposition of colour and black and white and disembodying the voice from the body by means of voice overs (Isaacs, 2005). His film *Memento* disrupts classical narrative structures as it is a story within a story. As the protagonist, Leonard tries to find his wife's murderer as he relies on notes, photographs and tattoos to discover the story behind her murder. (Isaacs, 2005) The first story is the search for his wife's murderer while the second story is the murder found in the clues of the materials he collects.

There are various ways a storyteller may achieve non-linear storytelling. In the creation of digital narratives on Instagram, the various narrative structures which the image and video function afford are investigated.

Findings on storytelling structures on Instagram

In considering the storytelling structures discovered from my findings, I will consider both the external structure and the internal structure of the narratives. All narratives are structured externally and internally (Fludernik, 2009). The external structure of the narrative includes the title page, the display and notes about the author (Fludernik, 2009). The internal structure of a narrative is the text of the narrative. The text includes all the elements which convey meaning in the fabric of the story (Fludernik, 2009), and includes sound, images, etc.

Image And Video Structures On Instagram Feed And Account Page

All the images and videos discussed in this section are distributed on the Instagram feed and the account page and they displayed some common narrative structures. Therefore, the common narratives structures of image and videos on the Instagram feed and account page will be discussed and then the more specific narrative structures for each image and video function will be discussed.

Frame structure

Having the Instagram account serve as an overarching narrative compiled of sub-narratives in the form of images and videos presents an Instagram account page as narrative with a frame structure. A frame structure refers to a story within a story. When images and videos are posted on the Instagram account page, they are consequently displayed on the Instagram feed.

Temporal context on Instagram feed

The way in which the Instagram feed organises content is according to the latest posts of content which the Instagrammer interacts with the most. Instagram users can choose the time that they share an event (Instagram post), however, they cannot control the time that their event is revealed to others. The order of events is driven by Instagram's algorithm and can be understood as the *syuzhet*. The algorithm presents events and the time that they are shown as it displays events of indicated interest first.

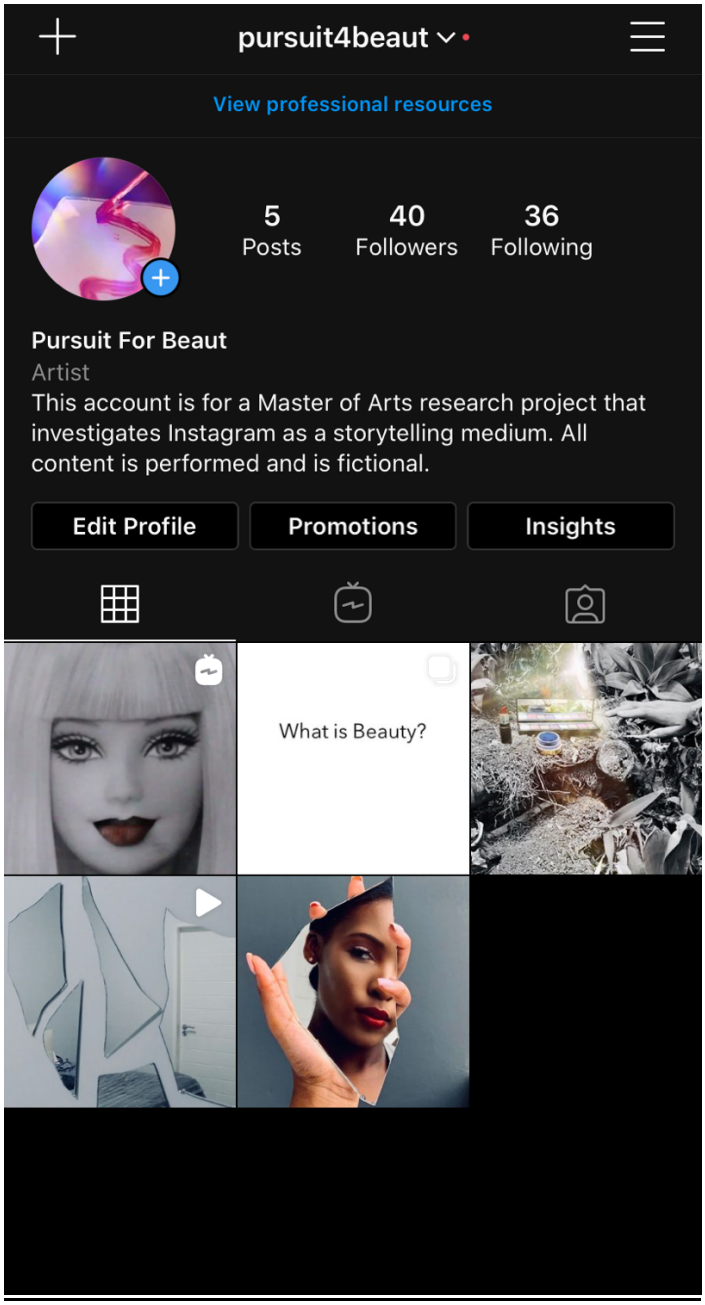
Logic on Instagram feed

The algorithm is also the causality agent in the presentation of the content and has been informed by an Instagrammer's actions. The Instagrammer's actions on Instagram act as the cause and the output of the algorithm, and event it presents, act as the effect while the content of the posts does not relate to each other in meaning as they all have independent authors and only relate to indicated interests. An Instagrammers input (the cause) can result in multiple outputs (effect), as there can be a variety of content, which represent the indicated interest informed by the input, that have been created independently from different authors. Therefore, there is no linearity in the way content is understood. Each event does not display causal links

to one another and is understood as whole on its own but is part of the narrative of the Instagram feed. Not only are these narratives episodic in the narrative of the Instagram feed but are also an episode in the narrative of the Instagram account page as an Instagram account page presents an overarching narrative of the page but consists of content which episodic events which can be understood on their own. This presents an episodic structure of how events are perceived and consumed within the frame structure.

Episodic Structure

An episodic structure refers to a narrative structure which is made up of parts that can be understood as a whole on their own with all the parts operating under one overarching narrative. In the creation of the Instagram account @pursuit4beaut, created for this study, the images and videos which are displayed on the Instagram account page are perceived as only a part of the pursuit4beaut narrative, yet they can also be understood on their own. The grid structure pre-sets the narrative on the Instagram account page into episodes by presenting content in individual square frames which are accumulated together to create tiles of visual narratives as seen in the image below.



Temporal context on Instagram account page

On the Instagram account page, the time that the events are revealed is controlled by the Instagrammer. Therefore, the Instagrammer can set the pace and rhythm in which they would like the events to unfold on the grid display. The number of posts an Instagrammer chooses to post per day will affect the pace and rhythm of how Instagram followers are exposed to events of the narrative. The order of events is shown from the Instagrammer's most recent post to the latest post; therefore, Instagram followers are first exposed to the most recent event.

Logic on Instagram account page

The order of events displayed on the grid is not authored by the Instagrammer and is ordered by the Instagram software which is concerned with presenting content in accordance with recent activity and not causality. Therefore, the content is not consumed linearly and does not display a cause-and-effect relationship in the order of the development of events. However, Instagrammers may manipulate the order of events displayed by planning and organising their content in the order of the latest content being shown first and plan the causality between the developments of the content, with the predetermined order of display in mind. Instagrammers can only manipulate the display of events of the account feed while their content will continue to be revealed to Instagram followers on the Instagram feed in accordance with the Instagram followers' input in the algorithm, within a variety of content from different authors.

Spatial context on Instagram

The nature of the Instagram environment helps users become accustom to the world of Instagram and the logic of how content is created, presented and understood. The Instagram feed provides a space where different Instagrammers are able to contribute to the content presented on the platform and the presentation of the content is governed by an algorithm. This anchors how users understand that the logic of the content presented pertains to the algorithm which presents a variety of content from different authors with content that is unrelated. Therefore, the democratic context of Instagram which is organised by the algorithm anchors the logic in how users consume content from different authors and interact with content in a non-linear manner.

Interactive non-linear structure

Interactivity refers to the participation in an activity in such a way that the participating factors influence one another in their performance. In the digital domain, one participating factor is the computer while the other is the user. Therefore, the interactivity between the two is understood by the way in which the computer responds to the user's input and the way the user responds to the computer's output. The input and output of the user and computer, respectively, influence one another in how the user and computer perform activities.

The images and videos which are discussed in this section appear on the Instagram feed when they are posted. The Instagram feed is an interactive page that is also the Instagram home page. Having the Instagram feed frame the way that these images and videos are presented results in the Instagram feed serving as the external structure of the narratives.

The Instagram feed is interactive in the way in which the user scrolls through the content and engage with the content through interactive functions such as the ‘like’, ‘comment’ and ‘share’ buttons which are seen in the image below, showing the heart symbol, speech bubble and the paper plane icon respectively. Each post on the Instagram feed is accompanied by these interactive functions. Users’ interaction with the content using the interactive functions informs the algorithms which informs the logic of how content is presented.



Now that the common narrative structures of the images and videos on the Instagram feed and account page have been discussed, the findings of other specific narrative structures in the individual image and video functions will be discussed.

1. Image with a caption

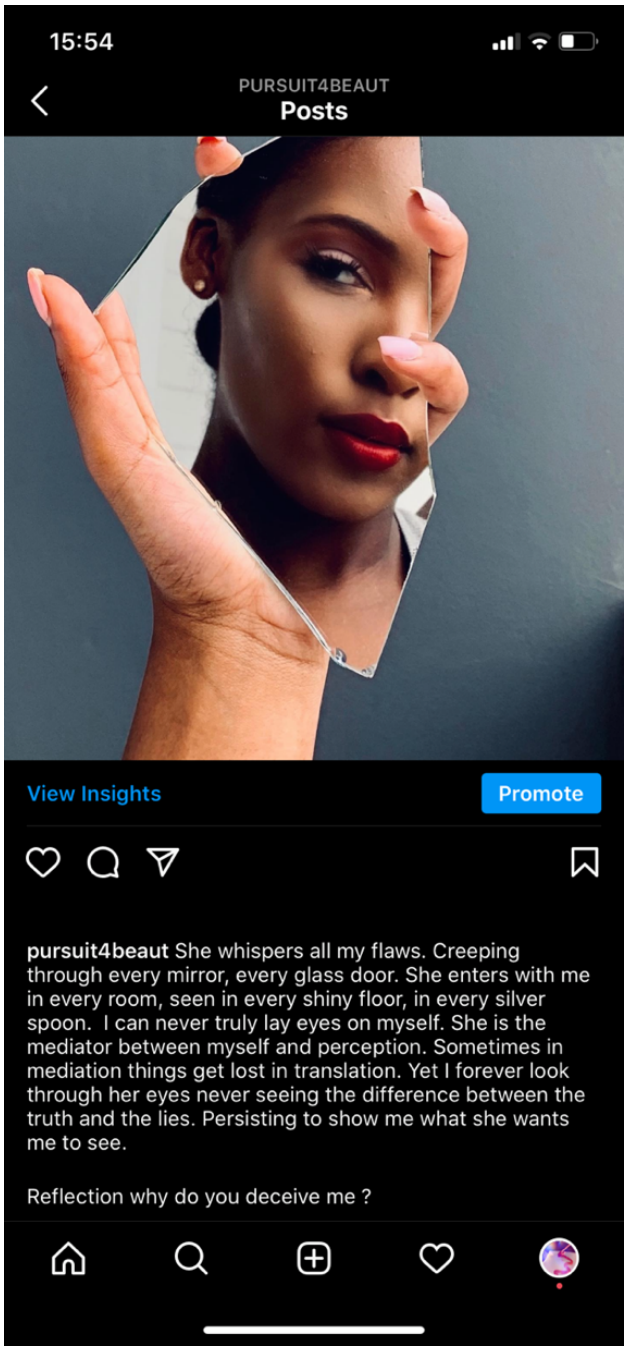


Fig 1.1 Image with a caption on Instagram feed

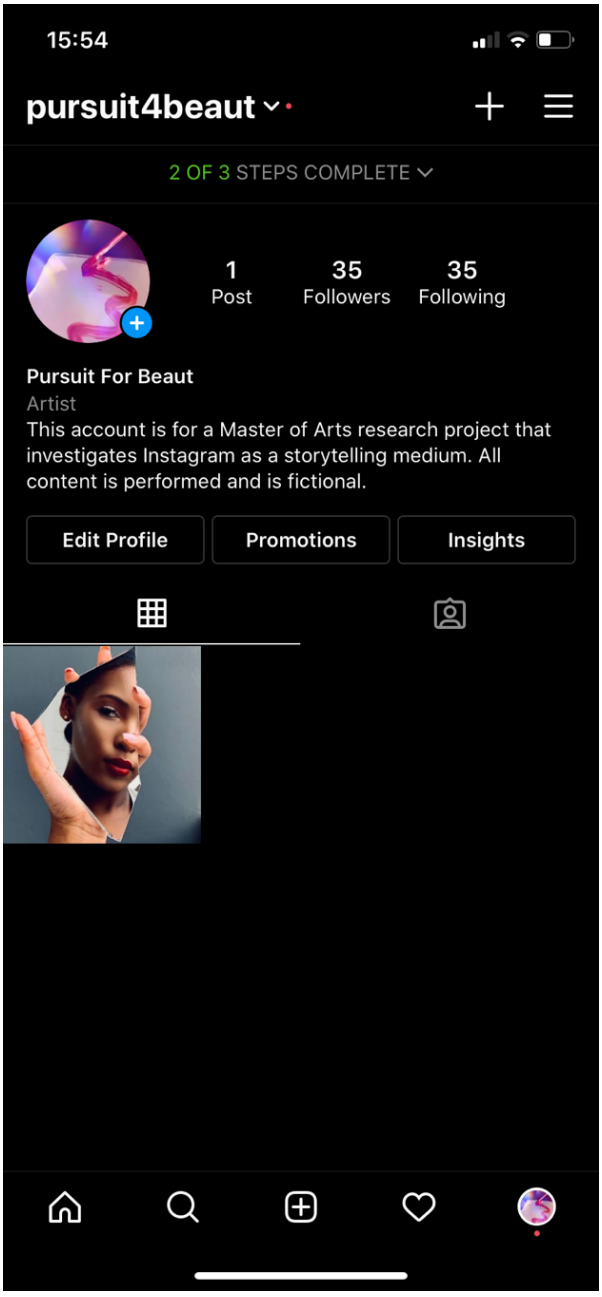


Fig 1.2 Image with caption on Instagram account page

Non-linear two-part structure

As seen in fig 1.2, the image with the caption is displayed on the account page in a square frame. However, on the account page the caption has been omitted in the display and can only be seen if a user taps to open the full image. Once the image is opened it will appear with the caption as seen in fig 1.1. The image with caption allows for a non-linear narrative with a two-part structure. One part of the narrative is the image, and the second part of the narrative is the written text.

Temporal context

The two parts of the narrative are presented in two different narrative frames simultaneously, giving the audience the freedom to engage with either part in any order. With the interactive function of clicking onto the image in order to reveal the full caption, Instagram followers who are viewing the narrative then takes control of the revelation of events in a temporal capacity. By having the choice to interact with the image and reveal the caption, Instagram followers choose if and when they want to reveal the next frame of the narrative i.e. the caption.

One frame is a square frame which frames the captured moment of action in the narrative in the form of an image, in imitation of polaroid square photographs. The other frame is a column where users are able to scroll through the text and read the story which can be understood parallel to the image. The simultaneous framing of the image and the caption displays a multimedia characteristic of Instagram's function to post an image with written text.

Logic

When Instagrammers create a post that has an image with a caption, they are directed to choosing an image first, after the editing tools are presented for the selected image, Instagrammers are directed to creating a caption to accompany the image. Therefore, the caption is created based on the image selected, creating a causal link between the narrative fragment of the image and the next narrative fragment of the caption, thus introducing a cause-and -effect relationship between the content of the image and the content of the caption. The image created in this study for an image with a caption has an image of a reflection of a woman with a deceitful gaze. Once Instagram followers have read the caption which speaks of the torment of a deceitful reflection, the reflection in the mirror seen in the image is understood as the cause for the lamentation presented in the caption.

Instagram followers experience the image as the cause first presented and the caption as the effect in response to the image. Instagram followers are exposed to image first before they are exposed to the caption with the interactive function on the Instagram account page that presents the image first and presents the caption after the image has been tapped. The content on the Instagram feed is designed to

engage with from top to bottom, with the latest posts at the top and presenting the top of the page as the starting point to browse. With the image placed above the caption, as Instagram followers engage with content from top to bottom, the image at the top is revealed and then the caption is presented second as it is placed beneath, thus perceiving the narrative image as the cause and the narrative caption as the effect as the caption appears to be created based on the contents of the image.

Spatial context

Because Instagram is an interactive environment, users are able to shift back and forth between the interacting with the image and interacting with the caption, thus the image with a caption can be consumed in any order (with the image first or the caption first). This presents a non-linear option of the structure in how it can be consumed, even though there is a causal link between the contents of the image and the caption, it does not have to consumed linearly.

The interactive environment provides the context in which Instagram followers can manage which part of the narrative they consume which affects the logic of the narrative. If Instagram followers choose not to interact with the image displayed on the Instagram account page as seen in fig 1.2, or choose to browse past the caption and not read it when the content is displayed as seen in fig 1.1, then the logic of the narrative does not consider the causal link between the image and caption as well as understanding the full context of the image, which is supported with the use of the caption.



Fig 2.1 60 second video

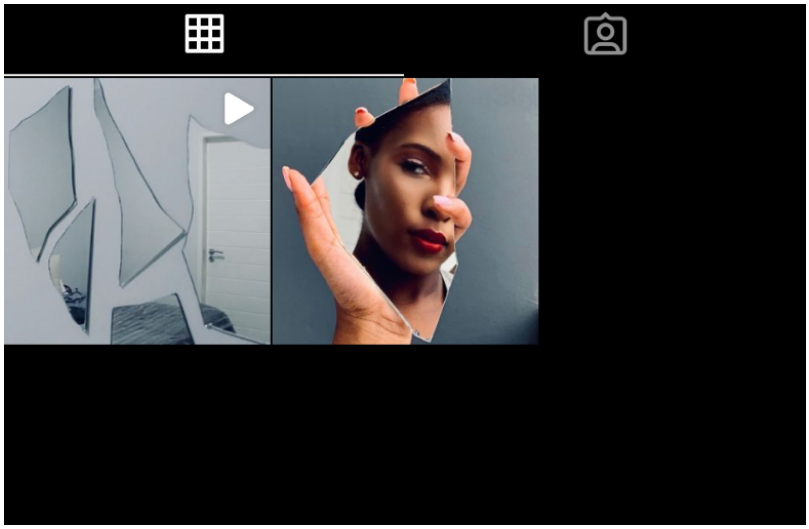


Fig 2.2 Display of 60 second video on account page

Interactive episodic narrative

The first frame of the video acts as the cover page for the video on the user's account page as seen in fig 2.2. The cover page is interactive because once a user clicks onto to the cover page the video begins to play. Users can also mute or play the sound of the video by clicking on the speaker button. The interactive environment allows viewers to control the exposition of narrative devices, such as sound.

The video is a whole part that can be understood on its own. On the Instagram account page, it is framed into a square and is presented as a new episode in the unfolding narrative of @pursuit4beaut. The episodic structure of the video allows the video to be understood as a whole on its own without relying on the previous content in order to understand the logic of the video. Instagram affords for the logic, time and

special context within the video to be created by the Instagrammer in different ways, as the creative authors of their content. In this study, I decided to create a 60-second video that has a fractured narrative structure.

Fractured narrative

A fractured structure is a narrative structure which displays disjointed transitions, including jump cuts between scenes which go back and forth in the timeline of the narrative.

Temporal context

The use of quick jump cuts along the time of events gave the impression of a quick recount of events which took place over an extended period of time even though the video is 60 seconds. In order to create a quick recount of events, the pace of the action was quick, acting as highlights of an event instead of playing out the full duration of the actions. The reveal of disjointed action at a fast pace creates a jagged and fast rhythm.

Logic

Because the actions are disjointed, there is no cause-and-effect relationship between the different actions. However, there is a common theme which underpins the actions i.e., scrutinising one's body image in the mirror. Keeping a consist theme of actions, driven by only one motive i.e., wanting to look perfect, and presenting that in different ways, helps viewers understand that the action presented is a cycle of actions within the same process. New themes, or motives are not introduced.

Spatial context

The action of the scrutinising her physical appearance in a bedroom helps communicates her battle with her insecurities behind closed doors in a private space when trying to get the perfect selfie, in contrast to the public display of social media posts. Having all the action occur within one space with the same character, motive, and conflict helped provide the logic which presents the actions in the video highlights of different points of the same event. Additionally, the social media context presents 'selfie' culture as well as aesthetics. Therefore, many Instagrammers are familiar with the performing different actions e.g. poses, within the same process of

getting a good-looking selfie, similarly to the character in the video. This external context of social media culture – i.e., here, the ubiquity of selfies - also aids the viewers (Instagram followers) in understanding the logic of the video.

Image without a caption



Fig 3. Image without a caption

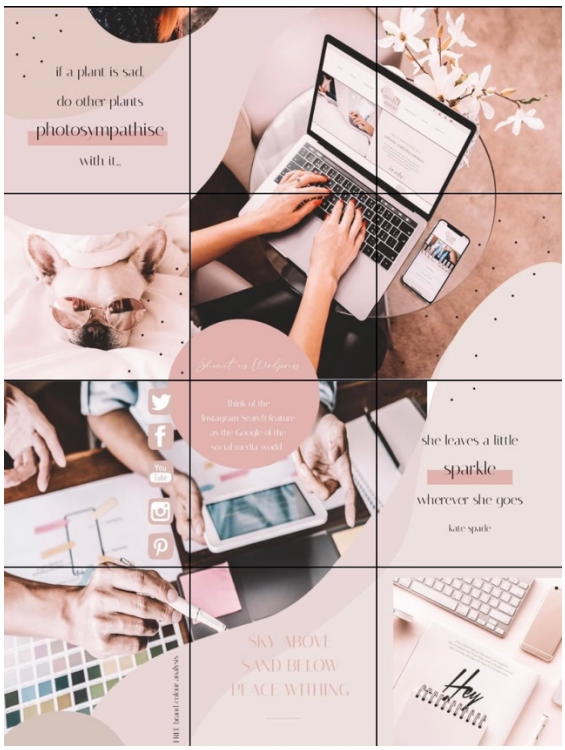
Episodic Structure

The image without a caption on Instagram is episodic in its structure as it can be understood in isolation but is part of the wholistic story of @persuit4beaut which displays a woman's pursuit to be beautiful. The composition of the image presents an episode of the appeal and desire for artificial beauty while natural beauty is presented as less desirable. This episode presented as an image is understood and presented on its own but pertains to the overarching narrative of the pursuit for physical beauty presented on the Instagram account page.

Logic

The image is presented in a square frame and is not presented in relation to another image but is understood on its own. In the image without caption created for this study, the colourful beauty products glistening in the sun cause the character's to be

attracted to it in the dull black and white environment. The image is understood with the elements presented within the content of the image. There is no cause-and - effect relationship between the images. However, there are Instagrammers who use the image function to post an image as a part of a larger image as seen in the image below.



@themediamuse_marketing

When the images are strategically posted in a way that creates a larger whole image on the Instagram account page, there is a cause-and-effect relationship created in the order of the images in order to present the logic of it being perceived as one image. However, each image is still posted separately and is presented separately on the Instagram feed as an incomplete image, while being presented together as a whole on the account page. In order for Instagram followers to understand the logic of the separately posted image, they need to go to the Instagram account page.

Temporal context

If an image is posted as part of a larger image, similarly to the @themediamuse_marketing page, then the images posted act as events which are developing the full image presented on the Instagram account page. In this case, the Instagrammer controls the pace and the rhythm of the development of the image by choosing when to post.

Images which are created to be understood on their own, as the still image with the hand in my study, does not present events in a motion of developing on the @pursuit4beaut account page and is perceived as a still captured moment. This means that there is no pace of action revealed in the development of events. However, pace and rhythm can be suggested and perceived in an image as viewers do not perceive an image as a whole in one go but the viewers eye is taken from one element of the image to another element of an image through colours, lines, shapes and repetition. In the image I created, I first used colour to draw the viewer's eye to the beauty products.

Spatial context

The juxtaposition of the colour against black and white structured a divide between natural beauty and artificial beauty, presenting them as conflicting concepts existing in one space. The the sun beam piercing through the plants resembles dream-like visuals, referencing an oneiric narrative structure. Oneiric structures explore the structures of dreams and memories. The sunbeam can be read as a metaphor for desire and not time of day such as a sunrise in realism narratives where the sun is used to indicate time, similarly to the real world, with the efforts of achieving verisimilitude.

The sunbeam was edited into the image on a separate editing application. The allowance of editing, before an image is published on Instagram, shows how the image function gives users the freedom to create their own structures within the contents of the image by using other editing applications and then accessing the image on Instagram. The publication of images is however restricted to the square frame structure as well as the episodic structure of the images. The square framed episodic images are also seen in the multiple image post.

Multiple image post

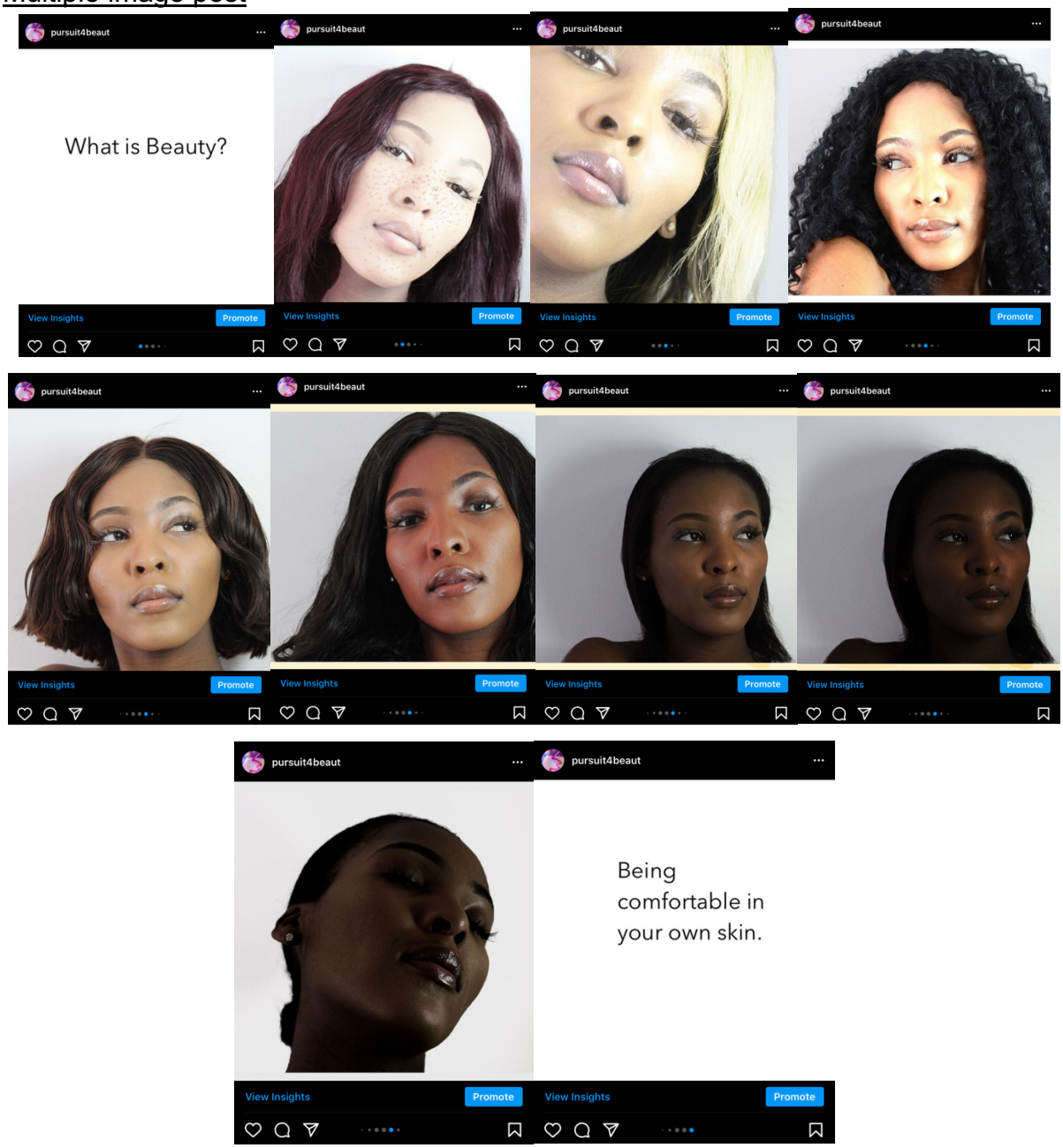


Fig. 4 multiple image post with maximum of 10 images

Chronological and reverse-chronological structure

The multiple image post creates content, which is of a chronological and reverse chronological structure, simultaneously. Users interact with each image by swiping

through the images. Users can only begin to interact with the multiple image post by swiping forward. The images are interacted with in the chronological order that was set by the Instagrammer who created the post. Users interact with the multiple image post in a linear fashion, from the first image to the last image. This presents the chronological part of the structure. Chronological structured narratives are common in classical narratives. These are narratives which unfold from the beginning to the end. The events take place in the order that they happened in the story. However, once users have swiped forward, they are able to swipe backwards to the first image. They can only move forwards and backwards through the images in the set linear order of the images, thus, presenting the reverse chronological part of the structure. The small grey dots below the multiple image post indicate if there are images to interact with forwards or backwards as seen in fig. 4. The small blue dot indicates the image that the user is currently looking at.

The multiple-image post function on Instagram allows users to select the images which they wish to include in their multiple image post. Instagrammers select the images in the order that they want the images to appear. As Instagrammers select the images, Instagram labels the images with numbers in the order that the images have been selected. Once the images have been selected in the Instagrammer's desired order, the user is able to see a preview of how the images will appear one after another. Therefore, Instagrammers are able to arrange and rearrange the order of the images until they are satisfied. The selected order of the images determines the order the images will be presented in.

Logic

Since the Instagrammer chooses the order in which the images are displayed, the Instagrammer is able to plan to create causal links between the images. In the multiple-image post I created for this study, I created a cause-and-effect relationship between the images. The first image is a question: what is beauty? The effect of this is a search for the answer. The search is presented in the exploration of different racial identities, making reference to race and colourism in the discourses of beauty. Each skin tone explored is darker than the last, meaning the skin tones and racial identities are explored in relation to the former, creating a gradation going from the representation of light Caucasian to dark African. After exploring a gradation of skin

tones and racial identities, an answer is provided at the end: being comfortable in your own skin.

Temporal Context

The multiple-image post is interactive, allowing Instagram followers to control the pace at which they are exposed to the next event in the narrative. They can also travel backwards and forwards in the timeline of events presented in the post. Having Instagram followers being able to move back and forth can affect the cause-and-effect logic of the narrative established by the Instagrammer as the reverse chronological structure can present the effect before the cause.

Spatial context

The interactive environment and nature of the multiple image post allows Instagram followers to control the revelation of events. Therefore, the way they choose to swipe through the images, whether they swipe only halfway, swipe forwards then backwards or do not even swipe through the images at all effects the revelation of events, thus affecting the logic of the story.

The logic of the story is also located in the external context of the discourses surround beauty, race and colourism. This means that Instagram followers who consume this multiple-image post narrative would need to have knowledge about the discourses of beauty and how race and colourism are presented in these discourses in order to engage with the full meaning of the narrative.

15-minute video for Instagram Television (IGTV)

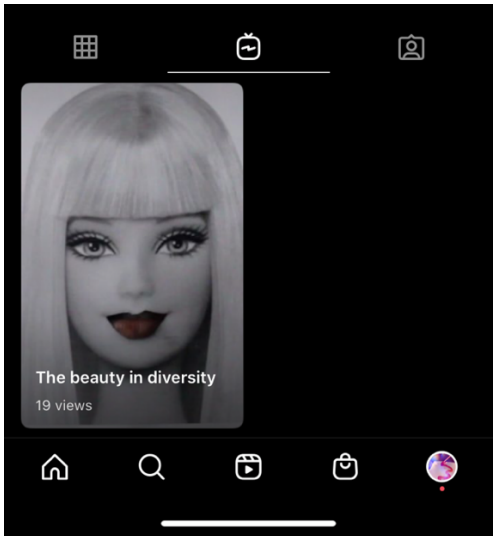


Fig 5. 15-minute video for Instagram Television (IGTV)

Miscellaneous narrative structures

When creating the content of the 15-minute video, Instagrammers are required to select an already existing video that they have on their phones or mobile devices. Users cannot record a 15-minute video with Instagram's video recording function. Therefore, users create and edit the video outside of Instagram and then distribute it on the Instagram platform. This means that users have the freedom to create the content in any structure they wish to employ in their storytelling while having the maximum duration of 15 minutes.

Interactive structure

The thumbnail is interactive as users click on the cover page to watch the video when they access the video from the account page. The thumbnail serves as the external structure of the video. The external structure of the video consists of a rectangular frame where the Instagrammer is able to select which frame of the video he or she would like to use as the thumbnail of the video. The Instagrammer is also required to create a title for the video. The title of the 15-minute video created for this study is *The beauty in diversity.*

Spatial Context

The external context of the narrative underpins the external structure the narrative, which informs viewers on what the video narrative is about. The image selected as the thumbnail and title produces meaning which indicates what the video is about. The production of meaning is located in cultural factors as culture provides the lens at which connoted meanings are derived from representations. The representation of Barbie on the thumbnail connotes the idea of physical perfection in the discourses of popular culture as Barbie is considered as an idol for physical perfection which has been perpetuated in popular culture and is critiqued by feminists repeatedly in modern society.

The title of the video produces signs as it communicates intended meaning through words which signify the concept of democratising and de-colonising standards of beauty. With the thumbnail's representation connotating physical perfection layered with the signified title of democratisation and de-colonising of beauty standards, they together produce meaning which communicates shattering the single outlook on beauty standards, which remain Eurocentric with regard to body shape, skin colour, hair length and texture, and the shape or size of physical features. The understanding of the external context of assists the logic of the narrative and how viewers are able to produce meaning from the events presented.

Logic

The start of the video presents a character performing a monologue, wearing the masks of beauty icons presented in popular culture i.e. Barbie, Kim Kardashian, Kylie Jenner etc, as these beauty icons represent the physical beauty standards that people try to achieve and manipulate their appearance to look more like the beauty icons and meet physical beauty standards. The monologue confronts the judgement which is placed on people based on their physical appearance and how well they conform to beauty standards presented in popular culture.

The performance of the monologue presents causal links in the development of the performance. The judgement by people of the character based on her appearance

causes the character to wear masks of icons who represent beauty in popular culture in protest of how aiming to achieve beauty standards can lead people to put up a facade. The character's frustration in trying on different masks to please the viewer causes the character to finally remove the masks and reveal her face, challenging viewers to accept her true appearance.

The rest of the video is a fractured structure as the editing included jump cuts to different parts of the timeline in the narrative. The narrative jumps in between a variety of different flowers as an inspiration for recognising the diversity in natural beauty to a drawing process showing the pictures of different flowers being drawn, inspired by the variety of different flowers. Therefore, there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the different flowers which were seen and taking the time to appreciate the shapes and forms of different flowers by drawing them. The cause-and-effect relationship between the display of a variety of flowers and the variety of flowers drawn is anchored further by a voice over. The voiceover narrates the comparison between the diversity in nature and diversity in people and explains how the drawing process unfolds in relation to the diversity found in flowers and using the drawing process to show close attention to defining characteristics which diversify the beauty in nature. The drawing process acts as an illustration in relation to the narration presented in the voice over, presenting a causal link between the illustration and the narration.

Temporal context

The time of the drawing process has been manipulated with the use of fast-forward effects in order to communicate the discourse time, which shows the exploration and process of understanding different characteristics in nature's beauty in order to understand people as nature's beauty by comparing the two, all within the 15-miniute maximum duration of story time that Instagram affords Instagrammers when creating an IGTV video. The discourse time is understood to be longer than the story time as manipulation of time with the fast forward effect makes it clear for the audience that the time has been manipulated and breaks the illusion of real time presented in realism.

Video Structures on Instagram Stories

All videos which are created and distributed using the Instagram story function are limited to a duration of 15 seconds per video. As seen in fig 6.1 Instagram stories are displayed with circular frame which consists of the Instagrammer's profile picture. Therefore, the circular image of the profile picture acts as the external structure of the Instagram story and is the thumbnail of an Instagram story. The external structure is an interactive structure as Instagrammers tap on their own circular image which is labelled as 'Your Story' in order to create a story.

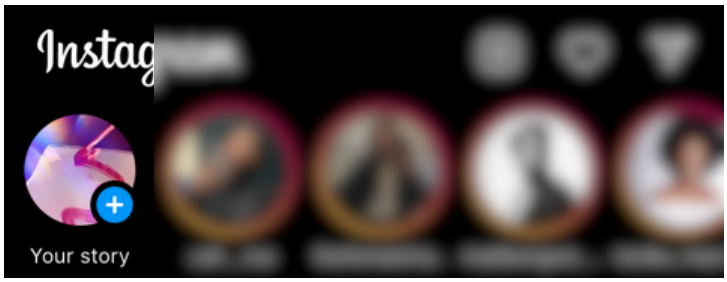


Fig 6.1 The presentation of Instagram stories

Temporal context

Each video created with the Instagram story function is 15 seconds. These 15 second videos contribute to the creation of an Instagram story. Having a 15 second maximum duration to create a narrative where character, desire, conflict and point of view are presented within 15 seconds is likely to present a very fast pace in the development of events. However, the affordance to have multiple 15 second videos in one Instagram story can assist in exposing the narrative elements of the story across several 15 second videos, as narrative fragments. In this way the pace of the exposition of narrative fragments can become slower, the longer the Instagram story becomes with the compilation of the 15 second videos.

The 15 second videos within the Instagram story can only be accessed for 24 hours after they been published. Users can have further access to the videos if the videos are saved onto the account page of the Instagrammer. The limitation of the 24-hour

access to the 15 second videos, within the Instagram story presents the potential for some videos to expire at different times. This means that the information shared in the exposition of narrative fragments could potentially become lost, and be presented as incomplete, thus affecting the logic of the narrative.

Logic

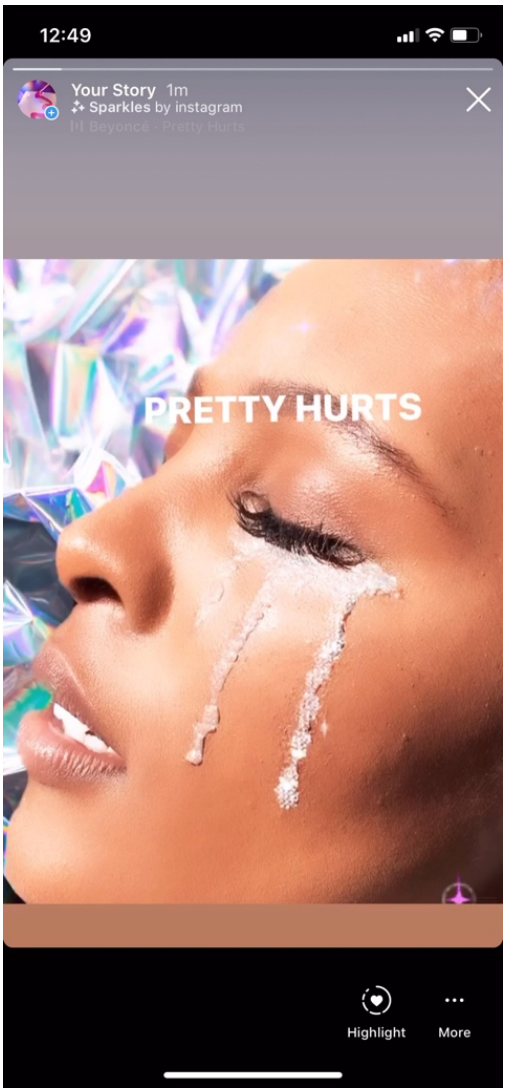
The order in which users consume these 15 second episodes is in chronological order. Instagram followers view the first video to the last video that has been posted by Instagrammers within the last 24 hours. An Instagrammer can create as many Instagram stories as possible that they would like which will be displayed within the 24 hours. Because the Instagram stories are episodic the content of each video can be understood on its own and has the potential to communicate meaning independent of the previous 15 second video and often serve as highlights of the events within the last 24 hours. However, the chronological presentation of the 15 second videos within an Instagram story shows the potential for causal links to be produced between the content of 15 second videos. Instagrammers can plan to develop their Instagram stories which show cause-and-effect-relationships by having the first 15 second video inform the content (event) which will be displayed in the next 15 second video. In this way when Instagram followers watch the Instagram story a linearly structured narrative with cause-and-effect relationships is presented.

When Instagrammers wish to interact with another Instagrammer's story, they tap onto the circular image of the user whose story they wish to view. Once the circular image thumbnail of the story is tapped, the Instagram story opens. If Instagram followers do not manually change to another story by tapping onto the thumbnail of another story while having the Instagram story function opened, they will automatically be directed to an Instagram story. The automatic display of an Instagram story is not at random but has been organised according to the Instagram algorithms. Therefore, the algorithms order the events presented in the content. The episodic content does not display a cause-and-effect relationship between the Instagram stories which automatically display and direct Instagram followers from one Instagrammer's story to the next. However, the causality in the order of events is established by the input of users' indicated interests (the cause) which produces an output of content in accordance with the indicated interests (the effect).

Spatial context

Instagram affords an environment where all users have the opportunity to produce and consume content which underpins the logic of how users can consume a variety of Instagram stories without causal links between the content but can understand the content as episodes which communicate meaning independently as the content has been created independently by different authors. The Instagram story function affords Instagrammers to become authors of their 15 second video narrative by presenting a variety of tools which can assist in storytelling. The first Instagram story structure which will be discussed is the music filter.

Instagram story with music filter



6.2 15 IG story with music filter

Multiple layered structure

The 15 second video with Instagram's music filter has a multiple layered structure. In the story I created for this study, the image consists of the following layers: the layer of the image, the layer of the 'sparkles filter' by Instagram; the layer of the song *Pretty Hurts* by Beyonce and the layer of the lyrics which overlay the image. The layer of the image connotes the glamourisation of pain which is anchored by the representation of glitter tears as glitter connotes glamour and tears connote pain. The layer of the 'sparkles filter' by Instagram extends the connotation of

glamourisation as the filter produces the representation of animated glittered sparkles which twinkle.

Temporal context

The pace and rhythm is set by the song and the written text of the lyrics which appears in synchrony with the lyrics sung in the song. Having the written text of the lyrics appear together with each word sung brings attention to the lyrics and therefore, meaning of the song. The song and the lyrics of *Pretty Hurts* speaks on the internal pain and brokenness which one may suffer in the pursuit of external beauty and perfection. The song and the lyrics serve as a sign which communicates the logic of the narrative.

Logic

I overlaid the song (reinforced by the lyrics for clarification) to act as a form of external narration; the image of a woman with glitter tears offers a character whose quest for physical beauty (the desire) may be achieved but highlights that it comes at the cost of substantial pain (conflict). Thus, the music offers a context that anchors the image which, otherwise, could be interpreted as simply an experimentation in artistic use of make-up. The song and the lyrics serve as a causal agent as the song communicates that the characters pain experienced in the quest for physical beauty is the cause of her tears. Having her tears appear in the form glitter, glamourises the pain she experiences in her quest for physical beauty. The use of the song and lyrics as well as the meaning communicated by the representation of the tears and glitter, place cultural context in the logic of the narrative.

Spatial context

The song *Pretty Hurts* by Beyonce is well known in popular culture. Since Instagram is also located in the discourses of popular culture, Instagram followers may already be familiar with the song and/or its music video, where Beyonce acts as a character who desires to meet the beauty standards stipulated in beauty pageants which comes at a cost of substantial pain. The cross reference between the narrative created for this study and the familiarity Instagram followers may have with the meaning and narrative of the music video introduces intertextuality. With an intertextual understanding of the narrative provided by cultural contexts, another

layer of meaning is provided. An example of this is seen in how the quest for physical beauty in the narrative for this study may be understood as desiring to meet beauty standards stipulated in beauty pageants, with reference to the music video.

15 Second video on Instagram Story

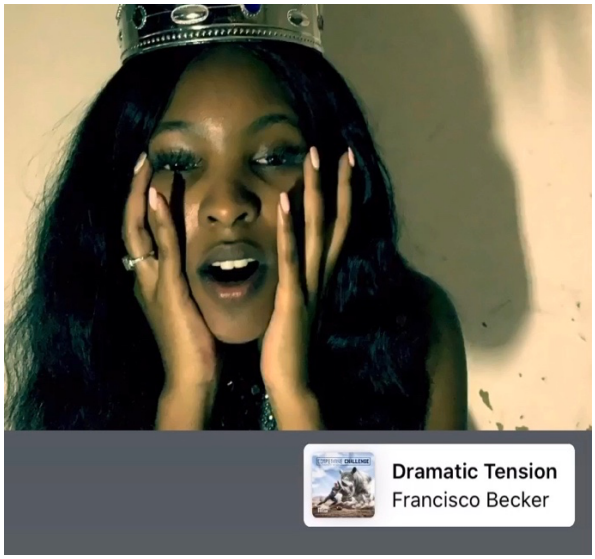


Fig 7.1

15 second video

The 15 second video which was created for this study was created and edited before it was shared on Instagram; however, the soundtrack of the video was added by employing Instagram's music filter. Instagram's music filter gives the Instagrammer the choice to use the music with lyrics in different fonts or to use a badge of the name and artist of the song. Therefore, Instagram users cannot use a song from Instagram's music filter without the indication of the use of the music filter. This makes Instagram's music filter, in the editing process of Instagram stories, distinct. In this 15 second video the soundtrack which was used was identified by the badge of the name of the song and artist as seen in fig 7. The indication of the soundtrack by the use of the badge separates the audio and the video and makes the audience aware of this separation. The audience becomes aware that the narrative is edited and constructed.

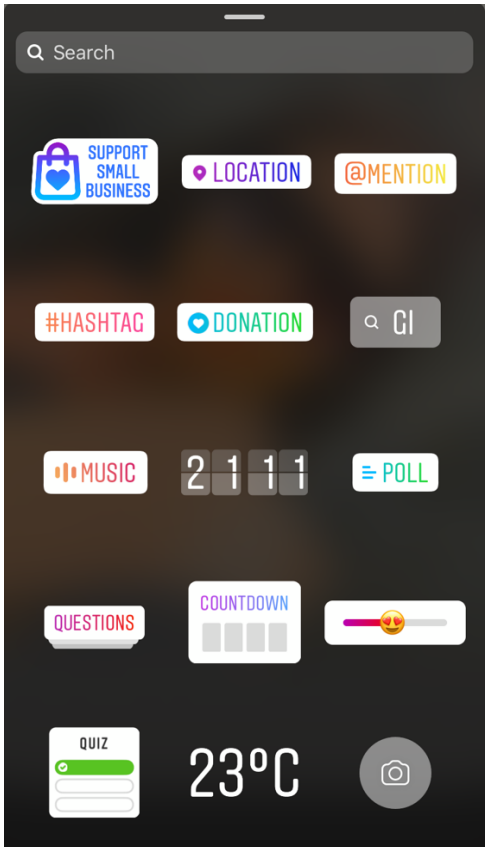


Fig 7.2 Badges in Instagram story editing functions

Spatial context

The editing tools used are exposed and displayed in the same space as the content presenting a deconstructed structure. All the editing functions which are available in Instagram's story function are visible in the publication of the Instagram story when they are employed by the user. When a filter is employed the name of the filter will appear in the top left corner of the screen as seen in fig 6.2 with the use of the 'sparkles' filter. There are variety of badges to use in Instagram's editing functions, such as location, hashtags (#), interactive question badges, graphics interchange format (GIFs) etc. In the 15 second video of this study only the music badge was used. All badges that are used are displayed on the content of the Instagram story. The display of all editing tools which are applied to an Instagram story, with the use of Instagram's story editing functions, results in a deconstructed structure in the presentation of the narrative. The raw materials of the narrative are exposed and are dislocated from one another as they are presented as separate entities.

Logic

There is causality displayed in the transformation of the character from a bare face to a full face of make-up. The agency of the make-up products established in the start of the video, with the make-up products moving independently towards the character, is the cause of the effect where the make-up products independently transform the character without it being applied manually. The instant application of the make-up causes the change from bare face to full make-up.

Even though the video displays logic in the form of cause-and-effect relationship and the event of transformation is communicated, the video omits some narrative elements e.g. conflict, thus, only showing a degree of narrativity. However, this video can serve as a narrative fragment in the development of a story as the Instagram story function allows multiple 15 videos to unfold an Instagram story which will be displayed over 24hours. Therefore, this 15 second video can serve as a part of a narrative series. When the video is considered as a whole that is understood on its own, the video becomes a form of creative expression which presents the agency of make-up communicating the power of make-up and its ability to transform individuals.

Temporal context

The use of stop animation presents multiple images at a fast pace creating the effect of movement. This has been used to give the illusion of the make-up products moving independently which suggests agency as the logic of the video presents the power of make-up and its ability to transform individuals. The impact of the transition of the character is highlight by the instant switch from the bare face to the face full of make-up. The final Instagram story video structure which will be investigated is the boomerang function.

Video created with Instagram's boomerang function

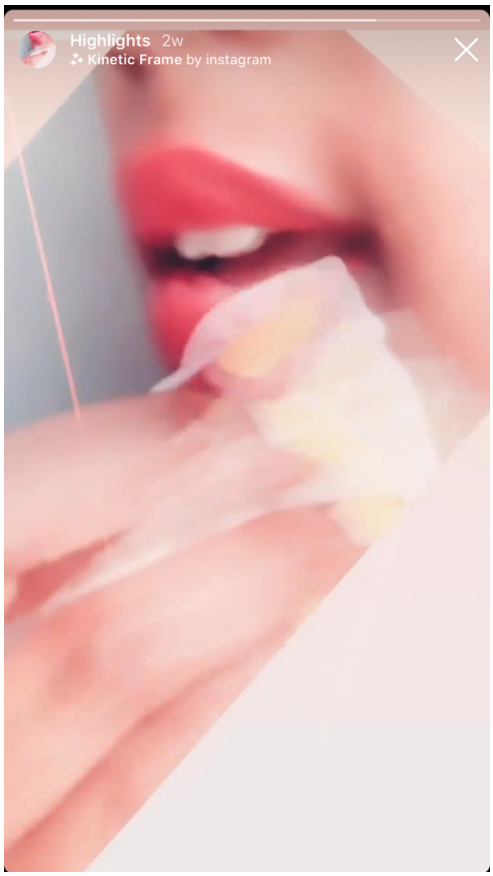


Fig. 7 Boomerang video

The boomerang function which is available on Instagram's story function presents an affordance where the user films a 15 second video through a boomerang recording setting. Once the video has been recorded it plays the action in a back-and-forth motion repeatedly. The boomerang function on Instagram is not an editing function but rather a video recording function. A user cannot post a video that has already been made and then apply a boomerang effect to the video. The boomerang function is the only Instagram video function that requires the user to record the video with an Instagram recording setting and cannot be applied to a pre-existing video. Therefore, users are unable to manipulate the narrative structures.

Logic

The removal of the lipstick causes a smudge across the mouth, the boomerang effect then reverses this cause and effect and then plays it forwards again and goes back and forth repeatedly. The repeated forward and reversed cause and effect emphasises the mechanics of cause-and-effect relationships presented in the development of events as it shows that every action has a reaction. This back-and-forth motion of an action can be used in storytelling to create tension, for example if a character trips over something and then begins to fall, this action can be played back and forth multiple times, leaving the audience in a state of tension as they anticipate the character hitting the ground in accordance with the causality mechanics. In the boomerang video created for this study, the emphasis on cause-and-effect mechanics presents conflict between two opposing choices: make on or make-up off?

Temporal context: Circular Structure

The back-and forth motion which is repeated creates a video that has a circular structure. A narrative with a circular structure is a narrative which ends where it began (Celli, 2004). The boomerang video begins with the action of removing red lipstick with a facial wipe. The action of removing the lipstick causes a smudge of red lipstick across the chin. The action then reverses, thus placing the smudged lipstick back onto the lip. The action of removing the lipstick is played forward and then reversed continuously. Having the action played back and forth makes the audience aware that what they are watching is a recorded action that can be manipulated. The video is not presented as a natural action which is unfolding for the first time, in the present, in a way that presents the illusion of time that mimics real life such as with classical realism.

Spatial context: Deconstructed structure

The audience's 'cinematic' self-awareness is extended further by the labelling of the filter, 'kinetic frame by Instagram' which is displayed at the top left corner of the screen. The audience is made aware that the video is an edited narrative as the editing feature which has been used is exposed. The exposure of the editing feature of the filter is placed as a part of the final product of the video. The exposure of the

editing feature presents a deconstructed structure where the raw materials of the video are exposed.

Conclusion of Findings

Instagram affords for the logic, time and special context within images and videos can be created by the Instagrammer in so many ways, as the creative authors of their content. However, the intracavity and presentational structures fixed into Instagram has been found to have effect on the organisational structure of the content.

On the Instagram feed, the order of events is driven by Instagram's algorithm and can be understood as the *syuzhet*. The algorithm presents events and the time that they are shown as it displays events of indicated interest first. On the Instagram feed, the algorithm is also the causality agent in the presentation of the content and has been informed by an Instagrammers actions. An Instagrammers actions on Instagram act as the cause and the output of the algorithm, and events it presents, act as the effect.

The content of the posts on the Instagram feed does not relate to each other in meaning as they all have independent authors and only relate to indicated interests. The Instagram feed provides a space where different Instagrammers are able to contribute to the content presented on the platform and the presentation of the content is governed by an algorithm. The nature of the Instagram environment helps users become accustom to the world of Instagram and the logic of how content is created, presented and understood with no linearity and causal links to one another. Thus, content is episodic on the Instagram feed.

On the Instagram account page, content is also episodic as the grid structure pre-sets content into episodes by presenting it in individual square frames. There is no cause-and -effect relationship between the images displayed. However, there are Instagrammers who use the image function to post an image as a part of a larger image. In the multiple images post the Instagrammer chooses the order in which the images are displayed and plan to create causal links between the images. The

caption attached to images are created based on the image selected, presenting a causal link between the image and the caption.

The order of events displayed on the grid is ordered by the Instagram software which is concerned with presenting content in accordance with recent activity and not causality. However, Instagrammers can set the pace and rhythm in which they would like the evets to unfold on the grid display but with the interactive environment, Instagram followers can manage which part of the narrative they consume which affects the logic of the narrative and can take control of the revelation of events in a temporal capacity.

The structures informed by the consumption of content are underpinned by Instagram's interactive environment which is fixed into the Instagram software seen through its interactive functions and algorithms informed by users' interactivity. Therefore, interactivity is imperative to consider in the understanding of Instagram as a medium.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERACTIVITY ON INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a social media platform which thrives on the interactivity of its users in creating and sharing content as well as through the platform's other interactive functions. Instagram has interactivity as its core in the foundations of its functions. From the home page of the Instagram platform, users are called to engage with the platform by interactively scrolling through content and employ further interactive functions. Instagram users are encouraged to interact with content across Instagram's image and video functions, with the use of 'like', 'comment' and 'share' buttons. In this study, fictional narratives and creative expressions presenting the topic of the pursuit for physical beauty were created. Instagram followers were able to interact with the content through Instagram's interactive functions.

Interactive Storytelling

Interactivity in a story gives the audience a more powerful sense of engagement in the text as they are able to create independent choices of how they engage with the text (Jorge, et al., 2013). Some scholars have acknowledged that in times, previous to the digital age, there had been interactivity in literature and written media but believe it is the digital age that has presented new opportunities to participate in the meaning construction of a given narrative within an interactive system (Bruni & Baceviciute, 2013).

However, African storytelling is historically known to employ techniques which are grounded in oral tradition where there is interactivity and shared meaning construction between storyteller and audiences. African storytelling is a "communal participatory experience" (Tuwe, 2016: 1).

In previous times, many African villagers would congregate around a fire daily to listen to stories (Tuwe, 2016). Storytelling became a ritual for African people to share stories at the end of each day. These stories were not written but were shared orally and stored through memory (Tuwe, 2016). Before writing and reading was established in ancient Africa, African traditions and histories were shared through storytelling. The stories shared had the function of transmitting knowledge across generations and preserving African history and tradition (Tuwe, 2016).

As knowledge is transmitted from storyteller to audience members, the storyteller and audience interact by means of call and response which becomes an essential part of the construction of the story (Tuwe, 2016). Therefore, the constant dialogue between storyteller and audience is woven together into the 'script' of the performance. An example of this is seen from the outset of Zimbabwean storytelling. The storyteller begins with saying *"Paivapo"* which means "Once upon a time" and the audience responds *"Dzepfunde"* which means "let it be so" (Tuwe, 2016: 4). Throughout the story the audience is called to participate in the creating the fabric of the story through their responses as they are directed by cues of the storyteller (Zenani, 1992).

Therefore, Africa's oral tradition in storytelling techniques which call for the audience members to be incorporated into the meaning making of the story indicates that interactive storytelling pre-exists the digital era.

The understanding of interactive storytelling can be understood as a continuum (Jorge, et al., 2013). The continuum begins from a narrative that the audience can engage with by interacting with it in some way without changing the narrative and still having the storyteller have authorship of the narrative. Interactive storytelling can then move into a narrative which is completely changed and emerges through the users' choices in their interaction with the narrative. This emergent narrative is placed at the end of the continuum. Here, the user becomes a co-author of the story (Jorge, et al., 2013).

Instagram's interactivity is located at both sides of the continuum. At the end of the continuum is Instagram's interactivity which encourages co-authorship where the reality of the user's experience of the platform is informed by his or her choices on the platform, such as the accounts a user chooses to follow and content engagement.

The content which is displayed on Instagram can be considered a narrative as it presents Instagrammers' point of view in events. When Instagrammers document their life on the platform, they become the subject in their content, similarly to a

character, where events (Instagram posts) develop with a causal link to their indicated interests (desires). Instagram posts can be interacted with by the Instagram community who produce microcontent (comments) to attach to Instagrammers' content, potentially presenting a clash (conflict) in the point of view.

The co-authorship of the narrative presents a narrative paradox where "the relationship between the authorship and interactivity is proportional" (Bruni & Baceviciute, 2013: 14). This is common in new media where the audience is released from the control and power of the author. However, in some cases the interactive stories keep the author in control. The degree of freedom the audience may have in their interaction with the narrative depends on the purpose and goals of the narrative (Bruni & Baceviciute, 2013).

In the creation of an interactive narrative, it is important that the audience has a clear understanding of the purpose of the narrative and the role they play in their interaction with the narrative. Poor indication of the purpose of the narrative and the audience's interactive role leads to problems of author-audience distance (AAD) which is a function of narrative intelligibility (Bruni & Baceviciute, 2013). AAD problems in a narrative occur if there is a misunderstanding between the author and the audience which is perceived as a gap or distance between the author and audience (Bruni & Baceviciute, 2013).

If the intentions of the interactive narrative and rules of engagement are misinterpreted this results in aberrant decoding (Bruni & Baceviciute, 2013). Decoding refers to the process of translating signs communicated into understandable information and instruction (Hall, 2001). This happens if the author and the audience do not share the same coding system. On Instagram there are functions which call users to interact with narratives in a particular way. Both the designers of the Instagram platform and the users need to have a shared understanding of how these functions work and what role the users play in their interaction. For example, the icon of the heart is understood as the 'like' button where users are called to indicate which content they like to engage with. The use of the heart icon to get users to understand how it should be used displays narrative representational power. The heart icon taps into an existing social coding system

where hearts are used to represent the love for something or someone, and hearts have been commonly used and reinforced in popular culture with liking, loving or affection. Therefore, Instagram users have an understanding of how to interact with the 'like' interactive function. The users' feedback is received through their interaction with the system set up by the designers of the platform.

Every system consists of an intentional goal and cycle of communication between the system and its users (Bruni & Baceviciute, 2013). Instagram uses algorithms as a mechanism to facilitate the intrinsic communication cycle between the platform and its users. The algorithms on Instagram ensure that each user's experience is personalized according to the choices that they make on the platform. Algorithms are a set of instructions built into the platform's functions which receive the input of the user's interaction with the platform (Milan, 2015). With the information that has been provided by the user's choices and interaction with the platform, the output of content is modified according to the users indicated interests (Milan, 2015). Therefore, it is the algorithm informed by the user's interactivity which populates the Instagram feed.

The reality of how the platform is experienced is not neutral as the content presented to engage with is informed by the recorded history of the user's choices by means of algorithms. This is known as productive interactivity where the user is able to directly manipulate the narrative paths as the way users engage with the content manipulates their experience in content consumption (Bruni & Baceviciute, 2013). Instagram only sets up the functions of the platform and its characteristics but how these functions are employed is in accordance with the user's choices on how they choose to perform on the platform. Therefore, Instagram users are called to co-author the display of content from the outset of their experience with the platform.

However, on the other side of the continuum lies Instagram as interactive media to engage with but is not altered by users' interaction with it. The interaction with other users' content is limited. For example, you can only like, comment and share the content, however, you are unable to completely alter the contents of the video or image that has been created. The creator of the post still maintains authorship over the content from its composition and structure, informed by the Instagrammer's choice of image or video function, to the elements which make up the content.

Instagram followers cannot change the images or texts they have access to. They can only add to content accessed by means of adding comments and likes. Here, Instagram followers' comment on the content and do not change the content.

However, it has been seen that Instagram followers' comments and engagement with the content can evolve the meaning of content. In this case, the content takes a step closer from the maintenance of full authorship towards the co-authored and emergent narrative on the interactive storytelling continuum, for example, in the event of *cloud protesting.* Cloud protesting refers to the mobilization of users for a cause with the mobilization grounded in social media (Milan, 2015). This has been seen by the #blacklivesmatter movement (Instagram, 2020). What began with the expression of grievances in the black community evolved into a protest by the means of reposting and sharing in solidarity with the hashtag #blacklivesmatter in order to bring awareness. Users move from only engaging with the content to participating in protest.

The hashtag (#) function on Instagram categorises content and is fed into Instagram's algorithmic systems where content is recommended to users with the same interests. Additionally, hashtag categories are grouped together into one feed on the hashtag explore page where a collage of posts relevant to the hashtag present a variety of viewpoints in the representations, signs and meanings of the hashtag. Therefore, contributions of content by Instagrammers are algorithmically collected into an intertextual display through Instagrammers' interaction and application of the hashtag function.

The algorithmic system which users interact with in every activity performed online creates a successful experience between the user and Instagram. The experience which people have when interacting with a system consists of a close relation between aspects of narrative communication, interaction between user and system, the achievement of the goals of the system (Bruni & Baceviciute, 2013). Instagram's interactive functions such as 'commenting', 'sharing' and hashtags (#) pertain to aspects of narrative communication as these functions are employed to communicate and spread a narrative which is assisted by the algorithmic system.

The interaction between users and Instagram is informed by the constant interaction that users have with the platform. This interaction informs the algorithms in order to create a more personalized experience in the users' interaction. Therefore, users are interacting with their interests which holds their attention and keeps them engaged with the system while constantly being receptable to its narrative communications systems. Keeping users constantly engaged with the system assists Instagram's goal to keep more users engaged in order to show more adverts (The Social Dilemma , 2020). Instagram's monetization agenda is founded in an advertisement strategy (The Social Dilemma , 2020). Therefore, the interactivity of users on the platform profits Instagram.

Interactivity and Surveillance Capitalism

Instagram's model which is aimed at commodifying users' personal data through their interaction with the platform defines surveillance capitalism (The Social Dilemma , 2020). Instagram profits from the data created by algorithms, informed by each user's interaction, which presents a mapping of users' interaction and their interests in order to sell certainty of users' online traffic to advertisers, thus, making advertising companies more successful (The Social Dilemma , 2020).

Former executive of Facebook, Tim Kendall was in forefront when advocating for the advertising model as the most viable and "sophisticated" way of getting social media to create profits (The Social Dilemma , 2020). Many online platforms, including Instagram have employed the advertising model in order to create profits. While users do not pay to use social media products, their data is sold to businesses that have a marketing agenda (The Social Dilemma , 2020).

Folded into the access to users' personal data are calculated triggers to hold user's attention. Computer scientist, Jaron Lanier explains that the allowance to access the calculated triggers informs "the gradual slight imperceptible change in users' behaviour and perception" (The Social Dilemma , 2020:). This means that by understanding how to guide users' interaction with the platform, through the use of algorithms, advertisers are able to exploit users' personal guide of interactions in order to guide their behaviour in such a way that will cause users to see and engage with advertised content.

Therefore, by exploiting the algorithmic system, advertisers are given a guarantee that the advertisements which they place will reach their target market. This guarantee is aided by algorithmically calculated predictions through the collection of personal data (The Social Dilemma , 2020). Every activity online is monitored and recorded, including what kinds of topics users search, what they click which images they look at and for how long they look at the images (The Social Dilemma , 2020). A model is created to predict users' behaviour. This model is then applied to modify users' behaviour by creating unconscious habits of interacting with the platform (The Social Dilemma , 2020).

Many contributors to the successes of social media attended Stanford Persuasive Technology Lab in order to learn about the psychology of persuasion and then build that knowledge into the functions of modern technology with the aim to modify users' behaviour (The Social Dilemma , 2020). Persuasion is hardwired into the design of Instagram. An example of this is seen in the design of the feed on the home page where a user needs to scroll up in order for a new content to appear. This design was purposed to give users positive intermittent reinforcement (The Social Dilemma , 2020). Google's former design ethicist, Tristan Harris, explains that this positive intermittent reinforcement technique is purposefully designed similarly to a slot machine where the player takes a chance in pulling down the lever with the possible chance of a new reward and keep players engaged by habit (The Social Dilemma , 2020). However, with social media this design technique is so discreet that it achieves keeping users habitually browsing through content at an unconscious level. Another example of persuasion is the implementation of interactive functions such as liking, commenting and tagging which is linked to notifications. Notifications on activity involving a user's Instagram account will trigger users to be engage with the platform to see the activity. Once users are on the platform, the platform takes the opportunity to bombard them with content which is algorithmically predicted to capture their interest. The user does not only then look at the activity triggered by the notification but is persuaded to continue to browse through the Instagram feed (The Social Dilemma , 2020).

With Instagram guiding user's interaction with the platform by exploiting users' personal data, users' psychology is essentially being used against them. This is confirmed to be an aim for social media platforms as they have a growth hacking team which is purposed to "hack into people's psychology to get more users" (The Social Dilemma , 2020: [Sp]). Growth hackers carry out experiments to get more users to look at advertisements (The Social Dilemma , 2020).

Having user's interactive behaviour on social media platforms at the mercy of large technology companies by using information from users' personal data for commercial interest calls for ethical concern. Tristan Harris urges technology companies to bring ethical design to its products (The Social Dilemma , 2020). From the time that Harris was on the Gmail team at Google he recognized the need to make technology less addictive. He realized that modern technology designs based on algorithms, while profiting technology companies and advertising businesses, affects users as their behaviour, what they see and what they know is manipulated in the favour of commerce (The Social Dilemma , 2020). Decisions which 50 designers at Google made in creating intentionally addictive technologies has manipulated the behaviours of 2 billion users (The Social Dilemma , 2020). Two billion people are triggered by algorithmic systems which exploit their calculated vulnerabilities.

This manipulation of psychology has transcended through the screen into the real world. An example of this is seen in how depression and suicide statistics in the U.S have spiked in relation to the growth of social media use (The Social Dilemma , 2020). Another example is seen in the genocide which took place in Myanmar. Hate speech on Facebook against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar resulted in mass killings, burning of homes and mass rapes of Rohingya Muslims. Facebook was used as a tool to manipulate public opinion and to enforce propaganda (The Social Dilemma , 2020). The personalization users' experiences in their interaction with modern technologies gives users a window of engaging with material which supports their worldview based on the calculated interest. Definitions and information that users are exposed to is tailor made and not objective as it is guided by their subjective interests. The subjective information which users consume causes polarization between groups of people (The Social Dilemma , 2020). There is not a fair distribution of knowledge where users are able to engage with several points of

view on a topic in order create a more wholistic and integrated understanding but are bombarded with information which confirms their point of view and presents it as truth.

While ethical design is necessary it presents a dilemma as algorithms are essentially the starting point of the manipulation, however they are also the starting point of the design and success of social media. Algorithms are programmed to guide users in such a way that achieves commercial gain. However, how the algorithm goes about achieving this commercial interest is not supervised by humans (The Social Dilemma , 2020). The algorithm works independently to find a way to achieve the goal, unaware of what is ethical and what is not (The Social Dilemma , 2020). Therefore, it is in the very nature of algorithms to pursue an agenda with no regard to people, yet technology companies intended for it to work on people. However, without the algorithms social media cannot sell certainty to advertisers which would nullify social media's unique selling point.

Despite the ethical concerns for social media users, some Instagram users have not just been pawns for the use of commercial profit for businesses but have profited themselves from Instagram's business model which capitalises on advertising. There are Instagram users who partner with businesses for the use of user-generated content that is imbedded with a marketing agenda. Such Instagram users are then remunerated for their marketing driven user-generated content. User-generated content was originally created by ordinary people who engaged in content creation outside of their professional occupations. However the commodification of user-generated content presents itself as a professional industry as users create content for businesses and brands.

In early 2015, a group of 50 fashion bloggers were selected and paid to post pictures of themselves on Instagram wearing an 88 USD dress from a clothing retailer Lord and Taylor (Macon, 2017). The fashion bloggers' audience on Instagram who served as Lord and Taylor's target market were effectively penetrated. In this way, 11,4 million Instagram users were reached and 300 000 engagements with the post were received by means of likes and comments, thus resulting in the dress selling out (Macon, 2017).

Interactivity and The Revolution Of The Commodification Of Creative Labour

The interactive functions presented by Instagram have revolutionised the way businesses engage their consumers. By the use of Instagram algorithmic system, which is informed by users' interactivity, businesses are able to better target their consumers with marketing content. Businesses that use Instagram as a marketing channel do not only exploit the algorithmic system but also exploit the influence users may carry in the fabric of the content they share on the platform. The succeeding hybrid of advertising and user-generated content has advertised products/services imbedded in user-generated content.

Use-generated content, on social media, is not the first to use this hybrid nature of advertising product/services and content of entertainment. An example of the hybridity of advertisement and product has previously been seen in film.
There are blockbuster films which are created as a vehicle to transport products to consumers, outside the world of the film. *Toy Story* (1999) is described to be "designed as the perfect showcase for the merchandise" as it showcases pivotal characters in the film. Toy figures, Woody and Buzz Lightyear were also available for purchase at stores (King 2002: 212).

Product placement became implemented in Hollywood films since the 1980s (King, 2002). The importance of merchandise in a film has become increasingly important that some argue that plot lines and the flow of narrative in a film are compromised in order to prioritise marketing products (King, 2002). However, there have been films such as *Twister* (1996) where the cola drink, Pepsi, received the spotlight at a pivotal moment in the plot. Scrap pieces of Pepsi cans were used to create an instrument which detects tornados (King, 2002). This use of the Pepsi cans fitted right into the narrative and did not disturb the plot development but was instead used to contribute to its the climax.

The hybridity of advertisements and entertainment content tends to bombard people with advertisements when they are consuming entertainment content. At times the advertisements are so discreetly integrated into the content that advertisements do not reach consumers at a conscious level but reach them at an unconscious level.

While creating content which carries a marketing agenda was a phenomenon established before the advent of Instagram, the interactivity and engagement which Instagram affords is used as a strategy to increase traffic for businesses' advertising content.

Businesses use Instagrammers who typically have a large following and frequent interaction with their account to promote advertised content. Therefore, the level of interactivity with content can change a user's landscape of the Instagram platform. Here, the platform transforms from a casual activity of creating and sharing content to a stream of income which causes the user to create and share content intentionally with a marketing agenda. The interactive affordances of Instagram have provided businesses with a marketing strategy which centres around the commodification of creative labour.

Creative labour refers to work which is centred in an individual's creativity, skill, talent and personal knowledge. Creative labour does have the potential to bring an income; however, the income generated is not guaranteed. It is inconsistent as it is generated according to the availability of work (Lee, 2013).

Creative labour is precarious labour (Lee, 2013). The precarity of creative labour refers to the short term contract basis of the work and free-lancing approach to work (Lee, 2013). When a business approaches a user to imbed a marketing agenda in the user's user generated content, the user does not become a full time employee of the business but is only outsourced for their expertise in creating content and engaging with a wide reach of potential buyers of the marketed product.

The entrepreneurial nature of creative labour, in cultural industries, indicates how the landscape of the work force will change into a space where people (including those from other industries) will be autonomized and will become independent bodies of their work (Lee, 2013). Thus, the mechanics of creative labour serves as a template for new ways of working, in the neoliberal climate which calls for late capitalism (Lee, 2013). Late capitalism dissolves unionisation and promotes autonomy as individuals become their own agents in the acquisition and production of work.

Creative labour also takes the form of immaterial labour. Immaterial labour refers to work which is affective and is centred in the labourer's knowledge and intellect (Lee, 2013). Immaterial labour is known to usually be performed outside of professional jobs but is now recognised as a commodity (Lee, 2013). Immaterial labour can be understood as providing a service, creating a cultural product or the knowledge of communication. It calls for the commodification of the self as individuals use the technologies of the self as a resource to inform their work (Lee, 2013). Being active on the Instagram platform is an example of immaterial labour. The content that Instagram users create and distribute, engaging with other content on the platform by commenting, liking and sharing posts is commonly done as a leisure activity. However, users' activity on Instagram is now commodified as businesses pay Instagram users to promote their brand on the platform.

Labour has increasingly become more affective (Lee, 2013). Affective labour is labour which aims to evoke emotions out of others (Lee, 2013). The mechanisms of social media have been ingrained with evoking an emotion out of others. The 'like' button which is presented on numerous social media platforms is used as a measure to show approval and interest in content. The circulation of content in the social media network is also at the heart of social media's nature. Social media users share content that they find worth sharing which is based on subjective judgement.
The influence that affective labour has over the relationship between consumers and businesses has been employed and appreciated in other industries. Different types of businesses have found user-generated content on social media platforms as a great way to understand their market better and to have an interactional relationship between a business and its consumers.

Instagram affords functions which can assess users' engagement with content. It is useful to have resources which assist in monitoring the interactivity between users and target specific content for users who use Instagram for professional purposes such as creating content with a marketing agenda. However, users who use Instagram for professional purposes and users who use Instagram for personal purposes are not afforded the same tools for interactivity assessments.

Findings

On Instagram users have two options for the kind of Instagram account they wish to have. The two options are a personal account and a professional account. Both options of Instagram accounts allow for the interactive functions of monitoring likes, comments and views. However, a professional account is accompanied by additional resources which help users track the interactivity with their content. The additional interactivity resources of a professional Instagram account include a function called ‘insights’. Insights provide Instagrammer with statics concerning interactivity with their content. There is an ‘insights’ button which is displayed at the top of the Instagram account page of a professional account. Here, The overall insights of interactivity with the Instagram page are recorded. The overall insights of the Instagram page present the monitoring of interactivity for the last 30 days or 7 days, according to the Instagrammer’s preference. The categories that are monitored for the overall insight of the Instagram account interactions are an overview of accounts reached, content interactions and total followers.

Each image or video that has been posted on the Instagram account page also has additional interactive functions which give insight to interactivity with the image or video. For each image or video the most insights allow Instagrammers to see how many likes their content has received, how many comments have been given, how many times the content has been shared and how many times the content has been saved.

The additional resources to monitor interactivity are useful to employ in this study for the purposes of investigating how interactivity affects how narratives are presented. Therefore, the Instagram account which was created for this study was created as a Instagram professional account.

The Instagram account created for this study @pursuit4beaut was active for 9 days. Day 1 was used to share awareness about the account and gain followers in order to create an audience. The remaining 8 days were used to share 8 posts. I created an audience by promoting the Instagram account @pursuit4beaut on my personal Instagram account which has 571 followers. There were five other Instagram

accounts which shared the promotion post of the Instagram account @pursuit4beaut, on day one.

Sharing interactive function

All five followers who shared the account have mutual followers with one another. However, the number of mutual followers can only be seen from the owner's Instagram account profile. Therefore, I did not have access to the number of mutual followers between the five Instagram accounts. But I was able to access the number of mutual followers between my personal Instagram account, where the promotion of @pursuit4beaut was posted, and the five other Instagram accounts which shared the promotion post for @pursuit4beaut. In order to identify each of the five followers who shared the promotion post, I will refer to each follower using alphabetic letters. My personal Instagram account has 65 mutual followers with account a), 59 mutual followers with account b), 21 mutual followers with account c), 18 mutual followers with account d) and 17 mutual followers with account e). Therefore, a minimum of 180 users on Instagram had the potential of seeing the promotion post for @pursiut4beaut at least 2 times.

There was a study conducted by marketing researchers that presented the investigation of the effectiveness that the repetition of banner ads has on how consumers remember the brand and have intention to click on the repeated advertisement in an online environment (Donthu & Yaveroglu, 2013). The findings in the study showed that the repetition of a banner advertisement led to greater brand memory in consumers and the repetition of an advertisement in an online environment generated an increase in clicks on the ad (Donthu & Yaveroglu, 2013).

The findings of this study can be used to understand the effect of the repetition of the promotion post of @pursuit4beaut that was caused by the use of the sharing function in Instagram's interactivity functions. Because other users who have mutual followers with my personal Instagram account shared the promotion post of @pursuit4beaut, the post was presented as repetitive content to at least 180 users. The promotional post for @pursuit4beaut presented a call to action as it encouraged users to follow the @pursuit4beaut Instagram account. The @pursuit4beaut account was tagged in the promotion post meaning that there was a link presented on the post that users

could click on that would direct them to the account page of @pursuit4beaut. Therefore, it can be understood that the repetitive presentation of the promotion post increased the visits to the account page for @pursuit4beaut and increased the chances of the awareness of the Instagram account. At the end of day one @pursuit4beaut had accumulated 25 followers.

Through the remaining 8 days of the study, the images and videos I had created and distributed on @pursuit4beaut had been shared 11 times in total. The Instagram sharing function automatically includes a link which directs users to the image or video on the Instagram account page from which the image or video was shared. The number of profile visits to @pursuit4beaut resulted in 195 profile visits and the Instagram account had 46 followers by the end of the study. The content created for the study had reached 82 users.

I had only promoted @pursuit4beaut from my personal Instagram account on day 1 and the promotion post was done with an Instagram story which expired within 24 hours after it had been posted. Therefore, the sharing of content, profile visits and content reach that occurred from day 2 to day 9 were not a result of the promotion post on my personal Instagram account. However, there is the possibility of several interactive functions which contribute to visits and interactions with the Instagram account.

There is no way to detect how each visitor was directed to @pursuit4beaut. The sharing of the images and videos from the @pursuit4beaut account could have contributed to the profile visits as the link presented in shared content directs users to Instagram account by the use of a ‘see post’ tag. ‘See post’ is a call to action presented by the sharing interactive function. Profile visits could have also been encouraged by Instagram’s account suggestions. Instagram’s account suggestion is a function that automatically presents new Instagram accounts to other followers as a suggested account for them to follow in order to integrate the new Instagram user into the Instagram community.

The Instagram account suggestions are presented with the call to action with a ‘follow’ button that users may click in order to follow the suggested account. Users

may also click on the name of the profile presented in the account suggestion and are directed to the suggested account's Instagram page where users can view the account page before making the decision to follow the page. Therefore, the account suggestion function presents a call to action for users to interact with the suggested account by either following the account or visiting the profile of the suggested account. With @pursuit4beaut being a new Instagram account which was created for this study, it is possible that some of the profile visits came from the account suggestions that Instagram shared with other users.

Instagram's account suggestion function also presents accounts that have mutual followers and accounts which display similar interests to indicated interests of users which have been detected by Instagram's algorithms. The interest of users are indicated by which content users engage with and which content users like.

'Likes' Interactive function

Users commonly share content that they like. Users show that they like or enjoy particular content by the use of the interactive 'like' button. 'Likes' are an interactive function on Instagram which is presented with the heart symbol at the bottom of images or videos on the Instagram feed and Instagram account page. Instagram stories do not have the 'like' function. Likes are used by users to indicate that they like or enjoy particular content.

The content which had the most likes in this study was the image with a caption (displayed below) with 33 likes. It also happened to be the content which was shared the most. This led me to investigate whether the number of likes correlates with the number of times content has been presented to others with the sharing function. Therefore, the records of likes for each post and the number of times each post was shared has been put into a graph in order to observe if there is a relationship between the two.

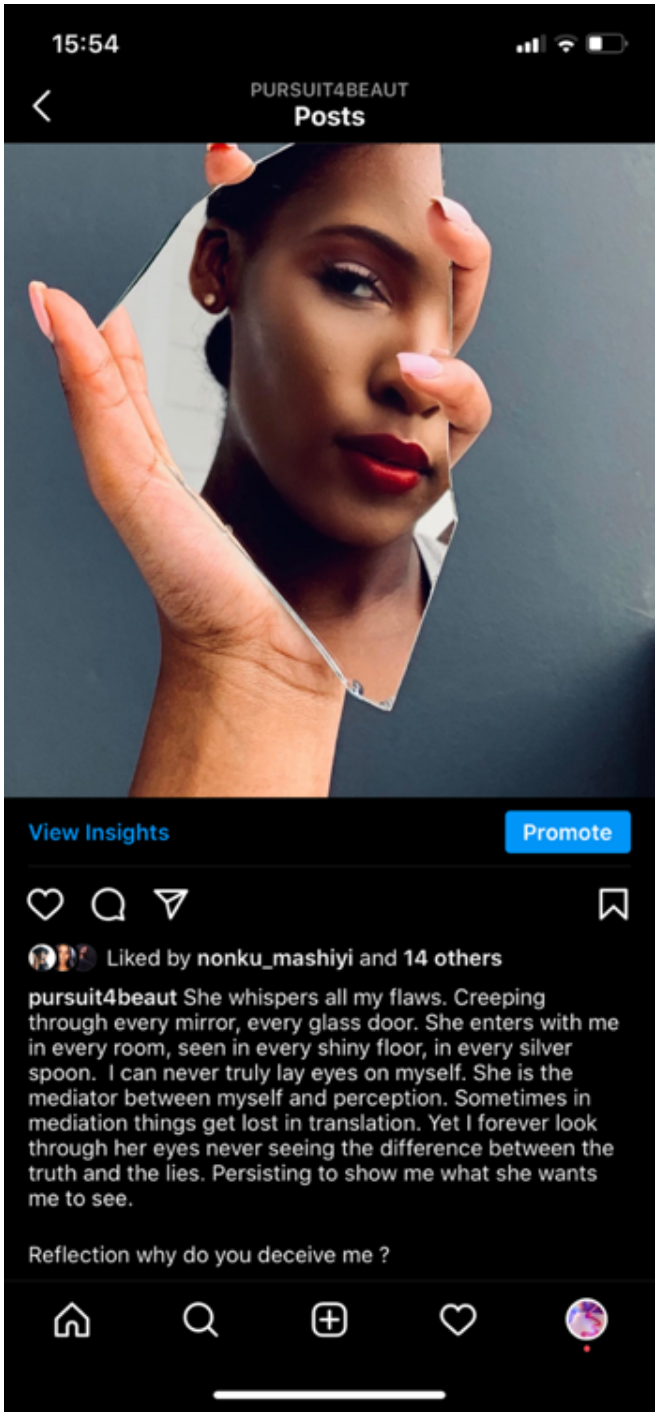
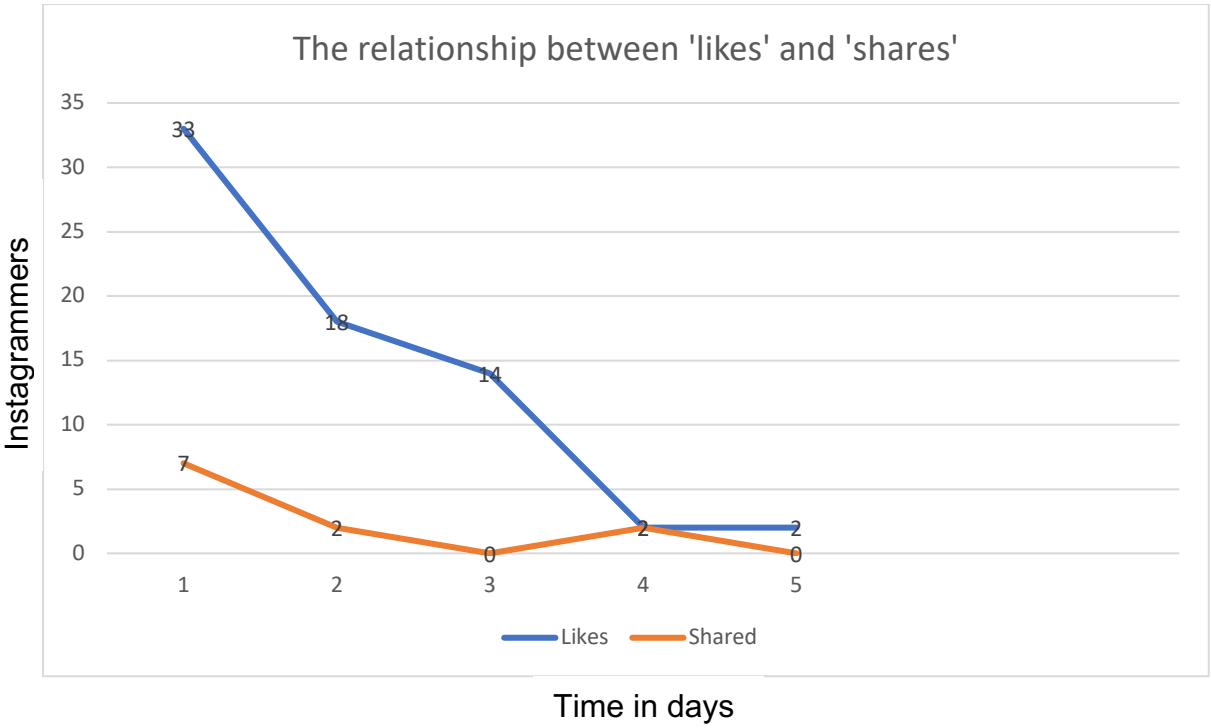


Image with a caption



From the graph it is seen that there is no relationship between likes and the amount of times content is presented to others through the sharing function. Therefore, ‘likes’ do not affect how users share content.

However, the number of ‘likes’ are presented with the content. The number of likes for an image or video are displayed at the bottom of the image or video. An example of this is seen in the image below. Instagram presents the ‘likes’ by revealing one of the usernames who liked the image and indicates how many others have liked the content. For the purpose of not disclosing usernames and profile pictures of other users, the profile picture and username have been concealed.



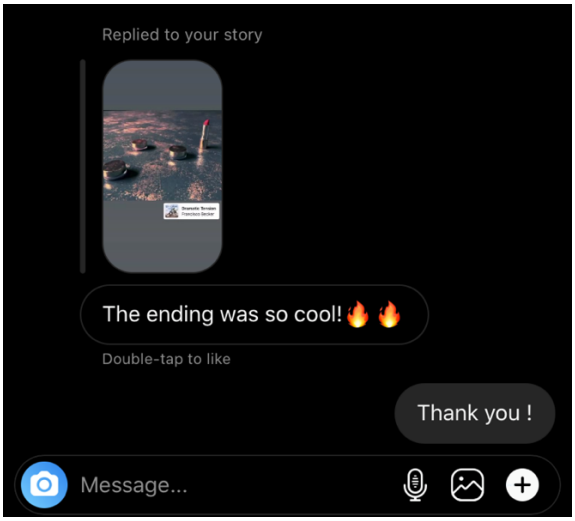
Users may also click onto the text where it indicates how many others have liked the image or video in order to see a list of all the users who liked the content. All users may see how many likes an image or video has as well as who has liked their content and other users' content as well. Therefore, the popularity of the content is presented in the presentation of the content. This shows that the interactive affordance of the 'like' function alters the presentation of Instagram content. However, this alteration in the presentation of the content does not alter the contents of the image or video.

Having particular content presented as popular by having many likes does not affect the content. Rather, the consumption of content is affected by what users have indicated that they like in order for Instagram's algorithms to present users with content which could potentially interest them. An example of this is seen on Instagram's explore page where an abundance of images and videos are presented. These images and video usually belong to users that the exploring user does not

follow. All the images and videos displayed have been presented according to indicated interests of a user. At the bottom of some images or videos on the Instagram explore page, it is written ‘based on photos you liked’. Therefore, the way the ‘like’ interactive function is used by users affects what kind of content they are presented with in the Instagram explore page. The content that is presented on users’ Instagram explore page depends on each user’s indicated interests by the use of the ‘like’ interactive function. Users are able to engage with the content presented and contribute to the discourse surrounding the content by including their comments with the comments interactive function.

‘Comments’ interactive function

Users are able to comment on all content which is posted on Instagram. Both Instagram stories and Instagram account pages afford the interactive function of commenting. The comments on Instagram stories are directed to Instagrammers’ direct messaging on Instagram. The comments relating to an Instagram story are presented as a reply to Instagrammers’ stories. An example of this is seen in the image below where a user commented on the 15 second video which was posted with the Instagram story function.



The comment on the Instagram story is presented in direct messaging therefore, the comment can only be seen by the commenting user and the Instagrammer who posted the Instagram story. The direct messaging function on Instagram works in a similar way to text messaging where only the sender and the recipient of a message

are able to have access to messages. Therefore, other users are not able to see the comment made for the Instagram story.

Having the comment on the Instagram story displayed in the direct messages function, which is out of sight for other users and is separate from the display of Instagram stories, shows that the comments on Instagram stories do not affect the way other users see the Instagram story. The comment on the Instagram story is only limited to the sender and recipient of the comment.

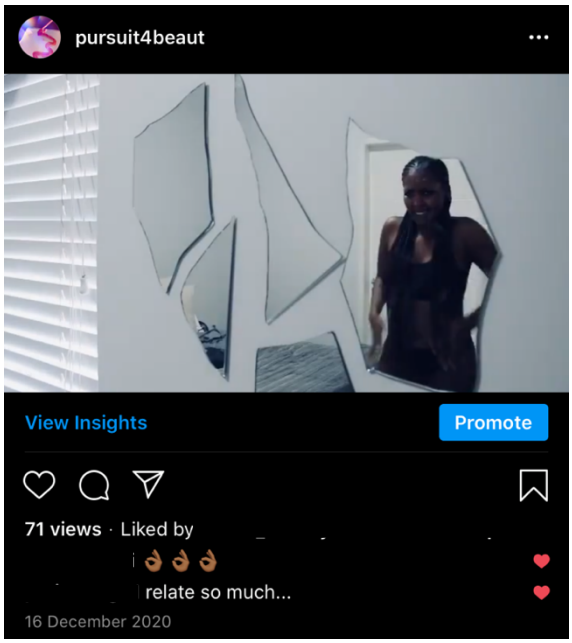
The recipient of the comment is able to respond to the comment. Therefore, the commenting interactive function on Instagram stories are conversational as the sender and recipient of the comment are able to communicate back and forth. Having the comments on Instagram stories presented in direct messages function solidifies the conversational nature of the commenting function on Instagram stories.

Comments and responses are presented in a similar format to text messages in the direct message function. The way in which the speech bubbles are arranged in a way that places the sender's message on the left-hand side and the recipient's messages on the right-hand side simulates the format of text messages. Additional conversational elements such as voice notes and emojis are included in the direct messaging function where Instagram story comments are displayed.

The conversational use of the commenting function is also apparent when users comment on content which is displayed on the Instagram feed and Instagram account page. When users comment on comment on content on the Instagram feed and Instagram account page, the recipient of the comment is notified and is able to respond to the comment. However, the defining difference between the conversational element that the comments in Instagram stories present and the conversational element that the comments in the Instagram feed and Instagram account page present is that the comments on Instagram stories can lead to communication that is only between the commenting user and the recipient of the comment, while the comments on the Instagram feed and Instagram account page is open to all users within the Instagram community.

Therefore, the comments on content which is shared on the Instagram feed and Instagram account page allows for communal conversation and communication. The contribution of each user in this communal communication platform, by use of the commenting function, is marked by usernames. In that way users are able to identify who is saying what. Users may also respond to one another's responses by clicking on the comment they wish to respond to which automatically tags the username they wish to respond to. In this way all users are aware of what is being said to whom. There is no limit to how many users can take part in this communal communication and how long conversations can take place in this commenting function. Some popular Instagram users such as celebrity, Kim Kardashian receive 10s of thousands of Instagram comments on an image or video post (Instagram, 2021).

Because the comments on content which is posted on the Instagram account page and Instagram feed is communal, the comments made in response to content is seen by all users. The comments made on particular content are presented with the image or video that is being commented on. An example of this is seen in the image below.



The comments are displayed below the posted image or video. Users consume this content as a two-part structure narrative where users read the visual text of the image or video and then read through the written text of comments made as they engage in communal communication through the commenting function.

If the image or video has been posted with a caption by an Instagrammer, the caption is presented directly beneath the image or video as a comment the Instagrammer has made as a note on their content. The caption is then included in the commenting space and is integrated with users' comments in the commenting space, if users choose to comment on the captioned image.

Therefore, the commenting function on images and videos posted on the Instagram account page and Instagram feed affect the way content is presented and consumed. Even though the comments are unable to change the contents of the image, video, or caption, the content is presented with the inputs and opinions of other users which may even be in conflict with the Instagrammer's intended message. Therefore, the meaning of the content is also intertwined with the meaning- making that users attach to the content by the use of the commenting function.

Conclusion of Findings

The interactive functions Instagram affords in being able to display comments on content, share content, receive immediate feedback on content and have content personalized, with algorithms by the use of the 'like' function, differentiates social media from other media. In social media, users are producers of content and can act as distributors of content and are not only limited to word of mouth but become agents in production, contribution and distribution of content. On Instagram, the sharing function on affords the repetitive distribution and presentation of content. A call to action is presented with shared content which invites Instagram followers to visit profile pages and view the original post.

The number of 'likes' are presented with the content but there is no relationship between likes and the amount of times content is presented to others through the sharing function. Therefore, 'likes' do not affect how users share content. Having particular content presented as popular by having many likes does not affect the content. Rather, the consumption of content is affected by what users have indicated that they like in order for Instagram's algorithms to present users with content which could potentially interest them.

Interest in particular content may lead to engaging in the comment function. The commenting function is conversational. There are two types of conversations commenting can afford: a private conversation between the sender and recipient of the comment in Instagram stories or the communal and public conversation on the Instagram feed and Instagram account page.

The conversational and dialogic nature of Instagram is a common trait in all social media. There is an exchange of information. All social media participants become both producers and recipients of information which is in contrast to the mass media's one way traffic of information from a central agency as producers of knowledge and the presenting the audience as the recipients.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

With the introduction of social media, storytelling through audio-visual media has been revolutionized in how consumers engage with content and how the creation and consumption of content has become more accessible. Access to creating and consuming audio-visual media was previously restricted to audio-visual media professionals such as television producers and filmmakers for consumption on cinema and television. However, social media allows amateurs to contribute to content production and distribute their content to a digital community and consume content continually locating social media in video-on demand discourses. The affordance of amateurs contributing to content production has introduced the democratization of cultural production, allowing for a greater diversity of narratives to be shared as more people are included in the discourses and meaning making of narratives. However, a digital divide within and between countries limits the inclusion of others in the contribution to cultural production on social media. It is people who have access to smartphones and web 2.0 who are able to contribute to the image and culture production of narratives on such platforms like Instagram.

In this study I investigated Instagram as a medium for storytelling, creative expression and interactivity with the aim of understanding the affordances and limitations of the medium in the creation of creating narratives and creative expression content. I conducted a creative research study in which I created an Instagram account called @pursuit4beaut, where I investigated Instagram's image and video functions with the aims of a) how image and video functions serve concise narrativity and creative expression, b) how Instagram's functions such as boomerang, music filters, captioning and other editing tools serve as creative expression and storytelling aids, c) the kind of narrative structures which are informed by the presentation of Instagram's image and video functions and d) the degree in which interactivity may affect how content is presented to others as well as study the limitations of Instagram's interactivity.

The creation of narratives on @pursuit4beaut which employed Instagram's image and video functions had the overarching narrative of the pursuit for beauty with images and videos serving as sub-narratives which contributed to the overarching narrative.

Findings on Instagram functions for concise narrativity, creative expression and storytelling aids

All Instagrammers' images are displayed in equal sized squares which democratises the display of images across the Instagram community. The democratisation of the display of images allows for images to be consumed in the same way and presents Instagrammers as equal contributors of content creation and distribution.

As per the findings of this study, Instagram's image and video functions dominate as a distribution channel rather than a creation channel as all image and video functions except for one (the boomerang feature) allow users to create videos and images outside of Instagram and then access those videos and images through the platform for distribution purposes. The boomerang function requires users to record and create the boomerang video on Instagram's story function. The boomerang effect presents two different temporal realities and emphasises on the mechanics of cause-and-effect relationships. Having Instagram dominate in distribution presents Instagram as a platform where users are able to share and showcase their content creations within a community. Therefore, there is no regulation in the kinds of content that is created amongst users, except for adhering to the Instagram community guidelines.

Instagrammers are afforded the option to capture and edit pictures outside of Instagram and are, therefore, not limited to Instagram's editing tools, while being able to distribute their previously edited image on Instagram. Editing allows the storyteller to design the lens through which the audience views the image, thus introducing a point of view. Instagram affords Instagrammers with editing tools for both image and videos. Instagram television (IGTV) is the only function on Instagram which does not present editing functions. Instagram's picture editing functions reference 20th century photography with 13 editing tools and present Instagrammers with the choice of 27 filter options. Images and videos distributed on Instagram

stories are also afforded a wide range of filters, music and badges in the editing functions. The use of filters in the Instagram story function affords the contribution to atmosphere and themes presented in the content as a storytelling aid. The development of a narrative may also be assisted by the use of music filters which presents songs and lyrics, affording narration and context in a concise narrative.

All the editing choices made by users in the Instagram's story function are visible in the publication of the Instagram story, exposing some of the raw materials of the video therefore, the audience (Instagram followers) edited stories on Instagram are constructed and manipulated. Part of the spectacle of the edited Instagram stories is how Instagrammers have chosen to construct and manipulate content in their creative expression of messages, ideas and interests.

In the creation of a narrative, Images afford the representation of a scene that is part of a story, similarly to a tableau, and does not constitute of a story on its own but can present elements of narrativity such as characters, desires, space, and time. Since images afford the representation of a scene, the multiple image post function affords a progression of which are presented in chronological order and affords causal links between the image scenes which are limited to 10 scenes. Having multiple images affords the development of a narrative in the form of a series of tableaux and presenting causal links between the image series.

When captions are attached to an image, the caption affords the anchoring of the intended fuller meaning of the image which is understood as one bi-media text. The caption affords an extension of the story in written text of 2200 characters maximum. The caption anchors the meaning of the image and provides context for the narrative. The caption can be useful in further articulating the author's intended meaning of the content, and also restricts/reduces the number of possible interpretations of an image.

Instagrammers are limited to creating episodic content on the Instagram Story function. The Story function presents the maximum duration of a video at 15 seconds which can be presented one after another with causal links within an Instagram story, however, the Instagram Stories display these 15 second videos for a 24-hour

period. The automatic clearing of Instagram stories which have been on display for the last 24 hours, presents Instagram stories as independent from one another with no causal links presented from the Instagram stories between the stories every 24 hours.

The temporal structures in the presentation of images and videos are the dominant limitations which affects the degree of conciseness presented in content. The conciseness of a narrative mainly depends on the maximum duration of the videos as per the video functions or the allowance of captions and number of images presented in the image functions. The limitations of time and presentation in Instagram's video and image functions cannot be altered and are fixed into the video and image structures as per the different image and video functions. However, the majority of the content creation functions on Instagram allows for users to have freedom in how they create narrative content within the limitations of the degrees of conciseness presented by Instagram's image and video functions.

In the Investigation of how Instagram's image and video functions can be used to create a narrative presents challenges as there are several interpretations of what a narrative is. Therefore, the understanding of Instagram as a medium for storytelling is limited to one's understanding and interpretation of a narrative. However, I have found that the creative freedom it affords, by allowing Instagrammers to create content outside of the Instagram platform to be distributed on Instagram, allows Instagrammers to creatively express messages, interests and ideas with very little limitation on the kind of content that can be created. The limitations in the creation and distribution of content are mostly presented in the structures of the content and how it is consumed. It is the distribution structures in the image and video functions which regulate the structures and presentations of the content as it is being distributed.

Findings on affordances and limitations of narrative structures

Each of the image and video functions have a distinct format of how the content is presented and consumed. These formats are fixed into the Instagram interface and aid as a democratizing agent in the presentation of narratives. All narratives created with particular image and video functions afford the same presentational structures and consumption methods across users.

All content is consumed in different ways as per the image and video function. The consumption of content on Instagram's image and video functions can be understood in three parts. The first part presents Instagram functions that have users consume content on the Instagram feed and explore page which presents a variety of content from different users; the second part has users consume content from a selected Instagrammer by visiting his or her account page and the third part has users consuming content on Instagram stories. The regulation of structures of the narratives is limited to the presentation of the narrative according to the image or video function employed in the creation and/or distribution of the content.

Instagram affords for the logic, time and special context within images and videos can be created by the Instagrammer in so many ways, as the creative authors of their content. However, the intracavity and presentational structures fixed into Instagram has been found to have effect on the organisational structure of the content.

On the Instagram feed, the order of events is driven by Instagram's algorithm. The algorithm presents events and the time that they are shown as it displays events of indicated interest first. On the Instagram feed, the algorithm is also the causality agent in the presentation of the content and has been informed by an Instagrammer's actions. An Instagrammers actions on Instagram act as the cause and the output of the algorithm, and events it presents, act as the effect.

The content of the posts on the Instagram feed does not relate to each other in meaning as they all have independent authors and only relate to indicated interests.

The nature of the Instagram environment helps users become accustom to the world of Instagram and the logic of how content is created, presented and understood with no linearity and causal links to one another. Thus, content is episodic on the Instagram feed.

On the Instagram account page, content is also episodic as the grid structure pre-sets content into episodes by presenting it in individual square frames. There is no cause-and -effect relationship between the images displayed. In the multiple images post the Instagrammer chooses the order in which the images are displayed and plan to create causal links between the images. The caption attached to images are created based on the image selected, presenting a causal link between the image and the caption.

The order of events displayed on the grid is ordered by the Instagram software which is concerned with presenting content in accordance with recent activity and not causality. Instagram followers can manage which part of the narrative they consume which affects the logic of the narrative and can take control of the revelation of events in a temporal capacity.

In addition to the organisational principles of time, logic and space, how these elements are composed can present additional narrative structures such as two-part structures, circular structures, deconstructed structures and layered structures. However, because of Instagram's ability to liberate the creations of narratives beyond the Instagram features by having users create images and videos outside of Instagram for Instagram, Instagrammers have creative freedom in their composition of the organisational principles of time, logic and space in their narrative structure. There are few images and/or video functions which restrict users to particular structures in the creation of their content. These functions include the boomerang feature which restricts users to a circular structure of the content by presenting the action of the content in a back-and-forth motion, repeatedly.

The structures informed by the consumption of content are underpinned by Instagram's interactive environment which is fixed into the Instagram software seen through its interactive functions and algorithms informed by users' interactivity.

Findings on the affordances and limitations of Interactivity

The different ways that content is consumed on Instagram presents different ways users engage and interact with the content. Content which is distributed on an Instagram account page (Instagram profile page) is consequently displayed on the Instagram feed as the user's most recent content creation activity. This content can be engaged with by the use of communal interactive function of the comment function. The engagement users have with the content by the use of the 'comment' interactive function is displayed publicly and is presented as a communal activity that users from the Instagram community can engage in as a conversation. Users are able to communicate their thoughts on the content with one another and the Instagrammer who created the content is able to respond these comments. This communication affects the presentation of the content as it is presented with the content and can alter the intended meaning of the Instagrammer as thoughts and opinions are pinned to the content.

The public display of users' thoughts towards content on the Instagram account page and Instagram feed is extended into the 'like' function as the number of likes and the list of users who liked the content is available for the public. The number of likes content receives is presented with the image or video but is unable to change the contents of the image or video.

Where the 'like' function showed change in relation to content was in the way that Instagram's algorithm uses the 'like' function to detect what content users are interested in. Due to users' indicated interests informed by the algorithm, users' experiences and content consumption on Instagram is personalised. Therefore, the use of the 'like' function can influence the content made available for content consumption.

Algorithms are the backbone of Instagram's functions. The content presented to engage with is informed by the recorded history of the user's choices by means of algorithms. Instagram only sets up the functions of the platform and its characteristics but how these functions are employed is in accordance with users' choices on how they choose to perform on the platform. Therefore, Instagram users

are co-authors in the display of content from the outset of their experience and interaction with the platform.

Algorithms also direct users to consume content on the Instagram story function according to users' engagement with their following accounts. Users engage with content on the Instagram story function differently to how they engage with content on the Instagram account page and Instagram feed. In contrast to the public and communal interactivity presented on the Instagram account page and feed, Instagram story interactive functions are private and isolated. Users' comments on Instagram stories are sent to the recipient of the comment in private with the use of direct messaging. Direct messaging is a text messaging function presented on Instagram. Because the comments are presented in private, they do not affect how the Instagram story is presented, by the Instagrammer, to users.

Instagrammers were found to not be the only presenters of their content. Other users may present another Instagrammer's content by use of the sharing interactive function. Through the observation of the sharing interactive function, it was found that users may share content created by other users. The shared content is presented with a call to action which directs users to the original creator of the content and was seen to be a useful tool to attract users to account pages.

Instagram presents diverse tools in the interactive and content creation function. The range of these tools continue to expand as Instagram has been seen to continuously present new functions which present new tools.

Limitations presented in the study

Instagram is constantly updating their functions. This makes the understanding of their functions limited to the time the study was conducted. With Instagram continuously evolving the findings of Instagram as a medium are subject to change.

The most recent functions Instagram added are Instagram reels and Instagram shopping. These functions have recently become pivotal in how users experience Instagram. The Instagram interface now presents the buttons for both of these functions at the bottom of the home screen for easy access. Instagram reels are

videos which are limited to the duration of 30 seconds (Instagram, 2020). The new Instagram video function became so popular that it has even been identified as the new secret weapon in attracting more Instagram followers (Herrman, 2021)

the Instagram shopping function has become the new secret weapon for businesses which use Instagram as a marketing strategy. This function directs Instagram user-consumers to products presented by businesses and provides a link to the website where the product can be purchased (Instagram, 2020). With the help of Instagram's algorithms, these products are presented according to the indicated interests of users, pairing products with a calculated viable market. Having businesses use Instagram as a professional tool has been extended to promoting and advertising products more overtly, contrary to the marketing agenda businesses presented on Instagram that was more discreet with marketing messages ingrained into user-generated content. This continues to diversify Instagram's function from a visual documenting application to an overtly commercialised space.

At the time the methodology for this study was established, the recently updated functions of Instagram reels and Instagram shopping were not yet included in Instagram's functions. For this reason, they have not been included in the study. Therefore, the findings in this study do not account for Instagram's two most recent functions.

In the exploration of Instagram's image and video functions, the narratives created in this study were limited to one performer as per the methodology which was tailored to suit certain ethical considerations. This affected the kind of stories which were created in the use of these Instagram functions. With only having myself to execute the methodology of this study, including filming, taking photographs and performing it was challenging to create performances. Therefore, my storytelling abilities were limited. This limitation was not imposed by the features of Instagram as a medium, but by ethical considerations in undertaking this study.

An example of the restriction of my storytelling abilities is seen in the video created with the boomerang feature. Since the boomerang feature requires users to record the video using the feature, by having users keep their finger on the record button

throughout the recording, my movement was restricted. I was also restricted to use my cell-phone's front camera, casually known as the 'selfie camera' to record myself in the video. The use of the front camera gives the aesthetics of self- documentary which conflicts with the aim to create an explicitly fiction narrative.

I had approached this study with the aim to create a story which was explicitly fiction, as I planned and created staged performances. Fiction refers to a "detailed construction of an imaginary world" (Ryan, 2007: 31). This includes the imagined construction of the plot, setting and characters. However, while investigating Instagram's image and video functions I found that the application's design to have users document moments of their everyday lives creatively impacted the approach of the creative process when creating a story with Instagram's image and video functions. I found that the staged performances created for this study were created in a way which enhances Instagram's functions displayed documentary-like didacticism about the themes and style of the narratives.

Therefore, the narratives created for this study are not explicitly fiction as they are still underpinned by Instagram's image and video documentary aesthetics. The act of capturing the moments which include the self is indicative of Instagram's end-users experience with the application and presents documentary-like characteristics. The choices of the settings and themes were not part of a constructed imaginary world. Additionally, the way in which topics surrounding beauty are discussed in a way which a which alludes to real life issues surrounding the standards of physical beauty i.e discussion of race and body type which evolves in a plot, real-life setting and refers to real life beauty icons such as Kylie Jenner and Kim Kardashian which is seen in the 15-minute video created for Instagram television (IGTV). However, the staged and performed approach in discussing these aspects derived from real life presents the imagined and constructed characteristics of fiction without being completely fiction. For the purposes of acknowledging the narratives' characteristics which pertain to fiction, while simultaneously identifying the documentary qualities, categorises the narratives as fictional. Fictional refers to a narrative which displays attributes of a fiction narrative without being completely fiction.

Proposals for further studies

In further studies which investigate Instagram as a medium for storytelling and creative expression, I would suggest the exploration of narration creation with a team of professional visual and audio-visual content producers. In such a study, the storytelling abilities of the performer would not be compromised as there would be other people available for activities such as filming. Having a team of professional content producers distributing content on a platform which has originally been created for amateur content creators, could potentially present an insightful dynamic in the discourses surrounding content creation on the platform. It would be interesting to see how content created by amateurs will be interacted with in comparison to content created by professionals while investigating if users show a preference for amateur or professional content in content consumption in the current digital age. Instagram has been a place where amateurs are empowered to create and distribute content. With the 'intrusion' of professional content creators on a platform it would be interesting to investigate if content presented by visual and audio-visual professionals skews the commercialization of the Instagram space further and see if it affects end-users' enthusiasm to participate in content contribution for documentary purposes, with no professional agenda, in the increasingly commercialised space.

In conclusion, in the investigation of a) how image and video functions serve concise narrativity and creative expression, I found that Images afford the representation of a scene that is part of a story and is not a story on its own but can present elements of narrativity. The scene alone affords creative expression. However, multiple images afford the development of a narrative in the form of a series of scenes and presenting causal links between the image series. The temporal structures in the presentation of images and videos are the dominant limitations which affects the degree of conciseness presented in content. The conciseness of a narrative mainly depends on the maximum duration of the videos as per the video functions or the allowance of captions and number of images presented in the image functions. b) Instagram's functions such as boomerang, music filters, captioning and other editing tools serve as creative expression and storytelling aids in the way in which boomerang highlights cause and effect mechanics in storytelling, music filters afford narration, captions anchor the intended meaning of the content and editing tools

assist the author in manipulating the point of view in the image or video. c) The kind of narrative structures which are informed by the presentation of Instagram's image and video functions present Instagram's algorithm as agent that orders events and presents causality on the Instagram feed. The content of the posts on the Instagram feed does not relate to each other in meaning as they all have independent authors and only relate to indicated interests. The nature of the Instagram environment helps users become accustom to the world of Instagram and the logic of how content is created, presented and understood with no linearity and causal links to one another. Thus, content is episodic on the Instagram feed. The order of events displayed on the account page is ordered by the Instagram software which is concerned with presenting content in accordance with recent activity and not causality. d) The degree and limitations in which interactivity may affect how content is presented shows that the comment function affects the presentation of the content as it is presented with the content and can alter the intended meaning of the Instagrammer as thoughts and opinions are pinned to the content. The like function does not change the content presented but affects what kind of content is presented to users as the like function informs the Instagram algorithm. The sharing function allows other users to present the content of an Instagrammer and presents the shared content with a call to action, directing users to the original Instagrammer of the shared content.

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