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Pedagogy of Difference 2.0

Introducing Interactive Documentary in the context of Critical Media Literacy

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Pedagogy of Difference 2.0:

Introducing Interactive Documentary in the context of Critical Media Literacy

By

Danai Mikelli

September 2017

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Introducing Interactive Documentary in the context of Critical Media Education

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and approved as Medium Risk

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Contents of the USB

(It is recommended to use VLC for watching the documentaries)

Music in our Generation (2015)

Passion and Inspiration (2015)

*Social Media Evolution (*2015)

What does the community mean to you? (2015)

What you sayin'? (2015)

Abstract

The rise of digital interactive technology in recent years has been accompanied by claims about the democratic promise of interactivity, placing emphasis on the empowering potential it holds for users. This research set out to explore the implications of introducing the tool of interactive documentary in a series of Critical Media Literacy interventions with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The rapidly evolving field of Interactive Documentary has been theorised as a new learning system, offering contemporary ways to engage with the representation of reality. Interactive Documentary could be seen as the ideal platform for addressing the purposes of Critical Media Literacy, such as foregrounding a democratic pedagogy, due to its potential to create "spaces in which individuals can speak for themselves" (Nash 2014a: 51). This thesis provides empirical evidence of the challenges of delivering the benefits of interactivity in a complex lived environment and offers a critique of some of the assumptions of the theoretical discourse of Critical Media Literacy, namely promoting student voice and empowerment.

A qualitative multi-method approach was adopted for conducting this research. The methodology of Participatory Action Research (PAR) was used as the overarching framework for data collection, as this was in line with the theoretical underpinnings of this research, and provided the practical means guiding the series of Interactive Documentary workshops, which served as distinct cycles of action and reflection. I combined PAR with Visual Research Methods throughout conducting fieldwork and I deployed Discourse Analysis for analysing the data. This research was also influenced by Ethnography, in terms of foregrounding reflexivity and observing groups of young participants with an emphasis on their values and perspectives.

The findings of this study contribute to a reconfiguration of a 'Pedagogy of Difference', a concept often found in Critical Pedagogy literature, which denotes "teaching *for* and *about* difference" (Luke 1994: 38, italics in original) in terms of gender, class, ability, race, ethnicity, religion and nationality. In reconfiguring this concept, I present a "Pedagogy of Difference 2.0" for teaching and learning with interactive documentaries and outline the technological, relational, experiential and discursive dimensions which would sustain this new approach to pedagogy. Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 embraces

the limitations of interactivity on young people's media production and does not take young people's familiarity with the technology for granted. It foregrounds the notion of engagement, taking into account the challenges that emerged from engaging participants in Critical Media Literacy interventions. This approach to pedagogy also acknowledges the development of positive relationships between educators and learners and among learners, thus encouraging a sense of empowerment through forging new social relationships. In this regard, Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 acknowledges the contextual nature of teaching and learning, moving beyond the often abstract discourse of Critical Pedagogy.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

> When it comes to the revolutionary promise of participatory media, the challenge faced by the proponents and practitioners of a Critical Media Studies 2.0 is not to assert (in all too familiar rhetoric) that, 'everything has changed', but rather to explain why, even in the face of dramatic technological transformation, power relations remain largely unaltered. (…) Interactivity isn't automatically political, it needs to be made political if it is to live up to its promised potential.
>
> (Andrejevic 2009: 35, italics in the original)

The 21st century has seen the advent of digital networked media and the proliferation of information outlets, which have been accompanied by claims about the democratising and empowering potential that these technologies hold for audiences. This thesis aims at interrogating such claims, placing emphasis on the educational uses of Interactive Documentary[1], a rapidly evolving field whose educational potential is under-researched. This research introduced the tool of interactive documentary in a Critical Media Literacy context, through a series of interventions with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The outcomes of this study align with a wider critique of Critical Pedagogy discourses and suggest that combining participatory interactive tools with participatory interactive pedagogies does not automatically result in enhancing participants' engagement or politicisation. This thesis argues that the reconfiguration of pedagogies for teaching and learning with interactive media is required to address the "contextual nature of all classroom interaction" (Orner 1992: 82).

This study is therefore positioned within what Andrejevic framed as Critical Media Studies 2.0 and resonates with the goal "to develop critical approaches that are suited to the contemporary media environment, rather than to assume that because media have transformed, social relations have too" (2009: 36). In this introduction, I will provide the background of this research project and highlight its importance,

[1] Hereafter, I will capitalise Interactive Documentary when referring to the field, as opposed to an interactive documentary.

emphasising the researcher's positionality and how this shaped the research questions. I will also present the stages of the development of this project, and conclude by outlining the structure of this thesis.

Research questions

The research questions for this study were initially formed based on the literature review, which I conducted on the theoretical discourses of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary. The research questions were then, adapted and refined as I was conducting fieldwork[2], in light of the insights which emerged throughout the workshops and of my familiarisation with some critiques of the above mentioned discourses. The resolution of the research questions was also linked to the development of this research project, as my initial plan was to collect data with high school students in Greece. Given the unstable political situation in Greece, I was interested in exploring the ways in which young people from disadvantaged backgrounds engaged with platforms and technologies designed for the creation of interactive documentaries. The second research question revolved around the contribution of the documentary making process to raising participants' critical consciousness on the topics of their films. This plan to undertake fieldwork in Greece had to change, as the Ministry of Education in Greece rejected my application for permission, on the basis that the online distribution of participants' documentaries raised issues of data protection. Therefore, I had to change my research questions and the arrangements for conducting fieldwork.

Just after the rejection of my application for organising the workshops in Greece, I started approaching potential partner organisations in England, a process which was complex and time-consuming. The redesigned research questions concerned the educational benefits and limitations of interactive documentary and the ways in which the tool addressed the democratic promise of Critical Media Literacy. First, I contacted Knowle West Media Centre in Bristol, exploring the possibility of organising Interactive Documentary workshops with them. I chose this Media Centre as it focuses on youth

[2] Fieldwork was carried out in Positive Youth Foundation, Knowle West Media Centre and Imagineer which endorsed a series of workshops introducing young people from the community to the principles of Interactive Documentary. The process of fieldwork is discussed in Chapter 3.

programmes, aiming to familiarise young people with digital media, and it is located within an economically deprived area, as I have already mentioned above. Two of my fieldwork workshops (one focusing on documentary truth and one on interactive documentaries) were incorporated in "Visible You", a web design, video and data project about the stories of teenagers[3] from Knowle West and South Bristol. The Centre recruited eight participants aged 18-24 with the purpose to create one interactive documentary exploring the ways in which teenagers spend their spare time and the reasons for social isolation in young people. This project resulted in the interactive documentary *The Glowing Divide.*

Hoping to organise a series of workshops for young people in Coventry, I also approached the Youth Centre in Hillfields and through this I got in touch with Positive Youth Foundation, which endorsed my fieldwork as part of their Media and Communication programme "What you saying?". I conducted two cycles of PAR at PYF, each with participants aged 14-16. The interactive video tool which we used at PYF was Mozilla's Popcorn Maker. The final cycle of PAR involved young adults 18-25, who were recruited for Imagineer's co-creation programme. The workshops with these groups were divided in three parts. The first part introduced participants to the theory of interactive documentaries, the second was the stage of filming and the third was that of editing the documentaries and adding interactive elements. This thesis is accompanied by a USB stick, containing five of the documentaries which were created by the PYF and Imagineer participants in this research. The reader is encouraged to view these documentaries after reading Chapter 3, which outlines the methodological underpinnings of this research, and prior to reading the analysis chapters. The KWMC interactive documentary *The Glowing Divide* can be viewed at www.theglowingdivide.com. I used a screen capture software to create downloadable files of the PYF Popcorn Maker documentaries and Amy's traditional documentary which emerged from the Imagineer cycle, but this was not possible for the *The Glowing Divide,* due to the dynamic design of the website which consisted of several clips.

[3] Hereafter, I will use the word "teenagers" to refer to the three young people who were portrayed in KWMC's interactive documentary *The Glowing Divide*, in order to differentiate them from the young makers of the documentary who participated in my research.

As a result of the above-mentioned complex process, my final research questions were refined as following:

1. What are the relational, technological, experiential and discursive dimensions of a series of interventions introducing interactive documentary in the context of Critical Media Literacy?
2. To what extent do these interventions reconfigure a Pedagogy of Difference?

The first research question was shaped in line with Kate Nash's (2014a) documentary interactivity framework, which I also used as a guide for structuring this thesis. Considering that Interactive Documentary is a relatively new field, Nash's framework was chosen as it provides an apt description of the multidimensional character of interactivity and it is more recent (compared with Galloway et al.'s 2007 taxonomy, for example, which is discussed in Chapter 2). Nash built on her previous research theorising "webdocs" (2012), according to which she proposed three dimensions of interactivity: the form of interactivity, the purpose or motivation for interactivity and the context of interactivity (para 5). The first dimension concerned the technical affordances of the documentary, the second referred to the functions of the documentary text and the third dimension considered interactivity "in terms of users' political and interpersonal goals" (para 20). The updated framework for documentary interactivity, which Nash suggested in 2014 encompasses the dimensions of discourse, technology, experience and relationships, which I adapted to address the scope and aims of this research.

The next section illuminates the background and significance of this research, contextualising Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary.

1.1 Background and importance of the research project

Critical Media Literacy

The context of Critical Media Literacy was chosen due to the emphasis that its related theoretical discourses place on the empowering and transformative potential of this approach, which provides marginalised people with "tools to tell their stories and

express their concerns" (Kellner and Share 2007b: 9). This research illuminates a gap in the scholarly literature by providing empirical evidence of the use of interactive documentaries in complex educational environments. The model of Critical Media Literacy has been significantly influenced by the educational legacy of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921-1997). In his seminal book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1996), originally published in 1968, Freire advocated his "problem-posing" educational strategy aiming at raising people's "critical consciousness". He defined the concept of "critical consciousness" as "learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (1996: 17).

The transformative pedagogy that Freire illustrated contributed to the development of Critical Pedagogy discourses, which influenced educators across the globe. Ira Shor is one of many academics who espoused Freire's problem-posing education. Shor provides a definition of Critical Literacy in his book *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change,* which points to deconstructing dominant narratives aiming at exposing the meanings and ideologies behind them:

> Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse (Shor 1992: 129).

In the field of Media Education, such discourses are associated with Critical Media Literacy, which, as argued, aims at providing young people with the skills for the interpretation of the various meanings of media texts, enabling them to have more critical responses to "socially constructed forms of communication" (Kellner and Share 2007b: 5). The rise of New Media has had an impact on education, however there is a relative scarcity of empirical evidence on the combination of interactive tools with interactive teaching and learning approaches. Kellner and Kim suggest that New Media, combined with a transformative critical pedagogy, can realise the Internet's

potential for democratisation and that "a critical media pedagogy can provide the oppressed with the revolutionary power of 'praxis' by providing virtually universal points of intervention into the cultural politics of the New Media" (Kellner and Kim 2009: 618).

In my attempt to implement a Critical Media Literacy approach in my fieldwork, I worked with young people from economically deprived areas and designed Interactive Documentary workshops based on the theoretical discourse of Critical Media Literacy. Participants[4] were chosen on the basis of this discourse, which claims to empower people who are "marginalised or misrepresented" (Kellner and Share 2007b: 9). Whilst the young people who took part in this study did not experience the specific forms of "oppression" that Freire analysed in his writings, such as the consequences of colonisation and illiteracy, their socio-economic status aligned with the aims of Critical Media Literacy interventions. One way that I tried to engage with my research questions was by investigating the different articulations of "oppression", as stemming from young people's alternative media production. Furthermore, the initial purpose of this research to "emancipate" participants is not unproblematic, as I will illustrate in the following chapters, considering the challenges that emerged in implementing the tool of interactive documentary in a democratising pedagogy.

Participants' backgrounds are illuminated through the youth and media organisations with which I collaborated for this project and which recruited the young people who took part in the workshops. This research deployed the method of Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the overarching framework for data collection[5] (further outlined in Chapter 3). Participants fell into two age groups, 14-16 (young people) and 18-25 (young adults). Two cycles of PAR with young people were conducted in collaboration with Positive Youth Foundation (PYF), which is based in Hillfields[6], an area with high levels of deprivation in Coventry. The first cycle of PAR with young adults was endorsed by Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) in Bristol. KWMC is an arts organisation and charity and has been using digital media to engage with communities

[4] The anonymity of participants has been preserved by allocating fictional names to participants.
[5] Data was collected in the form of the interactive documentaries created by participants, the interviews with participants and field notes from my research diary.
[6] According to the Child Poverty Action group, 45% of children in St Michael's ward in Coventry were in poverty in October-December 2015, after housing costs (Coventry City Council 2016).

since 1996. According to Bristol City Council statistics, some areas in Knowle West are amongst the 10% most deprived in England and 42% of adults (aged 16+) have no formal qualifications (KWMC Manifesto 2015). Finally, a second cycle of PAR with young adults took place in conjunction with Imagineer, which is a creative production company in Coventry. Imagineer launched a co-creation/performance programme for young people aged 18-25 who were not in employment, education or training, aiming to develop the confidence of the young people involved. The Interactive Documentary workshops for this research ran in parallel with this programme and participants comprised unemployed young people, young mothers and young people with learning difficulties.

Interactive Documentary

For the purposes of conducting fieldwork, I introduced the innovative tool of interactive documentary in the above-mentioned workshops with young people. Theoretically, interactive documentary could provide an ideal platform for this emancipatory educational project, as it is seen to create "spaces in which individuals can speak for themselves" (Nash 2014a: 50). I followed Aston and Gaudenzi's definition of interactive documentary as "any project that starts with an intention to document the 'real' and that uses digital interactive technology to realise this intention" (2012: 125). Although a full account of the origins of Interactive Documentary is outside the scope of this thesis, it is worth noting that one of the first academics who discussed the term "interactive documentary" was Mitchell Whitelaw in 2002. He described interactive documentary as "a catchy tag and an open question" (2002: para 1) and placed emphasis on the potential of this new form to undermine the narrative coherence of traditional documentary.

In terms of its educational use, interactive documentary has been theorised as a new learning system, promoting the student's deeper immersion in the subject (Gifreu 2012: 4990). Some of the advantages of digital learning systems are considered to be the creation of networks of learning, the encouragement of collaboration between learners and the facilitation of publication (Gifreu 2012: 4988). This study provided evidence of the challenges of delivering the benefits of interactivity in a complex lived environment, thus addressing a gap in Interactive Documentary literature. The

difficulties which emerged regarding the relational, technological, experiential and discursive dimensions of the interventions demonstrate the need for revisiting emancipatory pedagogies in order to highlight the complexity of using interactive media in nuanced environments.

Why is this research important?

Freire's ideas about reinforcing critical thinking skills and raising awareness about social inequalities are timely, considering the transitional situation of Europe in recent years. The political and economic crises which have stricken several European countries resulted in "societies in transition", a term that Freire used to describe Latin American societies in the 1960s. Evidently, the particular context of Freire's work in the 1960s was different, as it linked to the agrarian reform movement (further discussed in Chapter 2). However, critical approaches in education need to be reimagined, aiming at realising their transformative potential in meaningful ways for educators and students. In the field of Media Education particularly, some of the assumptions, which have accompanied the theoretical discourse of Critical Media Literacy, need to be questioned through empirical research. The empirical evidence which emerged from this research problematised some of the concepts of this discourse, such as "empowerment" and "student voice", and was used as a basis for reconfiguring Pedagogies of Difference. In feminist literature, such pedagogies are associated with "teaching *for* and *about* difference not only in terms of gender and sexual identity, but intersecting differences of class, ability and able-bodiedness, race, ethnic, religious and national identity" (Luke 1994: 38, italics in original).

In addition, the rise of New Media has had an impact on education, which is worth further investigation through empirical research. The tool of interactive documentary lends itself to further experimentation as an educational resource, due to its potential to enhance students' learning. Interactivity has been celebrated as a means to promote audience participation, but such claims need to be supported by evidence. As Andrejevic argues:

> To make an automatic association between interactive participation and democratic empowerment is intellectually complacent in the worst

> sense: by clinging to an outmoded set of associations it bypasses the conceptual work that might help imagine ways in which media practices could live up to the promise of democratic empowerment (2009: 36).

This research is also significant to me, as it resonates with my background in Documentary and my experience of politicisation in Greece, where I come from originally. I was introduced to Critical Pedagogy through the writings of Paulo Freire a few years ago. When I started reading Freire's books, I was teaching Film at college level in Greece, at a time of political unrest and austerity. I found his work to be timely and his writings shaped my views about the salient role of critical education in turbulent times, encouraging me to explore critical teaching and learning as a means of resistance. As an educator in a highly political environment, I found Freire's pedagogy to be meaningful and inspiring, hence my decision to start this research project. This standpoint shaped my response to Freire's work, similarly to what bell hooks, "a devoted student and comrade of Paulo's for life" (1994: 51), discusses in her book *Teaching to Transgress*. Although hooks is a writer and academic committed to feminist scholarship, which often dismisses Freirean pedagogy, she was influenced by Freire's work as she discovered his writings when she began to "question (…) the politics of domination, the impact of racism, sexism, class exploitation", and she could identify with the marginalised peasants that Freire referred to (1994: 45). This standpoint is opposed to the educators and students whose position towards Freire's work is that of outsiders.

Finally, having a background in Film and Documentary, I chose to explore the liberatory potential of education through documentary films. Initially, I was interested in organising and delivering a series of traditional documentary workshops and exploring their potential to raise participants' "critical consciousness" about aspects of their societies that they perceived as oppressive. Just before starting this research, I came across the form of interactive documentary which I considered ideal for the purposes of this study, due to its participatory potential. Throughout conducting this research, I have been able to critically engage with this new form, as I gained an understanding of its opportunities and limitations.

1.2 Researcher's positionality

This thesis adopts an understanding of research as "constitutive both of the researcher and of the other involved in the research process" (Rose 1997: 315). This research is premised on feminist and postcolonial critiques, according to which knowledge is partial and situated, and acknowledges that the findings resulted from a participatory process of meaning making with participants and from my subsequent interpretation of the data. Therefore, in writing this thesis, I aimed at situating this interpretation and my role as the researcher through a reflexive consideration of my positionality. In doing so, I confronted challenges and followed Gillian Rose's understanding of the research process as being "complex, uncertain and incomplete" (1997: 316). Rose foregrounds the political aim of situating academic knowledge as "to produce non-generalising knowledges that can learn from other kinds of knowledges", but argues that the research process is:

> Complex, because our position is a very particular mediation of class and gender and race and sexuality and so on; uncertain, because our performances of them always carry the risk of misperforming an assigned identity (Butler, 1990); and incomplete because it is only in their repetition that identities are sustained (1997: 316).

In addition, this research is influenced by a Post-structural understanding of subjectivity, "not as singular and fixed but rather as multiple and constantly changing" (Buckingham and Sefton-Green 1994: 30). This notion of subjectivity has implications for positioning the researcher and suggests that transparent reflexivity is hard to achieve. For example, in my attempt to articulate my positionality as white, female and middle-class, I found the notion of class to be ambivalent, due to the transforming economic and political situation in Greece after the outbreak of the crisis in 2008. The crisis destabilised traditional notions of class in the country, and consequently the notions of oppression these contained, as new taxes and cuts resulted in diminishing the middle class. My difficulty in clearly articulating my positionality therefore led me to follow Rose's recommendation "to inscribe into our research practices some absences and fallibilities while recognising that the significance of this does not rest

entirely in our own hands" (1997: 319), thus acknowledging the uncertainties and contradictions in my interpretation of the data.

Before moving on to outline the structure of the thesis, it would be worth expanding on my experience of politicisation in Greece, as this would help to contextualise some of my presumptions with regards to the notion of "oppression". This experience of politicisation resonates with what Douzinas described as "subjectivation", a process through which an individual "determines the truth" of their existence, "placing the subject in the service of historical becoming" (2013: 143). This concept relates to Freire's "critical consciousness" but the difference is that Freire provided a method for developing critical consciousness through education, whereas Douzinas attributes "subjectivation" to the occurrence of important historical events.

The process of "subjectivation" which sparked my interest in the liberatory role of education is linked to a manifestation of resistance in 2008, during the uprisings following the police killing of 15-year-old Alexis Grigoropoulos in Athens. Douzinas provides an analysis of the events that occurred in Greece at that time. He sees that insurrection as redefining the meaning of politics in Greece, through the appearance of politicised subjects, thus awakening a generation which was previously considered as apolitical (Douzinas 2013: 140). The events, which took place during that uprising signaled the awakening of my "critical consciousness", which later led me to explore education as an act of resistance.

This thesis starts with the Literature Review chapter and is then structured based on three sections (methodology, analysis and findings). At the start of the analysis chapters 4, 5 and 6 (focusing on relationships, technology and experience), there is a short literature review, pertaining to these dimensions. At the end of each chapter, I will also provide a brief introduction to the content of the next one.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 contextualises the key concepts of this research, thus introducing the fields of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary. I present some of the critiques of the theoretical discourses which accompanied the emergence of these fields and I

illuminate Paulo Freire's pedagogy and his understanding of the concept of "critical consciousness" as being universal. Emphasis is placed on the educational potential of Interactive Documentary and I address the impact of digital technology on education through a critique of Marc Prensky's concept of "Digital Natives" (2001). This chapter also looks at Political Film practices, which resonate with the participatory character of the workshops, based on their aim to politicise audiences.

The methodological and epistemological underpinnings of this research are discussed in Chapter 3. The method of Participatory Action Research (PAR) was used for data collection, combined with Visual Research Methods. These methods are contextualised and their suitability for this research is explained, with an emphasis on the challenges of implementing participatory approaches in educational research. The deployment of Visual Research Methods provided an innovative perspective in youth research, as participants' interactive documentaries were analysed, in contrast with verbal or written methods that are often used in youth research. This chapter also sheds light on the ethnographic influences of this study, based on promoting reflexivity and on enhancing my observational capacity as the lead researcher and facilitator of the workshops. The method of Discourse Analysis which was used for the analysis of the data is also outlined. Finally, this chapter raises the ethical considerations of this study.

Chapter 4 expands on the technological and relational aspects of this research. Focusing on how participants engaged with Interactive Documentary technology, this chapter presents some of the technical problems which occurred with this technology and which had an impact on participants' engagement. In terms of the interactive elements that participants used, these were mainly links, aiming at providing more information, and pop ups promoting self-expression. This chapter also challenges claims about the existence of "Digital Natives", a term which takes young people's affinity with technology for granted. The relationships that developed between the researcher and the researched are approached through Dascal's (2009) positive understanding of "mind colonisation", which foregrounds trust and respect as basic elements in building communication between heterogeneous groups. Participants in this research also strengthened bonds with each other, as they became more appreciative of their peers. Regarding their interactive documentaries, the young

people selected topics which were relevant to their everyday lives, illuminating their feelings, thoughts and opinions about issues such as music, dance, performance, community and social media. Whilst some of the makers aimed to challenge negative stereotypes about young people, some documentaries articulate typical adolescent concerns.

In chapter 5, I build on Nash's experiential dimension to discuss participants' engagement with Interactive Documentary, with an emphasis on their emotional engagement with it, their perceptions of interactive audiences, their engagement as audiences of their own interactive documentaries and the challenges of engaging young people in a participatory project. The young people experienced feelings such as excitement, empathy but also anxiety and confusion in engaging with interactive documentaries. Factors which shaped participants' engagement also included familiarity with traditional media and interest in the content of the documentary. This chapter points to a contradiction between young people's perception of interactive audiences and their responses as viewers of their own documentaries. Although participants understood Interactive Documentary audiences as being more "active", they did not physically interact with their own interactive productions while watching them. Furthermore, the Video Elicitation process contributed to enhancing participants' analytical awareness as makers, as they were able to critically analyse and discuss their work. Finally, the chapter concludes with the challenges of engaging young people in community-based media production. In the dual role of researcher and facilitator, I discuss / reflect upon the challenges I confronted such as coping with anxieties that participants expressed, requiring levels of support outside my expertise.

In Chapter 6, I illustrate the theoretical discourses attending Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary and examine how these influenced the design and delivery of my fieldwork, through an analysis of the continuities and discontinuities that emerged from their application. In line with the theoretical discourses which shaped this study, and which foreground the constructedness of media, the workshops enhanced participants' understanding of documentary. However, some of the findings of this study could be perceived as indications of "student silence" instead of "student voice", a concept which is often highlighted in Critical Pedagogy literature. Some participants did not complete the PAR cycles and did not take part in the final

interviews, thus challenging the empowering potential of Critical Media Literacy per se. The difficulties which came up in implementing the tool of interactive documentary in complex environments point to the need for reconfigured pedagogies and relationships, as I will argue in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7 brings together all the above-mentioned analysis and proposes the reconfiguration of Pedagogy of Difference. In this discussion chapter, I suggest that combining participatory interactive tools with participatory interactive pedagogies does not automatically result in enhancing participants' engagement. I therefore argue towards Pedagogy of Difference 2.0, which is based on empirical evidence and moves beyond the theoretical discourse of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary. Challenges such as accessing marginalised groups of young people and engaging them in community-based projects need to be acknowledged by educators and researchers, in order to meaningfully support young people in their alternative media production. The Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 recognises the technological constraints which might occur in using open-source interactive tools and makes space for the difficulties of engaging vulnerable groups in participatory projects. Finally, I highlight the importance of the relationships which can develop between researchers, educators, participants and their media productions, appreciating the importance of supporting communication between groups which are different.

The next chapter provides a review of the literature concerning the fields of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary, thus contextualising the key concepts of this research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review: Situating Key Concepts and Practices

This chapter contextualises the defining ideas and concepts of my research project through a review of the literature pertaining to the fields of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary, also drawing upon the concepts of Political Film and Digital Natives. The theoretical discourses of Critical Pedagogy and Interactive Documentary are critically considered in light of the critiques, which have been conducted at the level of practice. These discourses aim at changing the relationships between teachers-students and producers-consumers by reconfiguring the dynamics between these groups, but often fail to address the limitations that these approaches might conceal.

Critical Pedagogy is introduced through the lens of Paulo Freire's[7] work and his concept of "conscientization" (critical consciousness), which refers to raising the awareness of the oppressed regarding their state of oppression. The idea of critical consciousness has significantly influenced the development of this study and this chapter seeks to illuminate Freire's understanding of the concept as being unified and universal, through a critical account of his own writings. Critical Pedagogy has been problematised by feminist writers and the section on its critique rehearses some of the debates around this approach.

Before I move on to discuss Freire's work, it is essential to re-frame the relevance of his pedagogy in the 21st Century. Freire presented Brazil in the 1950s and early 1960s as a "society in transition" (Freire 2007: 3). The social and political context in which his work is located was that of the agrarian reform movement and of numerous coups d' états and subsequent military dictatorships in Latin America (Freire 2000: 3). Although the social and political landscape in Europe is entirely different today, its societies have been recently stricken by economic and social crises and hence undergone profound transformations[8]. The transition into post-industrial societies, and

[7] Freire's work has influenced other leading theorists of Critical Pedagogy including Ira Shor, Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren.

[8] For a discussion of the transitional economic and political situation of Europe see: C. Douzinas, *Philosophy and Resistance in the Crisis* (2013) and M. Hardt and A. Negri, *Declaration* (2012).

the growth of digital technologies that this entails, should be taken into consideration as well[9]. Manovich (2001: 73) associated (interactive) computer media with the demand of mass society for standardisation and for objectifying and controlling reasoning, thus obscuring the critical capacity of users. The re-inscription of Freire's critical framework suggests that innovative pedagogies are needed to negotiate these changes.

Political Film lends itself to the discussion of filmmaking practices, which aim at the inclusion and politicisation of audiences, as filmmakers across the globe have chosen this cultural form to address socio-political transformations over the years. Such film practices are aligned with the participatory character of my fieldwork and are exemplified in the development of Third Cinema and the Workshop Movement, also discussed in this chapter. Conversely, there is an increasing number of publications in the field of Interactive Documentary concerning the definitions and characteristics of this new cultural form, but there is scarcity of its political critique. The educational aspects of interactive documentary, and its efficacy in particular, are also under-researched. The implications of digital technology on education are further addressed through a critique of the concept of 'Digital Natives', a term coined by Marc Prensky (2001), encompassing those born after 1980 who are supposed to be "native speakers" of the digital language, including the participants in this study.

2.1 Conscientization in Freire's work

Critical Pedagogy is rooted in the first generation of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory[10]; in Gramsci's[11] concept of hegemony and Freire's practice of

[9] For further illustration of the wider epochal transition see: A. Toffler, *The Third Wave* (1980); F. Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) and *Archaeologies of the Future* (2005); F. Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay* (2014); M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (2010); H. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2008); C. Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations* (2008); T. Picketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2014); P. Mason, *Postcapitalism: A Guide to our Future* (2015) and N. Srnicek and A. Williams, *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work* (2015).

[10] The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research was established in Germany in 1923, linking Marxism to the development of a radical social theory.

[11] Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was an Italian Marxist intellectual, who developed the concept of cultural hegemony, referring to domination imposed through ideological means.

"conscientization". Frankfurt School theorists foregrounded the role of ideology critique in achieving personal and political emancipation and in negating "false consciousness"[12], whilst Gramsci suggested that subordinate groups have the potential to create counter-hegemonic discourses and practices, which in the case of Critical Pedagogy, could be developed within institutions of ideological control (Luke 1992: 27). Leonard (1993: 159) suggested that for Freire and Gramsci, the subjectivity of the oppressed is important, "because they tend to consent to their own oppression through the internalization of dominant ideology". This section elaborates on Freire's understanding of "conscientization" as being fixed and unified, concluding in a discussion of the three stages for its attainment: "semi-intransitive consciousness", "naïve transitivity" and "critical transitivity".

Freire's idea about adult education and its role in raising the consciousness of learners was first expressed in an unpublished article written in 1955. This idea was developed in his 1958 report under the title *Adult Education and Marginal Populations: the Problem of the Mocambos* (Schugurensky 2011: 52). Freire elaborated on his ideas about critical literacy and its connection with social reality in his doctoral thesis, which he completed in 1959. It is worth mentioning that Freire's thought was influenced by the Instituto Social de Estudos Brazileiros (ISEB), a body linked to the Brazilian Ministry of Education and Culture. Indeed, the concept of "conscientization" is often attributed to Freire, however, it was members of the ISEB team who coined the term in the early 1960s (Schugurensky 2011: 55). Freire relates "conscientization" to education, viewing both as "human processes" relating to people as "subjects":

> The starting point for such an analysis (of the concept of conscientization) must be a critical comprehension of man as a being who exists *in* and *with* the world. Since the basic condition for conscientization is that its agent must be a subject (that is, a conscious being), conscientization, like education, is specifically and exclusively a human process. It is as conscious beings that men are not only *in* the world, but *with* the world, together with other

[12] Deriving from Marxist theory, false consciousness refers to subordinate classes and the false representations of dominant structures, which conceal the inequalities embedded in social relations.

> men. Only men, as "open" beings, are able to achieve the complex operation of simultaneously transforming the world by their action and grasping and expressing the world's reality in their creative language (italics in original, Freire 2000: 39)

Freire sees people as uncompleted beings, who are conscious of their incompletion and who struggle to become "fully human". This point supports the connection between Freire and humanistic education. According to Santos (2009: 364), Freire's approach to education is a humanistic pedagogy, concerned with the real context of human conditions and particularly focused on the oppressive context. This thesis suggests a reconfigured Critical Pedagogy, acknowledging that we have moved towards a post-humanist education[13] and that the concept of the "human" has been destabilised, calling for a more nuanced understanding of the human subject and of the effects that this transformation will have on education.

In this chapter, I will examine three publications in which Freire discusses the concept of "conscientization", due to their influence on my research: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1996), *Education for critical consciousness* (2007) and *Cultural Action for Freedom* (2000). Despite the critiques of Freire's ideas, which will be presented in a later section, this research suggests that his concepts retain a critical value today, due to the overall ethos and aims of his work. Therefore, the workshops which I designed as part of my fieldwork were inspired by Freire's "culture circles", aiming originally to raise participants' awareness about potential oppressive factors in their lives.

Freire discussed the idea of "culture circles" in *Education for Critical Consciousness* (originally published in 1974), and related them to the transitionary processes of closed to open societies as analysed in the process of "conscientization". The "culture circles" were initiated by Freire in the Adult Education Project of the Movement of Popular Culture in Recife, Brazil, and promoted group debate among participants in order to

[13] Snaza et al. (2014) highlight the importance of meaning in post-humanist education, understood as interactions among patterns of information creation and the randomness of unperceived patterns: "Posthumanist education needs to take into account the critical differences between contexts in which knowing occurs and relativity, which would be a comparison of the various potential forms of knowing that might occur in specific contexts" (Snaza et al. 2014: 51).

clarify situations and promote action arising from that clarification. The topics for the debates were offered by the groups themselves. Similarly, in my study, participants were asked to choose the topics for their interactive documentaries in the first cycle of workshops, in an attempt to explore the themes that were important to them.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed was originally published in 1970. In the preface of the book, Freire (1996: 17) writes about the role of "conscientizacao"[14], which is translated into the term "conscientization" and refers to the process of learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality (as noted by the translator of this edition Myra Bergman Ramos). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire sets out to provide a justification for this Critical Pedagogy. He argues that people must first critically recognise the causes of oppression, in order to free themselves from oppression and create a new situation through transforming action (praxis[15]). The second chapter provides a critique of the "banking" concept of education and suggests the problem-posing model as an instrument for liberation. By this Freire contends that a problem-posing education can enable teachers and students to become subjects of the educational process and enable people to overcome their false perceptions of reality, as opposed to the "banking" model, which suggests knowledge is deposited from one (the teacher) to another (the student).

In the book *Education for critical consciousness,* Freire (2007) suggests that people should participate in their historical epoch[16], as they create, re-create and make decisions about intervening in, and transforming reality. In the opening of the chapter "Society in Transition", he states that, "to be human is to engage in relationships with the others and with the world" (2007: 3). In such transitional phases, the role of

[14] In this chapter, I will use the term "conscientization", instead of "conscientizacao", as it is more frequently used by researchers in the field of Critical Pedagogy.

[15] For a critique of Freire's concept of praxis see: R. D. Glass, *On Paulo Freire's Philosophy of Praxis and the Foundations of Liberation Education* (2001).

[16] "An historical epoch is characterised by a series of aspirations, concerns and values in search of fulfilment; by ways of being and behaving; by more or less generalised attitudes. The concrete representations of many of these aspirations, concerns, and values, as well as the obstacles to their fulfilment constitute the themes of that epoch, which in turn indicate tasks to be carried out" (Freire 2007: 5).

education becomes vital. A society moving from one epoch to another requires the development of a critical spirit, meaning that people need a critical perception of the social contradictions which occur in society, as emerging values clash with older ones (2007: 6). This critical understanding can enable people to overcome the state of shock between the past, which is no longer relevant and the future which becomes more concrete, and thereby to make choices about their lives that can be transformed into action. Hence the need for "conscientization", which "represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness" and "must grow out of a critical educational effort" (Freire 2007: 15).

This understanding of developing a critical spirit through education links to this research as the young people who participated in the workshops were encouraged to articulate their concerns and better understand aspects of their lives through creating their own interactive documentaries. In the following, I will address one of the limitations in Freire's approach, as he referred to the concept of concientization, and the three stages leading to it, as being fixed, assuming a unity of experience for all people. This approach is problematic and has been critiqued particularly by feminist writers (I will expand on their critique in the section 2.4).

Semi-intransitive consciousness

Freire further elaborates on "conscientization" in the book *Cultural Action for Freedom* (2000), associating the different stages of societies with certain modes of consciousness. He describes Latin American societies as being closed, due to the existence of hierarchical structures, the lack of internal markets, the corrupted educational system (which supported the established power structures)[17] and the rising percentages of illiteracy and disease. The reality of closed societies is "historically conditioned by the social structures", and is connected with "semi-intransitive" consciousness[18]. This mode does not allow enough distance from reality

[17] Rhonda Hammer (2009: 167) argues that Freire's critique of the banking method is still timely, as she attributes the obsession with grades and job training, which often prevails in contemporary university education, to "a pedagogy that treats students as passive objects of indoctrination".

[18] Similar to intransitive verbs in grammar, which do not allow objects, consciousness which does not challenge the world is intransitive, as it does not act upon the world as an object. Total

in order to know it in a critical way. As a result, the only data that the people can assess are the data that lie within the orbit of their lived experience (Freire 2000: 48).

Naïve transitivity

In the second stage of naïve transitivity, Freire (2007: 13) argues that people become "transitive", as their interests and concerns extend beyond the "simple vital sphere", thus increasing their capacity to respond to the questions of their times and so enter into dialogue with their world. He distinguishes two stages of transitive consciousness, the first one is naïve and the other is critical. Naïve transitivity is the consciousness of the people who are still almost part of a mass. They must progress to the stage of critical transitivity which leads to a deeper interpretation of problems, rejects passivity and highlights the practice of dialogue rather than polemics.

Freire attributes new styles of political life to this naïve transitional phase. He argues that the appearance of the emerging masses forces the power elites to find new forms of maintaining the masses in silence. This historical transition corresponds to a new phase of popular consciousness, that of "naïve transitivity". As the people become anxious for freedom, the elites are anxious to maintain the status quo by allowing superficial transformations, which prevent any real change in their power. The passage from naïve to critical transitivity needs to be supported by an active educational programme, highlighting social and political issues (Freire 2007: 15).

Critical transitivity

William Smith (1976) provides a study of "conscientization" in *The Meaning of Conscientizacao: the goal of Paulo Freire's Pedagogy*. The book resulted from the Social Literacy Training project in the U.S. and Ecuador, which aimed to increase the democratic participation of teachers, students and administrators in transforming oppressive aspects of the system of schooling. The book addresses the need to define "critical conscientization"[19] more broadly than adult literacy. The creation of an

intransitivity is not a form of consciousness at all so the first phase in the emergence of consciousness for Freire is semi-intransitivity (Heaney 1995: para 11).

[19] It is worth mentioning that the author of the book uses the Portuguese term "conscientizacao" intact.

operational definition and a way of measuring "conscientization" could enable a clear understanding of the term and a method of measuring the level of consciousness in situations before and after the literacy project.

In summary then, "conscientization" is presented as a coding system that divides each of the stages into three aspects which correspond to naming the problems, reflecting on the reasons why they happen and acting in order to solve them. Therefore, "conscientization" is a dialogical process which brings individuals together to solve common problems. One basic pedagogical difference between "conscientization" and other forms of education is that the questions posed by "conscientization" have no known answers.

Smith concludes that consciousness-raising processes are internal processes and as such they may not have significant external manifestations. Questions are also raised regarding the long-term learning benefits from consciousness-raising experiences, as they may often have a short-term result. Before I move on to explore the impact of Freire's pedagogy on Media Literacy, which provides the framework for the interventions delivered in the context of this research, I will introduce Marcelo Dascal's strategy for decolonising minds. In Chapter 4, I will outline how I used Dascal's approach as a vehicle to explore the relationships between the researcher and participants in this study.

"Mind colonisation" as a condition for thought

In his paper *Colonising and decolonising minds* (2009), Israeli philosopher Marcelo Dascal discusses the "colonisation of the mind" as one of the lasting manifestations of political colonialism and sees it as a condition for thought, highlighting the paradoxes which underpin the potential of a full decolonisation of the mind. One of the characteristics of the "colonisation of the mind", according to Dascal, is related to the unevenness of power between the parties involved. This applies not only to relevant phenomena in political contexts, but to any process of mind colonisation that can be reproduced via social systems, such as education and the media (2009: para 5). In the case of this research project, the unevenness of power between researcher and researched could be located in the levels of education and expertise

in the field of Interactive Documentary. Having completed postgraduate studies in Documentary and conducting this research at doctoral level, my knowledge of Interactive Documentary is advanced and my initial aim was to raise participants' "critical consciousness" and understanding of this field through a learning process involving the creation of interactive documentaries. Participants in this research had minimal (or no) prior knowledge of Interactive Documentary before participating in the workshops, therefore this immediately initiated an asymmetry of power.

Dascal's approach is also relevant as this research has been inspired by Paulo Freire's model of emancipatory education. Freire's strategy aimed at "critical consciousness", as I illustrated in this section. My expectation of raising participants' "critical consciousness" through media production at the start of my fieldwork was based on the potential of participants making films about political/societal issues. Coming from a highly political environment, (as discussed in the Introduction chapter) I had particular views regarding what "oppression" means and I was interested in exploring the potential of education as a means of resistance. These views were not imposed on the young people, however, as they were given the freedom to choose the topics for their documentaries in the first cycle of PAR. The themes that the young people chose for their documentaries were not purely "political", in the sense that I would originally expect, but these provide valuable insights into participants' worlds. I will expand on this in Chapter 4.

Dascal makes a distinction between radical and intermediate approaches to mind colonisation. Radical approaches reject "foreign" models, whereas intermediate ones involve levels of interaction between the two parties and promote an "open examination" of beliefs regardless of their being foreign or native (2009: para 32). Dascal quotes the work of intellectuals such as Frantz Fanon and Uhuru Hotep, who advocated the need for radical struggle in order to fight against the epistemic roots and mental aspects of colonisation. Such approaches, according to Dascal, entail the risk of the "double colonisation of mind":

> One cannot but wonder whether, after decolonising one's mind through its complete cleansing from the foreign model, the following step in Fanon's or Hotep's strategy, namely re-filling the 'liberated

> space' with another set of contents, whatever their origin, does not amount to re-colonising the just liberated mind (Dascal 2009: para 29).

Dascal's suggestion for a strategy against mind colonisation is "re-framing" instead of "re-colonising". He sees "re-framing" as an active process, in which participants "construct a new mental framework". He concludes that:

> Colonising each other's minds can indeed be conceived as a condition for thought in so far as it refers to the depth rather than to the superficiality involved in knowledge building communication – a depth that reflects respect rather than contempt for each other, trust rather than suspicion. This is a kind of communication between others that are different and yet care to talk to and listen to each other because they know there is something worthwhile to learn from the other's thoughts (…) (Dascal 2009: para 59).

This understanding foregrounds the complexity of communication between heterogeneous parties, emphasising trust and respect as essential features of a dialectical process. Trust and respect were elements which I strived to maintain in my relationship with participants throughout my fieldwork and that I will exemplify in Chapter 4. This approach also points to the intricacies of any participatory research process and to the positive potential which can be achieved out of it.

2.2 Critical Media Literacy

Critical Media Literacy is an important aspect of this study, and is again related to the application of Freire's radical pedagogy in the field of Media Education. Alvermann and Hagood (2000: 194) argue that the research literature on Critical Media Literacy started growing during the 1980s and 1990s. Critical Media Literacy can be defined in many ways, depending on the perspective or theoretical frame. According to Alvermann and Hagood (2000: 194), the term may refer to "the ability to reflect on the pleasures derived from mass media and popular culture practices (eg. radio, TV,

video, movies, CDs, the Internet, gang graffiti and cyberpunk culture); the ability to choose selectively among popular culture icons; or the ability to produce one's own multimedia texts (Luke, 1999)".

The authors point out that researchers in the 1960s were focused on analysing the ideology of media and later, in the 1980s, they became interested in analysing audiences (Alvermann and Hagood 2000: 194). Well before 2000, the year of the publication of Alvermann and Hagood's paper, media research had shifted to the construction of the meanings that audiences make based on one's different positioning. Researchers in Critical Media Literacy started to frame their work in cultural studies, instead of media studies perspectives, which resulted from a move towards analysing the politics of situated readings (Alvermann and Hagood 2000: 195).

In the paper *Critical Media Literacy, Democracy, and the Reconstruction of Education,* Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share (2007b) present the theoretical background of Critical Media Literacy and suggest a pedagogic approach addressing issues of gender, race, class and power. Their study is of interest here in that they provide a systematic analysis of the principles of Critical Media Literacy. The authors focus on the United States, where media literacy policy is in its formative years and Critical Media Literacy is not available for the majority of students (2007a: 59). They contrast this situation with Canada, Great Britain and Australia, where they argue that media literacy is more established. On the contrary, Buckingham (1996: 628) notes that the theoretical discourse of Critical Pedagogy is less popular in the UK compared with the US and that much of the pedagogy debate in the UK has been conducted in relation to issues pertaining to particular curriculum subjects, such as English. Therefore, Buckingham sees academic work on pedagogy in the UK as being restricted to classroom practice, which is also highlighted in my research.

Kellner and Share (2007b) argue that the changes occurring in technology and society require the development of Critical Media Literacy in order to enable learners to increase their participation as democratic citizens. They contend that the domination of the Internet and media culture should be reflected in the reconstruction of education, which should include media literacies and focus on the analysis of relationships

between media, audiences, information and power. This educational approach also nurtures the competencies and skills that young people need in interpreting the multiple meanings of media texts, as these will allow them to respond to using “socially constructed forms of communication” (Kellner and Share 2007b: 5).

The authors present four different approaches within Media Education, “in order to better explain the necessary elements of Critical Media Literacy” (2007a: 60). The Protectionist approach seeks to protect students from the harmful effects of media. Overall, this approach de-emphasises the empowering potential of Critical Pedagogy and alternative media production, although some of its aspects, such as addressing the interrelationships with social injustice, are seen as useful. Media Arts Education encourages students to value the aesthetic qualities of media and express themselves through creating media, but should avoid promoting individualistic self-expression against socially conscious analysis. The third approach is Media Literacy Movement, which originated in the United States and highlights the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and communicate. Kellner and Share (2007a: 62) argue that the type of Critical Media Literacy they suggest includes aspects of the three previous models, although it constitutes a critique of mainstream approaches to literacy. This position foregrounds ideology critique and the analysis of the politics of representation of gender, race, class and sexuality, incorporating alternative media production.

The main characteristics of the critical model include the analysis of the ways in which gender, class, race and sexuality are represented, the textual analysis of issues like control, social context and pleasure and the incorporation of alternative media production. Regarding its political implications, this approach is argued to empower marginalised or misrepresented people by giving them the tools to express their concerns (Kellner and Share 2007b: 9).

The connection of Critical Media Literacy to transforming societies is exemplified through the ideas of educators like Freire. Kellner and Share refer to Freire’s concept of critical consciousness as combining an understanding of social reality with action to transform society. To achieve societal transformation, Media Education should involve both critical analysis and alternative student media production. The authors conclude that there is a need for educational change. They argue towards the systematic

implementation of Critical Media Literacy in schools, aiming at equipping young people with the necessary skills for critically engaging with alternative media production.

From a comparable perspective, Stuart Poyntz (2006) emphasizes the role of critical practice in Media Education, thus addressing society's promise of democratic change. He also discusses New Media in the context of Media Education and explains how students may benefit from the possibilities of the Internet, including collective intelligence and making connections in digital media environments (Poyntz 2011). Similarly, Douglas Kellner and Gooyong Kim (2009: 622) suggest that New Media technologies challenge the institutionalisation of education, as they make possible decentralised and interactive communication and a participatory model of culture and technology, and thereby, 'informal learning'. The authors emphasise that New Media, combined with a transformative critical pedagogy, can realise the Internet's potential for democratisation and that "a critical media pedagogy can provide the oppressed with the revolutionary power of 'praxis' by providing virtually universal points of intervention into the cultural politics of the New Media" (Kellner and Kim 2009: 618). Kellner and Kim see the Internet as a new field for the conjuncture of education and democracy, as it provides opportunities for an expanded flow of information. They also call for new critical media pedagogies that will enable students to use New Media for progressive pedagogical and political goals, although they do not provide details of how these pedagogies can be implemented in the classroom.

Some suggestions about classroom practices cultivating the social skills that young people need in engaging with New Media can be found in the white paper *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*, a key text suggesting a reconfigured Critical Pedagogy for teaching and learning with New Media, which was written by Henry Jenkins and a team of co-authors from the MIT[20] Comparative Media Studies Programme published in 2006. The paper presents a new framework for Media Education in the context of Participatory Culture, which embraces the latest advancements in the media landscape and also focuses on the educational system of the United States. The aim of the paper is to change the focus of the "digital-

[20] Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

divide discourse" to widening participation and developing the social skills that young people require in their engagement with Participatory Culture (2006: xiii).

Jenkins and colleagues start by providing a definition of Participatory Culture, which highlights the members' social connection with one another. Participatory Cultures have various manifestations including Affiliations, Expressions, Collaborative Problem-solving and Circulations. The benefits related to Participatory Culture range from peer-to-peer learning to empowerment stemming from making decisions within a civic context. The main concerns related to this Participatory Culture framework, which highlight the need for pedagogical interventions, include the Participation Gap, the Transparency Problem and the Ethics Challenge. The Participation Gap raises questions about the inequalities in the ways young people have access to New Media technologies. Jenkins picks up this point in his critique of Prenksy's concept of "Digital Natives" (section 2.5). The Transparency Problem raises concerns about the ways in which young people assess the quality of information they receive. There is a need for a safe environment that will enable young people to develop the skills required to become citizens and consumers. Further, Ethics is viewed as a fundamental media education goal, as there are no established ethical guidelines in the context of emerging Participatory Cultures (Jenkins et al. 2006: 25).

Jenkins et al. suggest that the New Media Literacies change the focus of literacy from individual expression to community involvement. The authors address the new skills that are essential in the context of New Media Literacies and propose strategies for developing them, alongside developing textual literacy, which they argue is still important but needs to be expanded on for a better understanding of New Media platforms.

The social skills involved in the new literacies are indicated as Play, Performance, Simulation, Appropriation, Multitasking, Distributed Cognition, Collective Intelligence, Judgment, Transmedia Navigation, Networking and Negotiation. Play is seen as a mode of active engagement, promoting experimentation and creative problem-solving. Performance enables users to adopt different identities in order to broaden their knowledge. Simulation refers to interpreting and constructing models of real-world processes. Appropriation is understood as a process of sampling and remixing, which

encourages users to learn while re-constructing media content. Multitasking develops the filtering of information through focusing on meaningful data. Distributed Cognition is linked to the social production of knowledge which the authors relate to Collective Intelligence and sharing knowledge with other users towards a common goal. The skill of Judgment nurtures the evaluation of information sources and Transmedia Navigation involves reading and writing across multiple modes of information. Finally, Networking highlights the use of network for collecting and disseminating information and Negotiation is the ability of understanding multiple perspectives.

Jenkins et al. argue that these skills need to be encouraged by parents as well, who might feel overwhelmed by the impact of new technologies on their children's activities. In concluding, Jenkins et al. emphasise that technology and economic change create a cultural divide and highlight the challenges that need to be addressed by media educators in the context of Participatory Cultures. For the authors, the development of social skills, such as the above-mentioned, has the potential to help students to grow as participants, citizens and communicators.

Jenkins (2011) argued in a later blog post that we do not yet live in a fully Participatory Culture, but that our culture is more participatory now than it was before networked computing. He expands on the concept of Participatory Culture, where most people have the capacity to take control of the media and influence the circulation of ideas and images. Media Education should enable learners to understand the changes in media technologies, alongside the practices and institutions that affect the production of media (Jenkins 2011). He concludes that Media Education should engage with the practices of everyday life, which resonates with Paolo Favero's (2013) idea about interactive documentary inviting us to engage with the physicality and socialness of everyday life (which will be discussed in section 2.7).

Jenkins's concept of Participatory Culture has been critiqued by Christian Fuchs (2011), who calls for a more direct connection of participation with the political notion of participatory democracy theory. Fuchs argues that Jenkins fails to address issues of exploitation in his discussion of the creativity and activity of Internet users, which conceal the commodification of the users' activities (2011: para 5). Fuchs adds that Jenkins's understanding of Participatory Culture is reductionist and ignores the

political economy of contemporary culture, omitting aspects of participatory democracy theory such as ownership of platforms, collective decision-making, profit and class (para 10). Overall, this section illustrated that there is no consensus or agreed vision, in terms of the classroom implementation of Critical Pedagogies for teaching and learning with New Media, although Critical Media Literacy is seen as providing the basis for a "political project for democratic social change" (Kellner and Share 2007b: 8). The next section encapsulates the critique of the theoretical discourse of Critical Pedagogy, in order to provide a more informed understanding of some of its limitations.

2.3 Critical Pedagogy Critique

This section discusses the critique of the discourse of Critical Pedagogy, which has mainly been conducted within the frame of feminist theory, and addresses its implications in terms of classroom practice. The epistemology of Post-structuralist feminism is based on difference and acknowledges the contextual character of knowledge, in contrast with Freire's understanding of a "universal subject". The idea of a 'Pedagogy of Difference' is central in this research and its reconfiguration is further addressed in the following chapters. These critiques are useful for contextualising my research findings, as the results of my fieldwork point towards the shortcomings of Critical Pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogy, educative practice and politics

David Buckingham (1996) provides a critique of the theory of Critical Pedagogy with regards to Media Education in his paper *Critical pedagogy and media education: a theory in search of a practice*. Buckingham argues that Critical Pedagogy has embraced the media and popular culture, as objects of academic analysis and as an area for educational practice, and that its theoretical discourse has been challenged by feminists. Buckingham (1996) picks up on the work of American critical pedagogues Henry Giroux (1992a) and Peter McLaren (1993). He argues that these critical pedagogues dismiss classroom practices as pragmatic and are not concerned with Freire's concept of "praxis", defined as the dialectical relationship between theory and practice. Buckingham (1996: 628) argues that educational theories should address

the experience of classroom practice, and that practice should be a site for creating new theoretical insights. Buckingham elaborates on criticism offered by feminist writers such as Gore, Luke, Ellsworth and Lather, who raise questions about the position and authority of the teacher and about who is being "empowered" by the discourse of Critical Pedagogy. Such feminist writers argue that critical pedagogues have failed to address gendered power relationships within the classroom, alongside political and institutional constraints, resulting in an inconsistent theoretical discourse (Buckingham 1996: 632). Their views are further addressed later in this section.

In the second part of his paper, Buckingham discusses the turn of Critical Pedagogy to popular culture. He explains that there is a need for "a reflexive relationship between the social, affective and cognitive dimensions of media education" (1996: 645) and for a relationship between media analysis and media production, which are important issues for Critical Pedagogy. Buckingham's contention is that the theoretical discourse of Critical Pedagogy has failed to address educative practice and politics and that Media Education has the potential to offer a realistic approach in education.

Finally, Buckingham (2010) questions some of the assumptions that accompanied the appearance of New Media, in particular their potential to bring fundamental change and their implications in pedagogy. He argues that Media Education 2.0 should conform to the traditional principles of Media Education, as New Media have not yet replaced older media (2010: 2). Buckingham agrees with Jenkins et al. on the need to cultivate young people's social skills in the context of Media Education in the 21st century, as access to technology is not sufficient. This includes the development of relatively traditional skills, such as critical thinking, that could help disadvantaged young people to engage with Participatory Culture and reduce the Participation Gap, which relates to broader inequalities. In this respect, participation should be based on "relatively traditional forms of cultural and educational capital" (Buckingham 2010: 9).

For Buckingham, ultimately, creative practice needs to be supported by critical analysis and Web 2.0 has the potential to promote reflexivity, which can be achieved if students take a step back from their immediate experience (Buckingham 2010: 12). One of the works that Buckingham critiques in his paper is Gauntlett's article entitled *Media Studies 2.0* (2007). In a subsequent version of this article, Gauntlett addressed

some of the criticisms of his approach and mentioned that his critics ignore the creativity of previously marginalized people (para 6). The assumption that Web 2.0 effectively engages disadvantaged young people seems to be taken for granted in unproblematic ways here, but this is challenged by some of the results of this research.

What becomes apparent through such discourse is that there is a debate around the pedagogies required for teaching and learning with New Media, compared with those linked to older forms of media. Buckingham's argument on incorporating "traditional forms of cultural capital" in contemporary Media Education influenced the structure of the Interactive Documentary workshops which I conducted as part of my fieldwork[21]. In analysing some of the results of these workshops, it is useful to look at the work of feminist critics of Critical Pedagogy. Before doing so, I will illuminate Michel Foucault's understanding of discourse, which had a profound impact on Post-structuralist feminisms and will help clarify the value of such critiques to this research. Foucault's perspectives serve as a starting point for analysing the theoretical discourses of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary.

Foucault's perceptions of discourse

The understanding of discourses which encompasses this research is inspired by Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), following Lessa's interpretation of discourses as: "systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes and courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak" (Lessa 2006: para 5).

[21] The first workshops focused on traditional documentary (which could be seen as a "traditional form of cultural capital") and how it blurs the boundaries between "fiction and truth". I chose to focus on this debate so that participants could grasp the differences between traditional and interactive documentaries, due the ability of the user to potentially change the content of the latter, even though documentary is considered to be an "objective" form. It is also essential to acknowledge that my view of the "fiction and truth" binary was different from the participant's initial view. Most participants considered documentaries to be "honest" and not staged before the workshops, whereas my understanding of this binary resonates with Favero (2013: 261) who argues that "a degree of fictionalization or manipulation (…) has been at the core of documentary film from its very inception". I will elaborate on the decision to focus on issues of "fiction and truth" and participants' responses to it in Chapter 6.

The interviews with participants, my field notes and the interactive documentaries created by participants, which were collected as data, are treated as discourses in this sense, hence my analysis of them as a form of discourse[22] (as I will outline in Chapter 3: Methodology).

This understanding of discourse also aligns with the feminist critique of Critical Pedagogy which influenced this research. Luke and Gore (1992: 4) suggest that, in Post-structuralist feminisms, "texts, classrooms, and identities are read as discursive inscriptions on material bodies/subjectivities". Post-structuralist feminisms place emphasis on the connections between meanings in Critical Pedagogy discourse and classroom practices. These feminist critiques are influenced by Foucault's notion of power-knowledge[23] and his particular understanding of discourse.

According to Mills (2003: 53), the word "discourse" is one of the most frequently used by Foucault, but one of the most contradictory. Foucault (1972: 80) himself referred to discourse as "the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualisable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements". Discourse should be seen as a system which structures the way that we perceive reality (Mills 2003: 55) and Foucault placed emphasis on the association between discourse and power. This association is of importance for this research, due to the fact that it has been considerably influenced by the theoretical discourses of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary. The design and delivery of the workshops conducted as part of my fieldwork was in part shaped by these discourses, which raised my expectations regarding the efficiency of combining participatory approaches with interactive media production in politicising young people (further analysed in Chapter 6).

[22] In Chapter 3, I will reiterate that there is no strictly Foucauldian method of analysing discourse, although some methods of Discourse Analysis have been attributed to Foucault's work. Foucault did not do Discourse Analysis as an empirical method, but placed emphasis on analysing discursive practices.

[23] Foucault's conceptualisation of knowledge "emphasises the way that knowledge is not dispassionate but rather an integral part of struggles over power, but it also draws attention to the way that, in producing knowledge, one is also making a claim for power. For Foucault, it is more accurate to use his newly formed compound 'power/knowledge' to emphasise the way that these two elements depend on one another" (Mills 2003: 69).

The influence of such discourses in my research was due to the perceptions that I had of the work of authors in the fields of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary at the start of my PhD. My initial review of the Critical Media Literacy literature pointed to the benefits of implementing alternative media production as part of emancipatory projects, and I designed my fieldwork hoping to see similar results on my participants, through raising their "critical consciousness".

My understanding of the discourses of experts in the fields under scrutiny as reliable and truthful is associated with Foucault's conceptualisation of the intimate association between discourses, truth and power, as "those in positions of authority who are seen to be 'experts' are those who can speak the truth" (Mills 2003: 58). As Foucault put it:

> We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it (Foucault 1990: 101).

An example of a discursive field as a form of resistance is provided by the feminist critiques of Critical Pedagogy. Feminist writings challenge "master (ie., white, European, male) narratives" (Orner 1992: 77), which marginalise aspects such as gender and race. Similarly, the outcome of this research calls for reinscribing the discourse of Critical Media Literacy, premised on Foucault's perception of discourse as "a starting point for an opposing strategy". The "opposing strategy" in terms of this research project relates to a reconfigured Pedagogy of Difference, thus aiming at "identifying" the power held by experts in the field of Critical Pedagogy. The findings of this research illuminate the difficulties of implementing participatory and interactive practices in educational projects with young people and highlight the need for reconfiguring critical pedagogies for teaching and learning with interactive documentaries.

Feminist and Freirean pedagogies

In light of this notion of discourse, the connections between feminist and Freirean pedagogy is worth further investigation. Luke and Gore (1992: 8) argue that whereas the construction of feminist pedagogy[24] in women's studies gave little consideration to male-authored accounts of pedagogy, the work of Freire was the only exception. Similarly, for bell hooks[25] (1994), there is convergence between the work of feminist pedagogy and Freire's work, although certain feminist thinkers made a clear separation between these two approaches.

Post-structuralism and feminism examine power and knowledge relationships against master narratives and in the context of institutional structures, promoting the rejection of the "universal subject". For example, Patti Lather (1991) reflects on the impact of Post-structuralism on critical theory. She argues that, according to various feminisms, to politicise means to make visible how power pervades the ways in which knowledge is constructed. Post-structuralism invites us to consider how our positionality frames the meanings we read in cultural texts, highlighting how such texts re-enact power relations, and how it shapes our practices. This understanding of positionality was important to raise in the Introduction, with reference to my own position as the researcher and how this affected the development of this research project.

An example of a critique separating feminism from Freirean pedagogy can be found in *The Politics of Liberation: Paths from Freire*, published in 1994. The book was edited by Peter McLaren and Colin Lankshear and includes Kathleen Weiler's paper on *Freire and a feminist pedagogy of difference*. Weiler argues that Freire failed to address his own privileged position as White male educator and emphasises the use of sexist language and abstract terms in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, alongside the omission of the teacher's authority and of social settings in which different forms of oppression might overlap.

[24] Feminist critiques of Critical Pedagogy began to develop in the 1990s, especially in the United States. The book *Feminisms and Critical Pedagogy* (1992), edited by C. Luke and J. Gore, brings together a series of articles situated within Post-structuralist feminisms, challenging some of the assumptions of the discourse of Critical Pedagogy.
[25] bell hooks is the pen name of Gloria Watkins, an American feminist author who has been influenced by Paulo Freire.

Weiler links the development of the women's movement and women's studies programmes in the 1960s with the formulation of feminist pedagogy, which problematises the role of the teacher, situates the source of knowledge in personal experience and feeling and foregrounds the question of difference. She traces the origins of the feminist pedagogical approach in the consciousness-raising groups of the women's liberation movement, which emerged in the late 1960s. These groups promoted discussion of shared experiences and feelings and highlighted the need for political action. Issues of authority in feminist pedagogy are associated with the authority of the teacher as imposed institutionally and with the teacher's positionality, addressing "the need for women to claim authority in a society that denies it to them" (Weiler 1994: 29). According to Weiler, this assertion of authority by feminist teachers is an act of liberation, becoming a claim to authority on the feminist teacher's value as a scholar in a patriarchal society.

Weiler (1994: 13) writes about the similarities between feminist ideas about education and Freire's pedagogy: "both (…) rest upon visions of social transformation; underlying both are certain common assumptions concerning oppression, consciousness and historical change". She argues that feminist pedagogy as it has developed in the US provides "an historically situated example of a critical pedagogy in practice" (13), suggesting a more complex realisation of the Freirean vision of the collective conscientisation and struggle against oppression, which foregrounds difference (1994: 35).

Freire (1993: 170) acknowledged the influence of feminist critics[26] on his writings and defined his work as feminist, due to his perception of feminism as being linked to the political struggles for freedom. However, he places particular emphasis on the importance of the historical and cultural context in which he wrote *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which allows a more accurate interpretation of his work:

[26] A critique of Critical Pedagogy is also provided by Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989) in her paper *Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy.* Ellsworth suggests a "Pedagogy of the Unknowable" instead, which places emphasis on knowledge that cannot be predicted or understood beforehand by theoretical frameworks and / or methodological practices.

> I believe what one needs to do is to appreciate the contribution of the work within its historical context. That I was not as acutely aware of issues of gender as I wrote *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is an absolute fact. It is equally an absolute fact that the knowledge base with respect to gender oppression we have today, thanks to the great and comprehensive works of feminists, was not available to me then nor was it available to many women (Freire 1993: 170).

bell hooks was able to bring the feminist critique to Freire's work, because of her engagement with feminist thinking, although she acknowledges his willingness to be critiqued by feminist thinkers, as well as his "duty and right" to contribute to feminist movements and to transforming society (hooks 1994: 57). In a dialogue between Gloria Watkins and bell hooks, Watkins's persona, hooks also calls for a critical approach to Freire's sexist language:

> Freire's sexism is indicated by the language in his early works notwithstanding that there is so much that remains liberatory. There is no need to apologise for the sexism. Freire's own model of critical pedagogy invites a critical interrogation of this flaw in the work. But critical interrogation is not the same as dismissal (hooks 1993: 147).

Engaged pedagogy

hooks (1994: 15) champions what she calls "engaged pedagogy". She argues that engaged pedagogy is more demanding than critical and feminist pedagogies, as it places an emphasis on well-being and involves teachers in a process of self-actualisation, which can promote excitement in the classroom. hooks (1994: 12) sees the classroom as "a radical place of possibility" and suggests that excitement can only be the result of the collective effort of students and teachers. Teachers too can be empowered through engaged pedagogy, but this requires them to assume responsibility for changing students' lives and to accept to be vulnerable when asking students to take risks. hooks values her commitment to engaged pedagogy as a

manifestation of “political activism” and highlights that through this approach students and teachers can learn together the lesson of mutual engagement. She concludes that education as the practice of freedom can be achieved through teaching that goes beyond and against boundaries.

Post-structuralism also influenced the views of other scholars, such as Bill Green, who discusses post-critical pedagogy in the paper *Teaching for Difference: Learning Theory and Post-critical Pedagogy* (1998). He provides a Post-structuralist understanding of learning as a matter of working with particular positions which are available through discursive practice and of highlighting the relationship between discourse and subjectivity. He uses the term “online education” to emphasise the incorporation of “media as new sources of learning, social integration and identity formation”. The impact of media culture on pedagogy discussed in Green’s paper is relevant to my study, as it raises questions about the reconstruction of literacy in line with technological, social and cultural transformations, which dissociate the production of knowledge from schooling.

Further, Green calls for the need to refer to post-critical pedagogy, “as the form that critical pedagogy takes in postmodern contexts”. He foregrounds a Post-structuralist understanding of social subjectivity, according to which learning (as the production of difference) becomes transformative practice and this transformation is connected with subjectivity and social relations.

In the final section of his paper, Green cites Ulmer (1989) whose work on the convergence of video and computer prefigures New Media and “convergence culture” as discussed by Henry Jenkins. Ulmer implies a change in cognition as a result of this shift to computer-mediated forms of cultural production and distribution (Ulmer 1985 cited in Green 1998: 194) and suggests a type of learning which combines the “oral, literate and video conduct in our society” (Ulmer 1989: xii). When considered in the context of Media Education, Ulmer’s insights offer a critical understanding of learning and cognition, which relate to teaching for and with difference.

Katherine Hayles (2007) also wrote about the generational shift in cognitive styles, which can be seen in the contrast between Hyper and Deep Attention. In her paper

Hyper and Deep Attention: The Generational Divide in Cognitive modes, Hayles argues that as more and more young people move deeper into the mode of Hyper Attention, educators face the choice of either changing the students to fit the educational environment or changing the environment to fit the students. For Hayles, digital media offer important resources in facing that challenge, as they allow classroom space to be reconfigured and offer opportunities for building bridges between Hyper and Deep Attention.

This section illuminated some of the critiques of the discourse of Critical Pedagogy, through the lens of Post-structuralism and feminism. Such critiques promote the contextual character of knowledge and the impact of discourse on constructing subjects, thus challenging Critical Pedagogy's emphasis on universal and fixed identities/subjectivities. The next section focuses on ideas about generational changes in cognition, further elaborated in Prensky's concept of "Digital Natives", which has been widely critiqued.

2.4 Digital Natives

The participants in my study fell into two different age groups, 14-16 and 18-24, and could be seen as belonging to a generation which has been characterised as "Digital Natives", a term coined by Marc Prensky in 2001. In his papers *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants (part 1 & 2)*, Prensky suggests that, due to the growth of the use of digital technology in the last decades of the 20th century, "today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (Prensky 2001a: 1). Prensky argues that such technological advancements have had implications on education, thus creating its "single biggest problem" (2001a: 2). These claims point to the existence of a "digital divide", as those who teach the younger generations are unable to speak the "digital language of computers, video game and the Internet", hence being described as "Digital Immigrants". Prensky concludes that "Digital Immigrants" educators will have to change in order to address the needs of their students and design "Digital Natives methodologies for all subjects, at all levels" (Prensky 2001a: 6).

In the second part of the paper *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants (2001b),* Prensky provides evidence to support his claims, drawing from the fields of neurobiology and social psychology and from studies on children using games for learning. He provides the example of video games as an effective means for educating young people and reiterates the need for educators to embrace alternative teaching and learning methods in order to communicate their "still-valuable knowledge" (2001b: para 39).

In the years following the publication of Prensky's orginal papers on "Digital Natives", there has been extensive critique of his claims, not least in that they are viewed as being overgeneralising and lacking empirical evidence. In 2009, Prensky himself wrote that "the distinction between digital natives and digital immigrants will become less relevant" (para 1), as future generations will be fully immersed in digital technology. He suggests a new term, that of "digital wisdom", which goes beyond generational divides, and defines wisdom as the "ability to find practical, creative, contextually appropriate, and emotionally satisfying solutions to complicated human problems" (2009: para 8). "Digital Immigrants" can also demonstrate "digital wisdom". In particular, Prensky provides a definition of this term as:

> (…) a twofold concept, referring both to wisdom arising from the use of digital technology to access cognitive power beyond our innate capacity and to wisdom in the prudent use of technology to enhance our capabilities (Prensky 2009: para 2).

In his blog post "Reconsidering Digital Immigrants…", Jenkins (2007) highlights that the term "Digital Natives" fails to acknowledge the different levels of young people's access and familiarity with emerging technologies, as well as the Participation Gap (discussed in the section 2.3) which refers to the skills and competencies that young people need in order to benefit from using technology. He also points out that the emphasis on the divide between the generations could reinforce views against the restructuring of education to create spaces where adults and young people can learn from each other. Jenkins contends that we need new metaphors to address the changing educational requirements of today's youth and for a new understanding of "digital multi-culturalism". Jenkins here places emphasis on age differences, and does not expand on the political, social and economic factors, which accentuate the digital

divide. Buckingham (2006: 5) illuminates some of these factors, by suggesting that claims about the existence of a digital generation serve only to increase media industries profits as age-based categories, such as the construction of the 'tween' consumer (Willett 2005), have been taken up by marketers as a means of controlling an unpredictable market. In addition, further empirical research evidence (Kvavik et al., 2005; Kennedy et al., 2008a) points to the importance of factors such as socio-economic status, cultural/ethnic background, gender and discipline specialisation, which are at risk of being overlooked in this debate, yet are clearly relevant considerations.

In 2008, Bennett et. al published a paper providing a critical review of the evidence related to the debate around "Digital Natives". The authors argue that this debate contributes to raise "moral panic" and they present findings from empirical research on young people's use of technology. Examples from the empirical studies within the review highlight how young people's experiences with technology vary and only few of them are involved in creating Web content (Kvavik et al., 2004; Oliver & Goerke, 2007). Bennett et. al refer to the issue of access to technology and the required skills for engaging with it, in line with Jenkins's perspective. The authors question the link between young people's daily use of technology and its effectiveness in academic tasks. They conclude by emphasising the need for the development of "information literacies" to support young people with their learning.

Helsper and Enyon (2009: 5) provide evidence on how the British population accesses and uses the Internet and highlight the salience of additional factors, namely breadth of use, experience, self-efficacy and education in exploring "digital nativeness". The authors define a "Digital Native" as "someone who multi-tasks, has access to a range of new technologies, is confident in their use of technologies, and (…) uses the Internet for learning as well as other activities". Furthermore, Jones and Shao (2011) provide an overview of empirical studies illuminating young people's use of technology across the globe, and focus on the implications of this debate for Higher Education.

The impact of factors such as gender and socio-economic background, further discussed in Kennedy's et. al (2008b) study with academic staff and students across three Australian universities investigating their use of technology, contrasts sharply

with grand claims about students' familiarity with emerging technologies. This study demonstrates few differences between "Digital Immigrants" and "Digital Natives" in the use of new technologies, supporting counterarguments about the existence of a "digital divide" between teachers and students.

Similarly, Koutropoulos (2011: 526) raises concerns about the term "Digital Natives" becoming part of our "common sense" and critiques Prensky's technological determinism, asking for more attention to be paid to the contexts in which young people engage with technology. The distinction between "Digital Natives" and "Digital Immigrants" implies a power asymmetry between them, whereas, according to Koutropoulos, emphasis needs to be placed on the development of students' "information retrieval and critical information analysis skills" (2011: 532), and on nurturing appropriate pedagogies.

Finally, Kennedy et. al (2010) took the research on "Digital Natives" one step further, conducting a study which identified four types of technology users across a sample of undergraduate students at three Australian universities. These types were *power* users (14% of sample), *ordinary* users (27%), *irregular* users (14%) and *basic* users (45%). Further analysis pointed to links between the different types of technology users and their gender, their age, their cultural background (referring to their status as national or international students) and the university they attended. The findings paint a complex picture as opposed to Prensky's assumptions and place emphasis on the heterogeneity of the student population and their diverse uses of technology, suggesting that different pedagogies are needed to address different groups of learners. These empirical studies highlight another aspect of a Pedagogy of Difference, pertaining to young people's use of technology. Focus now shifts to consider another discursive form, that of political film, and how it has been articulated by its practitioners, expanding on the relationship between politicising practices and political film.

2.5 Political film practices

The history of political cinema goes back to the first projections (Dickinson n.d.), and a comprehensive analysis is outside the scope of this thesis (for a review of Third

Cinema see M. Wayne *Political Film: The Dialectics of Third Cinema,* 2001). What this section will focus on are film practices related to Third Cinema (in Latin America) and the Workshop Movement (in the UK). Emphasis is placed on Third Cinema's film practices because of how they focus on the inclusion of documentary subjects and audiences into the filmmaking process (Fusco 1987: 5) and at the non-hierarchical working relations, including relations between filmmakers, their subjects and audiences, which developed in the context of the Workshop movement (Dickinson n.d.). Such filmmaking practices and relations are in line with the participatory nature of my fieldwork[27].

Third Cinema

Argentine filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino coined the term "film act" in 1969, referring to an open-ended film form which emerged from Third Cinema. The idea of the "film act" was introduced in Solana's and Getino's manifesto "Towards a Third Cinema", which was published in 1969 and accompanied their film *The Hour of the Furnaces* (1968). In an interview with Jean-Luc Godard (1969), Solanas mentions:

> *The Hour of the Furnaces* is also a film 'act', an anti-show because it denies itself as film and opens itself to the public for debate, discussion and further developments. Each show becomes a place of liberation, an act in which man takes conscience of his situation and of the need for a deeper praxis to change that situation (Solanas 1987: 83).

This definition of the "film act" resonates with Freire's concept of critical consciousness, and the development of people's awareness about their state of oppression and acting towards changing it. This approach is based on the belief that the revolution against military governments can start when the people realise the need for change. The "film act" contributes towards the process of liberation as it provides a means of raising consciousness and spreading information which is not otherwise available (Solanas 1987: 85).

[27] Participatory video is discussed in the Methodology chapter.

Freire's influence on Third Cinema can be also traced in the "film act" in terms of a way of learning. The three steps in the process of knowledge described by Solanas and Getino (1969) in their Third Cinema manifesto evoke Freire's above-mentioned phases of consciousness (semi-instransitive, naïve-transitive and critical consciousness). The first step is the contact with the outside world which is the stage of sensations, the second is the synthesis of the data provided by sensations, and the third step is knowledge united with action to transform the world (Solanas and Getino 1969: para 76).

In the same manifesto, Solanas and Getino (1969) call for the need of the development of a Third Cinema, as a means of resistance to American film production practices, which Latin American filmmakers saw as dominant and colonising. Third Cinema has therefore been defined as a "cinema of liberation" (1969: para 31) and "a cinema of the masses" (para 66), operating "outside and against the System" and offering an alternative, not only to the commercially driven "first cinema" of the United States, but also to the Auteur "second" cinema, which, according to Solanas and Getino, had reached "the outer limits of what the system permits" (para 30).

Solanas and Getino suggest that in order for a revolutionary film group to be viable, "military structures" and "command concepts" are needed. Similar to revolutionary military acts, the authors consider Third Cinema screenings to be creating "liberated spaces". In their discussion of the distribution of *The Hour of the Furnaces,* Solanas and Getino emphasise the participation of the people, opening up debates on the themes suggested by the film. The people attending the screenings were considered to be spectators until then but, because of their participation despite the risks involved, they became protagonists in the films. The screenings were enhanced with "recorded music or poems, sculpture and paintings, posters" and dialogue was promoted, aiming at the audience's politicisation. *The Hour of the Furnaces* is an open-ended film in the sense that it must be completed by the protagonists and, if needed, new "film testimonies" can be added in the future (Solanas 1987: 83).

The tradition of Third Cinema influenced the initial design of the workshops, which I organised as part of my fieldwork, based on an understanding of film as being open to debate and as initiating action. This understanding informed the theoretical part of the workshops, aiming to analyse various documentaries, and the practical part, as the interactive documentaries that the young people made allowed for more open interpretation from the audience.

The Workshop Movement

A new oppositional film culture started to emerge in the UK during the 1980s, known as the Workshop Movement, aiming to develop structures different from those of the film and broadcasting mainstream (Dickinson n.d.). The relevance of this movement to this research project is related to its collective vision of filmmaking and its emphasis on education:

> During the late 1980's, independent filmmaking was structured along the workshop movement, which consisted of Channel 4-funded film groups that also had a string of support from trade unions, local charities, councils and so on. (…) Workshops operated as collectives which trained, educated, made films and screened them around the country and on television (Fero 2015: 40).

The workshops were made possible by the ACTT Workshop Declaration, which was initiated in 1982 by the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT), the British Film Institute and the Independent Filmmakers' Association. The Declaration provided financial security for independent film and video workshops and funding was secured through the newly founded Channel 4, which focused on innovative broadcasting (Roberts 2005). Some of the characteristics of the workshops were collective management, integrated production, distribution and exhibition, continuity of employment and a more flexible labour division (Dickinson n.d.) and emphasis was placed on ethnic diversity and local issues (Roberts 2005). The filmmakers involved in that movement felt that the

Declaration also allowed them to have more autonomy over their work (Attille 1988: 24).

The groups of Black Audio Film Collective and Sankofa, among other Black workshops, engaged with education activities and film programming alongside production (Roberts n.d.). Their work is relevant to my fieldwork, as the collectives placed emphasis on education and produced work, which subverted the stereotypical representations of the experiences of Black people. Both groups challenged racism, gender relations and homophobia in the UK, at a time when frustration with police violence led to riots (Blackman n.d.). I was also interested to see how the participants in my study would respond to what they consider to be the challenges of their time and to some of the stereotypes related to young people.

The Black Audio Film Collective was founded in 1982 by seven undergraduates in Sociology and Fine Art and Sankofa was founded one year later by five graduates from art colleges and polytechnics in London (Ogidi n.d.). In addition to producing award-winning films and videos, Black Audio Film Collective curated film courses, seminar series and screening programmes, introducing London audiences to avant-garde cinema (Iniva n.d). One of the educational activities organized by Sankofa involved Black women in 16mm workshops (Roberts n.d.). These collectives dissolved in the 1990s and some of the members of Black Audio Film Collective founded the production company Smoking Dogs, which is active until today.

It is worth acknowledging here that the concept of politics articulated by these groups of filmmakers is significantly different from those of the preceding writers, such as Foucault. Whilst these groups enacted a politics of difference, this was more defined by questions of political representation in films, rather than one which acknowledged the contemporary feminist and Post-structuralist critiques of the idea of the gendered/positioned subject/author, which explored the politics of representation itself.

In contrast with Political Film, the emergence of Interactive Documentary has not been accompanied by a wealth of political commentary, as I will present in the following section.

2.6 Interactive Documentary

Interactive Documentary is a rapidly evolving field, which needs to be positioned within a culture of New Media. Lev Manovich (2001) offers the first systematic theory of New Media in his book *The Language of New Media*, placing them within the histories of visual and media cultures of the last centuries. He draws on film theory, literary theory and social theory and uses the method of digital materialism, providing a critical examination of "the principles of computer hardware and software and the operations involved in creating cultural objects on a computer to uncover a new cultural logic at work" (Manovich 2001: 35).

According to Manovich, in 2001, we were in the middle of a New Media revolution, as many cultural forms shifted to computer-mediated forms of production, distribution and communication. He argues that the user can now interact with a media object, thus becoming the co-author of the work. New Media represent a convergence of two separate historical trajectories: that of computing and of media technologies. The result is New Media: graphics, moving images, sounds, shapes, spaces, and texts that have become computable offering users more opportunities for co-creation.

Manovich (2001) suggested that categorisation of New Media needs to extend beyond interactivity and hypermedia and identifies the principles of Numerical Representation, Modularity, Automation, Variability and Cultural transcoding. Numerical Representation means that all New Media objects are composed of digital code, so a New Media object can be described mathematically and is subject to algorithmic manipulation. In terms of Modularity, a New Media object has the same modular structure throughout. The third principle is Automation, according to which the numerical coding of media and the modular structure of a media object allow for the automation of many operations involved in media creation, manipulation and access, thus minimising human intentionality. Regarding Variability, a New Media object is not something fixed once and for all, but something that can exist in different and infinite versions.

Manovich here refers to New Media structures as branching (or menu) interactivity

and hypermedia. In the case of branching interactivity, the user plays an active role in determining the order in which elements are accessed. Open interactivity is related to the structure of the whole object, which can be moderated in response to the user's interaction with the programme. Finally, there is the principle of Transcoding, as computerised media have a structure which follows the established conventions of the computer's organisation of data but belong to human culture at the same time.

Manovich's critique of interactivity as a means for manipulating audiences is addressed through what he called 'totalitarian interactivity' (1996). All art is interactive, according to Manovich, by requiring viewers to fill in missing information, but modern media placed new cognitive and physical demands on the viewer. Computer-based media are interactive by nature, and although it is easy to identify different interactive structures, the users' experiences of these structures vary. Manovich expands on the implications of psychological interaction between a user and a media object, going beyond physical interaction. He associates interactive media with the demand of modern mass society, and the corporate institutions which form its basis, for standardization. For Manovich, interactive computer media tend "to externalize and objectify the mind's operations", as users are asked to follow pre-programmed objectively existing associations, "the mental trajectory of the new media designer", instead of their own thought processes (2001: 74). In this way, new media technologies are constructed as aligning with the requirements of mass society, as they can be used to control reasoning and manipulate private mental processes.

The computerisation of culture that Manovich analyses is related to the emergence of Interactive Documentary. The critique of the use of interactivity and the political implications of Interactive Documentary need to be expanded beyond the platforms and the technologies of Interactive Documentary, which informs most of the literature on Interactive Documentary

One of the first scholarly writings in the field of Interactive Documentary is provided by Galloway, Mcalpine and Harris (2007) in the paper *From Michael Moore to JFK Reloaded: Towards a working model of interactive documentary*. The authors provide a definition for Interactive Documentary as "any documentary that uses interactivity as a core part of its delivery mechanism" and raise issues about the changing role of the

documentary filmmaker, who is no longer in control of the message conveyed. Galloway, Mcalpine and Harris illustrate traditional documentary's historical background and explore interactivity in the context of interactive entertainment titles, film and television. They define traditional documentary as "a passive, one-way communication medium that does not promote dialogue between the production and the audience". My disagreement with this definition of traditional documentary lies in seeing each documentary as a "constant discovery process" (Trinh 1992 cited in Lewis 2007: 275), which is linked to the audience's interpretation of documentary film, thus establishing an active relationship between filmmakers and audiences.

According to Galloway et al., the notion of Interactive Documentary logically extends that of the documentary. The notion of interactivity is not easily combined with that of traditional documentary. Documentary has been associated with objectively conveying factual information[28], and any sense of objectivity is undermined by the interactive user's ability to change content. This argument is supported by Meadows's (2003: 44-45) definition of interaction as a repeating process consisting of four stages: observation, exploration, modification and reciprocal change.

The authors, then, set out to explore the characteristics of interactivity as found in a series of interactive entertainment titles and in current forms of interactive television and film. Galloway et al. elaborate on McMillan's (2002) third "tradition of interactivity" ("User to System"), which refers to the relations between users and technology, and propose four categories for facilitating interaction within filmic context.

The four categories for interaction as proposed by Galloway et al. are the following:

1. The passive-adaptive category, which allows user input on a sub- or un-conscious level.

[28] A full account of documentary "objectivity" is outside the scope of this thesis. The notion of film as record is at the heart of documentary film, hence its association with objectivity, but the intervention of the camera and the editing process inevitably involve the maker's subjectivity. Quoting Bruzzi (2000: 39): "Documentary film is traditionally perceived to be the hybrid offspring of a perennial struggle between the forces of objectivity (represented by the 'documents' or facts that underpin it) and the forces of subjectivity (that is the translation of those facts into representational form)". For further discussion on documentary "objectivity" see Nichols, B. (1991) *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary.*

2. The active-adaptive category, which implies user input on a conscious level. The user can be aware of physical interaction with the system and the power to change content (responsive dialogue).
3. The immersive category, which allows fully participatory user input, as the viewer is fully absorbed within the filmic world, thus achieving mutual discourse.
4. The expansive category, which promotes mass-interaction for community based practices. The users can change the content of the film and discuss the opinions of other users (Galloway, Mcalpine and Harris 2007: 334).

This categorisation now seems outdated, given that Galloway et al. suggested this in 2007. A more recent taxonomy is provided by Sandra Gaudenzi (2013), who outlines four interactive modes (hypertext, conversational, experiential and participative), based on the interactive logic of Interactive Documentary. The conversational mode positions users as if "in conversation" with computers and creates an apparently seamless interaction with them. The participative mode involves users in the production or distribution process and invites the participation of users to create open and evolving databases. Finally, the experiential mode brings users into physical space and creates experiences challenging their senses (Aston and Gaudenzi 2012: 128).

These categorisations are forms of discursive practice which shape our understanding of the field of Interactive Documentary and which emphasise the affordances and modes of interactivity, rather than its political implications. From the above-mentioned taxonomies, the interactive films produced in the context of my fieldwork would be more relevant to Gaudenzi's hypertext mode (Aston and Gaudenzi 2012: 127), which is argued to enable users to explore a documentary clicking on pre-existing options. Participants in this research enhanced their Popcorn Maker documentaries with links from the web, so the users are given the opportunity to engage with the interactive elements while watching the films. In the case of the *Glowing Divide*, users were also invited to navigate through the stories by clicking on different sections, which were pre-programmed on the basis of the challenges that were set to the portrayed teenagers. As I will argue in Chapter 4, there were differences between the four cycles of PAR in this project, in terms of participants' use of modes of interactivity in their documentaries. This ranged from complete lack of interactivity (Imagineer) to a more

sophisticated interactive design (Knowle West Media Centre), all documentaries however pertain to Gaudenzi's hypertext mode, as users can engage with a series of branching options.

Since Galloway, Mcalpine and Harris's publication in 2007, other academics have provided more complex definitions of Interactive Documentary too. However, the politics of Interactive Documentary are not addressed beyond the shift in maker/user dynamics that new technologies entail. Aston and Gaudenzi (2012: 125) extend Galloway, Mcalpine and Harris's definition of Interactive Documentary and they take into consideration the processes of production, apart from "delivery mechanisms". They define interactive documentary as "any project that starts with an intention to document the 'real' and that uses digital interactive technology to realise this intention". The authors are also concerned with the relationship between authorship and agency in interactive documentary and present different modes of interactive documentary as constructing different 'realities'. The emphasis here is again on the link between technologies and subjects.

Similarly, Arnau Gifreu highlights the impact of Interactive Documentary on the relationship between users and makers. Gifreu (2011) sees interactive documentaries as "interactive online/offline applications, carried out with the intention of representing reality with their own mechanisms, which we call navigation and interaction modalities, depending on the degree of participation under consideration". Gifreu argues that Nichols's (1991) documentary modes[29] focusing on the representation of reality cannot be applied to interactive documentaries, due to their non-linear nature. Navigation and interaction modalities are the key elements of interactive documentaries and enable users to interact with and shape the content of the documentary, while at the same time the authors lose control over the flow of their work.

Some of the political aspects of Interactive Documentary are highlighted in Paolo Favero's paper *Getting our hands dirty (again): Interactive documentaries and the*

[29] Nichols identified four modes of representation as "organisational patterns around which most texts are structured: expository, observational, interactive and reflexive" (1991: 32). In 2001, he revised his taxonomy as following: poetic, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive and performative.

meaning of images in the digital age. Favero (2013) links new media practices to the political movements aiming at creating less centralized communities and offers an ethnographic approach to interactive documentaries and their contribution to a new understanding of visual culture in the new digital era. The author illuminates new aspects of the field, as he discusses the ways through which interactive documentaries challenge our conventional notions about images and encourage the engagement of the viewers with the dynamics of everyday life. He also presents interviews with interactive image-makers and analyses various digital interactive media practices.

Favero (2013: 260) argues that the analysis of emerging interactive practices requires the use of theoretical tools related to visual and digital cultures. The variety of materials (sound, image, text) that are combined for the creation of interactive documentaries suggest that images go beyond the visual field and are transformed into data. New forms of interpretation of these materials allow new forms of participation in everyday life, thus "pushing" the viewers closer to the physicality of everyday life.

Reflecting on the definition given by Galloway, Mcalpine and Harris for interactive documentary as "any documentary that uses interactivity as a core part of its delivery mechanism", Favero expands on the paradoxes that this form may embrace. He also gives the example of the first Lumière films. The Lumière brothers are presenting the camera to the viewers as unobtrusive. However, the people portrayed within these films were aware of the camera filming them, thus attesting a degree of manipulation from the very birth of cinema.

Favero concludes that interactive practices hold a promise for the future of documentary and at the same time reflect its very essence, which is a turn to "the raw material and profilmic object" (Favero 2013: 273). Regarding the suitability of interactive documentaries to address social issues and encourage social change, he argues that social and political changes in today's capitalist societies are aligned with these New Media practices, although there is still much work to be done regarding the power of interactive media practices to bring social change:

> The growing belief in the act of sharing, collaboration and cooperation that characterizes contemporary digital culture

> seems to run in parallel with the growing sensibility for the common good (…) and the many experiments in creating new, less centralized and supposedly more egalitarian forms of community life, characteristics of many of the protest movements we have recently witnessed (Favero 2013: 272).

The educational potential of Interactive Documentary has been under-researched and there is no empirical evidence regarding the use of this conceptually complex tool and its Critical Media Literacy capability in complex educational environments. The work of the Spanish researcher Arnau Gifreu suggests some possibilities offered by interactive fiction and nonfiction as pedagogic tools and teaching materials. In his paper *The interactive nonfiction as 2.0 educational strategy, The case of the interactive*, Gifreu (2012) presents case studies developed by Audiovisual Communication students at the Universitat de Vic in Spain and suggests that the different modes of navigation and interaction can enhance the educational dimensions of Interactive Documentary combining it with entertainment.

Gifreu argues that interactive documentary could be used as a pedagogic tool as visual support for lectures, as a way allowing students to follow classes from their computers, as an alternative to tests and presentations and as a teaching tool to teach educators themselves. The open possibilities offered by this format include the student's deeper immersion in the subject, ubiquity and timelessness, virtual exams and the embracing of augmented reality and nanotechnology. The educational advantages of new technologies are summarised in the creation of networks, the encouragement of collaboration between learners, the facilitation of dissemination, new ways of evaluation and overall greater flexibility.

Gifreu provides an overview of the Universitat de Vic's student interactive productions and concludes that the most important educational advantages of interactive documentary are collaborative learning, multidirectionality, freedom of publication/ dissemination and immediacy in the communication process. He suggests that interactive documentary, as an evolution of traditional documentary, enables students to organise stories in informative and entertaining ways and such practices can increase students' motivation and interest in various subjects.

This research provided empirical data regarding the use of interactive documentary in complex educational environments, thus shedding new light on the educative potential of the tool. The results suggest that some of the above-mentioned educational benefits of interactive documentary, such as freedom of dissemination and immediacy in the communication process[30], could not be delivered in an informal Critical Pedagogy context, although Interactive Documentary theoretically aligns with the principles of Critical Media Literacy. An informal pedagogic context was chosen for this study, due to the lack of empirical evidence concerning the efficacy of interactive documentary outside formal settings (Gifreu's 2012 study focuses on students in Higher Education). Informal contexts tend to be less structured than formal ones, thus adding to the complexity of designing and delivering pedagogical interventions.

Summary

A study of the Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary discourses reveals an emphasis on community involvement and collective expression. Seen as "creating spaces in which individuals can speak for themselves" (Nash 2014a: 51), the rhetoric of interactive documentary implies it provides an ideal platform for addressing the democratising principles of Critical Media Literacy, although the discussion of the political aspects of the tool is scarce in literature. This lack of extensive political commentary contrasts with discourse surrounding film practices aiming to politicise audiences, exemplified in Political Film, which also influenced my fieldwork.

This research makes a contribution to the rapidly evolving field of Interactive Documentary, highlighting its educational potential in complex environments. In light of this literature review, my research questions have shifted from exploring the impact of making interactive documentaries on raising participants' critical consciousness to focusing on the dimensions of technology, experience, relationships and discourse within the context of young people's engagement with Interactive Documentary practices. Additionally, this literature review has led me to identify the need for a

[30] The withdrawal of Mozilla's Popcorn Maker resulted in the withdrawal of participants' interactive documentaries from the Web and limited resources, such as laptops, hindered the processes of creativity and communication.

reconfigured Pedagogy of Difference, encompassing Interactive Documentary practices.

The need for innovative pedagogies is linked to the epochal transition that is in progress, both in terms of the political, social and financial changes in Europe and the transition into post-industrial societies and the Information Age. This research has been influenced by Critical Pedagogy theories, which link the reconstruction of education to the development of a critical spirit to address this transitional stage. Theoretically anchored in the work of Paulo Freire, Critical Pedagogy foregrounds the importance of a critical awareness of the power structures embedded in societies and how these can be transformed through collective action and education, replacing the "banking" concept of education with a problem-posing model. This transformation aims at changing the power relations between teachers and students.

Premised on Critical Pedagogy, Critical Media Literacy has been theorised as a "political project for democratic social change" (Kellner and Share 2007b: 8), aiming at empowering marginalised people. New Media technologies combined with Critical Pedagogy are seen as maximising the democratising potential of the Internet, but there is lack of a clear vision of the implementation of a "New Media Critical Pedagogy" in the classroom.

Some of the limitations of the theoretical discourse of Critical Pedagogy were also highlighted, including critiques of this discourse for example, as being founded on a supposedly universal and fixed notion of the subject. The critique of Critical Pedagogy has been conducted mainly by feminist theorists, challenging some of the assumptions that accompanied the emergence of its core discursive tropes, including 'empowerment' and 'student voice'. Feminist pedagogies highlight the contextual character of knowledge and emphasise difference and how it operates in classroom settings.

Another argument towards rethinking education has been constructed on the grounds that today's students are immersed in digital technology, marking a "discontinuity" as Prensky argues (2001a: 1), which should be reflected in education, leading to the development of discourses which take young people's affinity with technology for

granted. In light of these arguments, the study of the above-mentioned literature raised my expectations regarding the outcome of my fieldwork in terms of promoting participants' engagement with interactive documentaries and improving their civic engagement[31].

Finally, the above-mentioned literature review shaped my ideas about the potential effects of a politicised Media Education, as I expected that this kind of approach could eradicate the power imbalance between the participants and the educator/researcher and that my fieldwork could result in empowering participants to mobilise technology in the context of a progressive pedagogy.

Addressing the lack of critique and empirical evidence of the educational potential of Interactive Documentary in heterogeneous contexts, in the following chapters I will argue towards a more nuanced conceptual underpinning for new pedagogies in the use of interactive documentaries for teaching and learning in more complex environments. The next chapter moves on to explore the methodological underpinnings of this research, combining Participatory Action Research with Visual Research Methods and Discourse Analysis.

[31] I will elaborate on civic engagement in Chapter 6. Henry Jenkins uses this term in his analysis of Participatory Culture to denote participation in political and civic structures/debates and in community life (2006: 10). In terms of this research, civic engagement is understood as increased engagement with communities, and is evidenced in the PYF fieldwork (one of the participants became a volunteer at PYF following her participation in the Interactive Documentary workshops).

SECTION 1: METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3. Analysing Discourse and a Participatory Approach to the Visual

This chapter illuminates the methodology and methods that I used for data collection and analysis in this research. It provides a rationale behind the deployment of Participatory Action Research (PAR), which encompasses this project and the transformative process through which I designed and delivered my fieldwork workshops. Fieldwork was carried out in Positive Youth Foundation (Coventry), Knowle West Media Centre (Bristol) and Imagineer (Coventry), which endorsed a series of Interactive Documentary workshops with young people. The workshops introduced participants to the basic principles of Interactive Documentary.

As part of the approach I took in responding to my research questions, I explored the ways in which young people from disadvantaged communities engage with Interactive Documentary practices, through an interpretation of a series of interventions involving young people in the creation of interactive documentaries. This research also investigated claims about the liberatory potential of Critical Pedagogy approaches within Media Education. Therefore, I considered a qualitative research approach to be the most appropriate, due to its interpretive nature and its grounding in the lived experiences of people (Marshall and Rossman 2011: 2). One of the strengths of qualitative research is "its ability to look at how social interactions are routinely enacted" (Silverman 2000: 283). This approach enabled me to more thoroughly explore the interactions of the participants with their peers, the researcher and their final interactive films. In addition, qualitative methods "start from the perspective and actions of the subjects studied" (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2009: 7), which was a key element of this research, considering I placed emphasis on participants' understanding of Interactive Documentary and of the effects of a progressive pedagogy that this tool could afford.

In particular, this research deploys Visual Research Methods within PAR, including Participatory Video and Video Elicitation interviews, and has been influenced by Ethnography, due to its focus on observing lived experience within human society and

culture, and “the beliefs, values and attitudes” of participants (Merriam 2009: 27). Data was collected in the form of the interactive documentaries created by the participants, the interviews with the participants and my own research diary. I transcribed the interviews and the audio of the interactive documentaries in order to use these transcripts as data. Some of the interactive documentaries contain interviews with young people conducted by the research participants (and documentary makers). Hereafter, I will clarify which interviews were recorded by the participants when I refer to this data in my analysis.

Further, this chapter discusses the method of Discourse Analysis, which was used for the analysis of the data, and outlines Kate Nash’s documentary interactivity framework (2014a), which was used to structure the data. Finally, the ethics of working with young people are addressed.

The researcher’s presence and interpretation are at the heart of qualitative research, as Denzin and Lincoln point out:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity which locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 3).

In the pursuit of the qualitative researcher to make sense of the studied situations and the meanings that participants bring to them, the values of the investigator influence the inquiry. I interpreted the data, which I collected during the above-mentioned interventions through the lens of my values and beliefs. This understanding of qualitative inquiry as value-mediated is in line with the epistemological underpinnings of this research.

Epistemological underpinnings

The epistemology of this research is situated within Post-structural feminism and critical theory. Chapter 2 highlighted the importance of Post-structural feminism among the critiques of Critical Pedagogy. Luke and Gore (1992: 7) argue that the epistemology of Post-structural feminism "accepts that knowledge is always provisional, open-ended and relational". They relate this epistemology to difference, rejecting the unitary subject as foundational to all knowledge:

> (Post-structural feminisms) ground their epistemology on the foundation of difference. A construct of difference that extends beyond the sociological trinity of class, race, gender (usually in that order), and makes conceptual space for difference in subject location, identity and knowledges, renders such a foundation anti-essentialist and indeterminate (Luke and Gore 1992: 7).

In a similar vein, this research acknowledges the contingent character of the findings, which pertain to the use of Interactive Documentary within a series of Critical Media Literacy interventions. This research is generalisable to the extent that it challenges some of the assumptions which accompanied the emergence of Interactive Documentary and of Critical Media Literacy. The findings of this research are context-specific as these are related to a particular educational context, that of informal Critical Media Literacy. Different interventions in different contexts could generate different outcomes regarding the educational potential of Interactive Documentary and Critical Pedagogy approaches, hence it is important to acknowledge that the production of knowledge in this research is based on the foundation of difference.

Regarding critical theory, Guba and Lincoln (1994: 109) use this term to encompass various paradigms, such as feminism and participatory inquiry, and list Post-structuralism among its strands. One of the key characteristics of critical theory is the value-dependent nature of inquiry and its epistemology is based on the conviction that what can be known is the result of "the interaction between a particular investigator and a particular object or group" (1994: 110).

The methodology of critical theory is "dialogic and dialectical" and aims at transforming "ignorance and misapprehensions into more informed consciousness" (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 110). This approach has connections with the theoretical underpinnings of Freire's concept of "conscientisation", which influenced the initial design of my fieldwork. "Conscientisation" refers to learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions through dialogue and one of the initial aims of this research was to explore the impact of documentary making on raising participants' awareness of oppressive elements in their lives and societies. In contrast with paradigms such as positivism and postpositivism (which rely on validity, reliability and objectivity[32]), the criteria for judging the quality of research in critical theory include a consideration of the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender antecedents of the situation under scrutiny and the extent to which the inquiry transforms ignorance and misapprehensions (1994: 114). These factors were salient for this study, as I chose to work with participants in areas with high levels of deprivation, following the principles of Critical Media Literacy, which aspires to provide marginalised or misrepresented people with the tools to express their concerns (Kellner and Share 2007b: 9). However, the researcher's positionality and presumptions were also taken into account in interpreting the studied situations.

The purpose of critical inquiry is emancipation through critiquing and transforming the structures "that constrain and exploit humankind" (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 113). Kincheloe, McLaren and Steinberg (2011:164) also emphasise the political nature of critical inquiry, which "must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society and public sphere within a society. Research thus becomes a transformative endeavour (…) unafraid to consummate a relationship with emancipatory consciousness". This research set out to explore the emancipatory potential of combining Critical Pedagogy with New Media, but throughout the process of conducting fieldwork, I confronted some of the challenges of implementing such approaches, and some of the limitations that emancipation might conceal. Eradicating the power imbalance between the researcher and the researched was not always possible, as I will illustrate in the following chapters.

[32] Validity refers to whether the data reflect the phenomena they claim to and reliability refers to the accuracy of the data (Sagor 2011: 109).

Critical theory has been associated with social constructionism but a social constructionist approach was not considered suitable for this research for the following reasons. For social constructionism, reality is socially constructed and research explores how these social constructions happen (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2009: 15). *The social construction of reality*, (Berger and Luckmann 1966), is one of the seminal texts of social constructionism and its starting point, the primacy of the individual "where everything starts and ends", is in contrast with the Post-structuralist approach which informs this research and which suggests that individuals are created by discourses (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2009: 36). Secondly, social constructionism tends to be somewhat anti-theoretical, in as much as it foregrounds the investigation of how the social construction of reality is carried out (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2009: 37). This research has been influenced by the theoretical discourses of Critical Pedagogy and Interactive Documentary and the findings point to the need for the reinscription, and a more nuanced understanding of these discourses, thus seeing knowledge as 'theory-laden'. Finally, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009: 24) have argued that social constructionists are frequently less systematic and confrontational in their criticism of societal phenomena than critical theorists, whereas this research foregrounds a systematic critique of the theoretical discourses of Critical Pedagogy and Critical Media Literacy, based on empirical evidence of social contexts.

In order to support the above mentioned epistemological underpinnings, the methods of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Visual Research were used for data collection and Discourse Analysis for data analysis. This study is also influenced by Ethnography, which accentuated the process of observation. Given that one of the initial aims of this research was to explore the impact of the creation of interactive documentaries on participants' critical consciousness, I used the method of PAR to guide the interventions.

3.1 Participatory Action Research (PAR)

As this research is theoretically anchored in the liberatory pedagogy championed by Paulo Freire, I sought an approach that would be in harmony with the initial emancipatory character of the interventions - Action Research. Kemmis and

McTaggart (2005: 560) argue that the third generation of Action Research[33] was linked to efforts in Australia and Europe promoting the development of a more "critical" rather than "practical" method. A fourth generation emerged in the connection between critical emancipatory Action Research and Participatory Action Research (PAR) that had developed in the context of social movements in the developing world, linking to the work of people such as Freire. There are two key themes in PAR, the first one is related to the development of theoretical arguments for more "actionist" approaches to Action Research and the second to the need for participatory action researchers to make links with broad social movements. The authors discuss PAR as an alternative philosophy of social research often associated with social transformation in contexts of social change. This approach is rooted in neo-Marxist approaches to community development but has liberal origins in human rights activism. It promotes shared ownership of research projects, community-based analysis of social problems and is oriented towards community action (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005: 560).

The key features of PAR are planning a change, acting and observing the process of the change, reflecting on these processes, re-planning and acting and observing again, similarly to the self-reflective spiral that Kemmis (1988: 178) outlines with regards to Action Research. PAR is a form of Action Research, therefore in this section I will refer to literature in Action Research in order to contextualise the PAR approach which I deployed.

Kemmis (1988: 179) argues that Action Research should be seen as an embodiment of democratic principles in research, allowing participants to influence the conditions of their own lives and work and develop critiques of social conditions sustaining inequality. Whilst the implementation of democratic principles in this research was difficult to achieve, this method was deemed useful for exploring my research questions, which revolve around the various dimensions of a series of Critical Media Literacy interventions and the extent to which these contribute to reconfiguring a Pedagogy of Difference. The object of educational Action Research is educational

[33] Kemmis and McTaggart (2005: 560) associate the first generation of Action Research with the work of social psychologist Kurt Lewin and the second generation with the Ford Teaching Project in the UK.

practice, which Kemmis associates with "praxis"[34], and refers to informed and committed action in response to a present and problematic action context (Kemmis 1988: 182). The problematic situation in this Action Research pertains to teaching and learning with interactive media within complex and challenged social environments and to interrogating claims about the liberatory potential of Critical Media Literacy. The results of this research point to some changes in terms of young people's understanding of documentary, raising their awareness and improved social relations (further discussed in chapters 4 and 6), but this thesis also illuminates the challenges of implementing PAR.

The impact of Freire's legacy on the development of PAR, is further discussed by Boog (2003: 430-431), who suggests that the democratic movements in 1968 prepared the ground for emancipatory Action Research and that the ideas of Freire about Critical Pedagogy had a profound impact in its development. Townsend (2013: 6) expands on the origins of the participatory theme in the work of Freire. He emphasises that Freire developed a research and educational process based within local and often oppressed communities, which invited people to study their own contexts, thus encouraging them to construct their own knowledge. Kincheloe and McLaren (2005: 305) mention that Freire insisted in involving all the people he studied as subjects and partners in the research process, thus suggesting that there are no traditionally defined objects of his research. As the people involved in Freire's critical research joined in the process of investigation, they learned to see more critically and recognise the forces that shaped their lives.

Kemmis suggests that Action Research is not characterised by the use of particular research techniques and the techniques of analysis are not unique to Action Research (1988: 174-175). This method is participatory, as it aims at involving participants in reflection on practices, and for this research particularly reflection on Interactive Documentary practices. It is also collaborative, as participants are involved in the organisation of their own knowledge in relation to social and political action in their own situations (Kemmis 1988: 185).

[34] Paulo Freire (1996) also used the term "praxis" to talk about the combination of reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.

The reflective and collaborative nature of Action Research is also highlighted by Cousin (2009: 152), who sees the essence of Action Research as research with subjects, not on them, creating a climate of enquiry which encourages more informed, subtle and negotiated understandings. Cousin (2009: 154) further contends that the transformative character of Action Research is based on shared understandings between researchers and participants for reaching possible solutions. The researchers are also positioned as learners throughout the process and they also undergo transformations (2009: 155). In the case of my research project, my understanding of how discourses operate has changed, through reflecting on the ways in which young people engage with Interactive Documentary practices and the ramifications of the educational process they took part in, which I outlined in the Introduction and which I will expand on in the following chapters. However, reaching shared understandings with participants turned out to be challenging, as I will also illustrate in the following chapters. Whereas the research was informed by a participatory ethos, it proved difficult to engage some of the participants, who either refrained from completing their documentary, or did not take part in the final interviews.

PAR was also chosen as a form of research carried out by practitioners into their own practices (Kemmis 1988: 177), considering that my fieldwork built on my background in Film and Documentary and continued my professional practice as a media educator. My previous experience teaching film led me to decide to take on the dual role of researcher and educator in the PAR series, instead of observing other educators/facilitators for example. In doing so, I was also influenced by Woods's (1986) argument that pedagogical knowledge is knowledge that teachers, and not educational researchers, have and which informs the practice of teaching. Woods contends that pedagogical knowledge involves an "open" certainty and a "closed" imperfection (1986: 3). Certainty and knowledge are seen as essential requirements of a teacher, but due to the changing nature of the situations that teachers face, it is difficult for a teacher to know all the factors that might operate within their classrooms. This decision had an impact on my observational capacity as a researcher, therefore I drew on an Ethnographic stance in order to enhance reflexivity, as I will explain below. A positive aspect of this dual role emerged in the final interview sessions, as the young people felt more comfortable due to our previous interactions and the positive relationship we had already established as part of the workshops.

Furthermore, as the researcher, I was an "outsider", who visited the research sites solely for the purposes of the research. Adlerson and Morrow (2011: 5/6) see the advantages of being an "outsider" as achieving a more independent critical view and encouraging participants to talk about various issues more honestly. This was the case for my research, considering that good working relations with participants were established from the first sessions.

Fieldwork

In terms of this research, each series of weekly Interactive Documentary workshops corresponds to a cycle of PAR[35]. As I was interested in working with participants in disadvantaged communities, I first contacted a Senior Community and Youth Development worker from the community radio station in Hillfields, Coventry. We discussed the possibility of organising the Interactive Documentary workshops at the community centre, which had already hosted some radio production workshops. Recruiting young people for the community centre workshops was complex, so the youth worker put me in touch with the youth organisation Positive Youth Foundation (PYF), which is also based in Hillfields. After meeting with the Development Manager at PYF, we decided to run the workshops at their office, as part of their Media and Communication programme "What you saying?". The project aimed at exploring how individuals and communities communicate and interact in the 21st century compared with previous generations and young people took part in writing the project proposal, alongside staff at PYF.

PYF endorsed two cycles of PAR, each one with a group of young people aged 14-16. The groups of participants at PYF and their respective interactive projects can be seen on Tables 1 and 2. The first cycle at PYF developed smoothly and the participants engaged with the process. The only exception was Peter[36], who attended

[35] The process of my fieldwork lasted for approximately 9 months, as each cycle of workshops ranged from two to three months. This enabled a more thorough and systematic understanding of the challenges of implementing an emancipatory educational project and of participants' engagement with Interactive Documentary.
[36] Fictional name.

some of the sessions but did not take part in filming and editing the documentary of his allocated group and did not participate in the final interview session.

Based on the self-reflective spiral of PAR, the themes for the interactive films in the first cycle inspired the themes for the second one. For example, the topics for the first cycle of workshops at PYF were free. The films that were created in this cycle revolved around the issue of "what does it mean to be a teenager", which became the topic for the films of the second PYF cycle. This process of discussing data from the first cycles of PAR with young people taking part in the second cycles enabled the creation of new meanings, through the lens of participants' views, thus contributing to joint meaning-making.

Participants	**Age**	**Interactive Documentary**
Oliver	14-16	Music in our Generation
Judy	14-16	Music in our Generation
Alexandra	14-16	Passion and Inspiration
Emily	14-16	Passion and Inspiration
Michelle	14-16	What you sayin'?
Stephanie	14-16	What you sayin'?
Peter	14-16	What you sayin'? (but did not participate in the making and did not attend the interviews)

Table 1: PYF participants in the first PAR cycle

Participants	**Age**	**Interactive Documentary**
John	14-16	What does the community mean to you?
Kevin	14-16	No final documentary
Chris	14-16	No final documentary
Michael	14-16	No final documentary

Table 2: PYF participants in the second PAR cycle

The second cycle of PYF workshops took place at the participants' school, as the young people had difficulties with reaching the office in Hillfields. Several sessions with this group were missed, due to half term holidays and the exams period. Added

to this, there various technical problems in this series related to limited technical resources such as laptops, which also discouraged some of the participants. I suggested organising a final workshop after the school exams, but this did not take place as the participants were on summer holidays. Overall, only one out of four participants managed to complete an interactive documentary. The cycle did not develop as planned, as we had little control over the outcome of the workshops with the sessions being held outside PYF and this group did not show the same levels of commitment as the previous group. For this cycle, there was no final interview session either, as the only participant who completed his interactive documentary emigrated to Australia.

I also worked with groups of young adults. The first cycle of PAR with young adults was held at Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) in Bristol and the second at Imagineer, a creative company in Coventry. The groups of adult participants can be seen on Tables 3 and 4. The KWMC cycle differs from the others, in the sense that I only conducted two workshops with KWMC participants and I then saw them again for the interview session. This was due to the fact that the Project Manager at KWMC was responsible for coordinating the sessions for this group, as my workshops were incorporated in an already existing KWMC interactive video and data project. KWMC recruited eight young adults on this project in order to create one interactive documentary about young people's dependence on technology.

The second cycle of PAR with young adults was delivered in parallel with Imagineer's co-creation performance programme for young people who were not in employment, education or training. In order to find the second group of adult participants, I contacted the Neighbourhood University Project Manager at Coventry University, who disseminated information about my project to various charities. I only heard back from the Deputy Director of Grapevine charity, who suggested collaborating with Imagineer.

Six young adults started attending the workshops, who were recruited to participate in the Imagineer performances. The group comprised young mothers, unemployed and young people with learning difficulties, who were invited to create interactive documentaries on the topic of social isolation, which emerged from the KWMC cycle. Five out of six participants did not complete the cycle, which resulted in one traditional

documentary. One participant started an apprenticeship and another decided to withdraw for personal reasons, as she found the project to be stressful. Some participants decided not to continue with the workshops, as the sessions clashed with the performance rehearsals. The participant who completed the cycle, Amy, did not take part in the final interview, due to her time constraints as she also started a new job. I will further expand on these challenges in Chapter 5.

Participants	Age	Interactive Documentary
Natalie	18-24	The Glowing Divide
Melissa	18-24	The Glowing Divide
Nancy	18-24	The Glowing Divide
Helen	18-24	The Glowing Divide
Christine	18-24	The Glowing Divide
Alfred	18-24	The Glowing Divide
James	18-24	The Glowing Divide

Table 3: KWMC participants in the first PAR cycle with adults

Participants	Age	Interactive Documentary
Amy	18-25	Social Media Evolution (traditional documentary)
George	18-25	No final documentary
Claire	18-25	No final documentary
Jane	18-25	No final documentary
David	18-25	No final documentary
Paul	18-25	No final documentary

Table 4: Imagineer participants in the second PAR cycle with adults

The first cycles of PAR were based on the spiral of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Re-planning, acting and observing again happened in the second cycles. I was responsible for the stage of planning, as I designed the lesson plans and teaching materials for the weekly workshops. All the lesson plans can be found on the blogs which I created for the workshops. The PYF blog is https://idocworkshops.wordpress.com/ and the blog for the cycles with adults is https://expandingopenpedagogies.wordpress.com/ (both are password-protected and the password is idoc). A sample lesson plan can be found in Appendix 5. The PAR cycles at PYF are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 and the adults' series in Figures 3 and 4. In Figure 1, I present the series of sessions with the first group of young people at PYF, which indicate the content of each session. The second cycle of workshops at

PYF was shorter, hence there are less sessions in Figure 2. Figure 3 represents the two workshops which I conducted with KWMC participants and Figure 4 shows the content of the sessions for the Imagineer cycle.

Figure 1: First PAR cycle at PYF

The stage of acting had to do with the process of the workshops and involved both the researcher/educator and the participants. Participants also did filming for their documentaries, but on their own and outside of the sessions. There was overlap between the stages of observing and reflecting, which took place while running the workshops (through keeping a research diary) and at the end of each series (when the interviews with participants were held). The young people involved in my fieldwork workshops were encouraged to reflect on various issues throughout the workshops and on the process of creating their interactive films, through Video Elicitation interviews which took place at the end of each cycle. Overall, the workshops were designed as teaching and learning processes, which involved an educator (myself) and the learners (the participants). Even though the workshops were inspired by Freire's participatory problem-posing model of education, our respective roles as educator and learners were primary during each session, thus weakening the

observational aspect of Action Research. In order to overcome this problem, I used an ethnographic reflective mindset, which allowed a more thorough examination of each session. I will refer to my ethnographic influences in the section 3.5.

Figure 2: Second PAR cycle at PYF

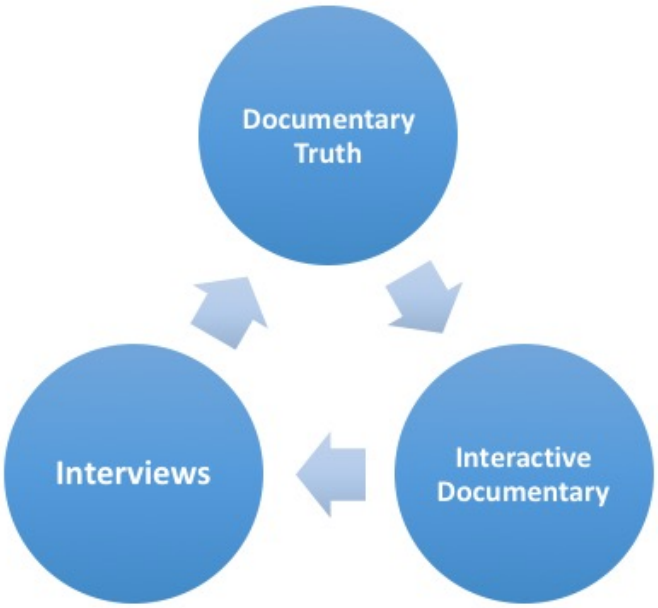

Figure 3: First PAR cycle at KWMC

Figure 4: Second PAR cycle at Imagineer

The notion of empowerment in PAR is discussed next, as this approach is seen as a social process, which is collaborative, emancipatory, critical, reflexive and aims at transforming theory and practice (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005: 568).

Empowerment

Kemmis and McTaggart (2005: 593) locate empowerment within processes of cultural, social and personal transformation which are both sources of possibility and sources of constraint. Empowerment produces a capacity for individuals and groups to interact with one another in the processes of social reproduction and transformation. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (2005: 600), the people involved in this kind of Action Research may not change the world, but they change their worlds and they may improve situations for other people who might hear about their stories.

This research is also informed by a critical understanding of empowerment, which is a contested term, as it acknowledges that the power imbalance between researcher and researched could not be eradicated, but some of the positive aspects of the interventions were perceived as empowering participants, for example through providing them with a better understanding of New Media and strengthening their bonds with their peers. In this respect, empowerment was seen as being context-specific, thus resonating with Milne et al. (2012: 231) who link the effectiveness of participatory methods to "the project purpose, the starting point of participants and the actual situation".

Les Back (2007: 18) further argues that claims linked to the empowerment of research participants through the research process hide "the inevitable unevenness of agreement, consent and participation". He suggests a form of active listening that challenges the listener's preconception and position while at the same time engages critically with the content of what is being heard and said. Back believes that one way to avoid objectifying research participants is to draw them into the very spaces where research is shown, thus inviting them to become sociological readers and viewers.

Kincheloe and McLaren (2005: 308) foreground what they call critical emancipation, placing it within the context of the 21st century:

> (…) as many critics have pointed out, no one is ever completely emancipated from the socio-political context that has produced him or her. Concurrently, many have used the term "emancipation" to signal

> the freedom an abstract individual gains by gaining access to Western reason- that is, becoming reasonable. Our use of "emancipation" in an evolving criticality rejects any use of this term in this context. In addition, many have rightly questioned the arrogance that may accompany efforts to emancipate "others" (Kincheloe and McLaren 2005: 308).

Holt (2004: 15) comments on how empowering research with young people can be realised within context-specific power relations. She suggests that researchers need to place themselves as "embodied and feeling subjects/agents" developing connections with participants within the moments of research. Although such processes might create feelings of vulnerability, Holt believes that they can contribute to establishing empowering research relations between the researcher and the researched, while paying attention to the limitations such efforts might conceal. This approach is similar to the one I followed while conducting this research and my reflexive insights will be shared as data in the following chapters.

Critique of Participatory Action Research

This section problematises some of the concepts which are at the heart of PAR, such as empowerment and democratising research, suggesting a more critical engagement which places emphasis on the context in which PAR takes place. This research also critiques the concept of critical consciousness (Chapter 2), as defined by Freire (1996), whose participatory approach to pedagogy influenced the development of PAR.

In addition, there has been criticism of the political nature of emancipatory Action Research, as opposed to other methods focusing more on the personal and professional development of educational practitioners. Responding to this critique, Carr and Kemmis (2009: 74) argue that "education is politics conducted by other means"[37] and challenge the assumption that Action Research can be anything other

[37] Paraphrasing Carl Von Clausewitz's statement that "War is a continuation of politics by other means".

than “political”. The authors believe that education can only be understood as part of the general process of social reproduction: the social process by which new generations are initiated into the language, roles and relationships in order to become members of a society. Education can be transformative by providing new generations with the forms of consciousness and modes of social relationships needed to participate in changed forms of social life.

Carr and Kemmis (2009: 76) link educational action to what Aristotle termed “praxis”, which refers to “ethically informed practices in which and through which some understanding of the individual good and the good society are given practical expression” (77). Seen as praxis, “educational action” for Carr and Kemmis (2009: 77) is a form of political action aimed at realising the view of the good society to which the educational practitioner is committed. Consequently, emancipatory Action Research is political, as it is constituted by the principles of the democratic form of social life it seeks to achieve. Carr and Kemmis conclude by seeing Action Research as personal, professional and political, as it requires the existence of educators (personal dimension) with a commitment to practicing education, the existence of institutions for the conduct of education (professional dimension) and the existence of traditions of education (political dimension) in which generations of educators reach evolving understandings of what education is. They argue in favour of a critical approach, which explores the relationships between these three faces of educational Action Research, relationships between individual and collective self-transformation, the transformation of the educational profession and the transformation of society in which educators participate (2009: 83). These transformative aspects of educational Action Research are aligned with this research, as it addresses the challenges posed by teaching and learning with interactive media in complex environments, the implications that these have on pedagogy and the transformation of societies.

The next section discusses Visual Research Methods, which were deployed within PAR as appropriate data collection tools for addressing the aims of this project, due to its focus on Media Education.

3.2 Visual Research Methods

The methodological choices in this project push the boundaries of using Visual Research Methods in youth research, as the young people were encouraged to make their own interactive films, providing insights in participants' engagement with interactivity, which is scarce in literature. Conversely, media research involving young people is often based on verbal and written methods of collecting data. For example, Asthana (2006) discusses the participation of youth in media, and the ways through which this can empower them, in his report in the UNESCO research study on twelve initiatives from around the developing and underdeveloped regions of the world. The methods he used include textual analysis of documents, interviews with the young participants, the project managers and staff members from the initiatives and reviews of several youth programme materials. In addition, Leonida (2012: 32) mentions that during preliminary meetings with students for the "Videomuseums" project, she collected their written statements on their reasons for participating, although she does not present the research methods of "Videomuseums" extensively. Niesyto et al. (2003: 463) argue that a "new perspective for youth research" is provided by the project "VideoCulture", as it invited young people to create their own media productions. The methods of participant observation, open questionnaires and group discussions were chosen to record the various stages of the project and the media productions themselves were analysed.

The use of visual data in educational research, and Action Research in particular, is worth further investigation. Klein and Agostinone-Wilson (2012: 82) point out that visual research methods in educational research are mainly used by researchers who are interested in understanding their topics "through multiple ways, including the visual". These methods allow researchers to establish a "critical dialogue" between participants, communities and larger communities of practice (Klein and Agostinone-Wilson 2012: 96). Critical dialogue, as promoted by Freire, is a key concept in this research project, therefore the employment of visual methods will necessarily incorporate a critical stance in line with the theories underpinning this research.

During my fieldwork, visual data were collected in the form of the interactive documentaries produced by the participants at the end of the PAR cycles. As the tool for the creation of the interactive documentaries was web-based, the final projects were published online. This online dissemination of the documentaries aimed at enhancing their communicative dynamic, influenced by the findings of the "VideoCulture" project (2003). Niesyto et al. (2003: 479) suggest that future projects should find ways of publishing the students' productions via the Internet and of facilitating critical dialogues about these productions. However, this was not the case for this research, as participants at PYF did not share their films with their social networks outside the workshops and also the Popcorn Maker was subsequently withdrawn, thus resulting in the removal of the projects from the web. The communicative dynamic of *The Glowing Divide* is also problematised in Chapter 5.

Participants were invited to undertake Video Elicitation interviews upon completion of their documentaries and discuss their feelings and opinions about the process. Participants were interviewed in the groups that they were allocated for the creation of their interactive films, there were no individual interviews. This approach was deemed more suitable as the groups had good working relations and they felt comfortable with their peers in the workshops. The Video Elicitation interviews were combined with semi-structured interviews. This combination of Video Elicitation with more conventional interviews was useful, as it allowed a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives.

In the interviews, I asked the young people to comment on issues such as the process of creating their films, their understanding of Interactive Documentary and their engagement with it. Moreover, I asked them to watch the interactive documentary that their group has created and express their thoughts about it. I also had the opportunity to record follow-up interviews with some of the participants from PYF and KWMC. In the case of PYF, this included a final screening of all the PYF films and I asked the two participants who attended the follow-up interview to reflect on the other films too. Before turning to Video Elicitation, I will briefly illustrate the methodological characteristics of qualitative interviewing, which informed the interview sessions.

Qualitative interviews

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 47) examine the epistemology of qualitative interviewing, which is seen as a "knowledge-producing activity". They argue that the interview as conversational practice became associated with epistemological issues over the last centuries, as its use in the context of professional interviews started to grow. The authors describe the knowledge emerging from interviews as produced, relational, conversational, contextual, linguistic and pragmatic. The interviews complementing Video Elicitation upon completion of the interactive documentaries were semi-structured. Brinkmann (2013: 21) illustrates the benefits of this format compared to structured and unstructured interviews. The semi-structured interview gives the researcher more flexibility in developing aspects that the interviewees might find more important. Also, it foregrounds the researcher's involvement in producing knowledge. This format was deemed useful for this research, as it enabled a more interactive communication process with the young participants.

Video Elicitation

Jewitt (2012: 3) explains that video is an appropriate data collection tool for researchers concerned with "the multimodal character of social interaction", although its theoretical and methodological implications have been somewhat under-researched. Video Elicitation is argued "to prompt discussion, stimulate recall or provide a basis for reflection" (Roth 2009 cited in Jewitt 2012: 3). Jewitt suggests particular approaches to promote reflection, including asking participants to identify what they consider to be important in the video, pausing the video to comment or developing participants' "selective attention" (2012: 3) by focusing on events that appear in a video.

Video Elicitation has also been used as a method for exploring physician-patient interactions (Henry and Fetters 2012), but its potential as a method within Media Education is surprisingly under-developed. In the following, I will refer to the method of Photo Elicitation, which has similarities with Video Elicitation, but uses photography instead of video. Some of the benefits of Photo Elicitation can be found in Video

Elicitation as well, which I considered more suitable for my research given its focus on participants' media production.

Photo Elicitation

In her discussion of Photo Elicitation, Rose (2012: 297) makes a distinction between methods including the creation of photographs as part of research, and other visual methodologies. These methods do not include "*found* images that already exist distinct from a research project" (italics in original), but images created by the researcher or the researched. Harper (2002: 13) defines Photo Elicitation as a process "based on the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview". Comparing two forms of interviews (one using only text and one using images and text), he argues that people respond to these two forms in different ways, as "images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness that do words" (2002: 13). Harper divides Photo Elicitation studies in four areas, including social class and social organisation, community, identity and culture. He also illustrates the origins of this method, by referring to John Collier, who proposed the method of photo interviewing in 1957, in the context of a research project investigating the quality of housing of the study's subjects (Harper 2002: 14).

Clark-Ibanez (2004: 1512) identifies Photo Elicitation as an ideal research method to engage young people, as it enables them to focus on the images and provide insights about aspects of their life that sometimes may be ignored. Young people may not be familiar with more traditional interviews, which appear to be problematic for youth research, as they emphasise the power dynamics between researchers and participants (Clark-Ibanez 2004: 1512). The use of Video Elicitation in this research had a similar purpose, which was to effectively engage participants in reflecting on their own productions, which concerned aspects of their communities. This process could be uncomfortable for some of the young people, as the documentaries mostly illustrated personal stories, but it seemed likely that focusing on the interactive documentaries enabled a more conversational approach.

Similarly, Bignante (2010: 17) sees Photo Elicitation as a more enjoyable process for participants, as it can provide them with a more active role, encouraging a more

relaxed and aware participation. Bignante used Photo Elicitation methods in the context of a research project on the Masaai and the use of natural resources. She observed that traditional interviews sometimes produced "vague replies, silence or embarrassing pauses" (2010: 5), thus magnifying the cultural and relational gap between researcher and participants, creating confusion or boredom, or causing them to lose their interest. The idea of dialogue becomes important in Photo Elicitation, as it enables a collaborative meaning-making process, establishing a dialogue in which "complementary understandings of the physical, social and cultural milieu of the actors can be explored" (Bignante 2010: 17).

A visual method which is similar to Photo Elicitation is that of Photovoice. The latter is often associated with Action Research, but it is more time-consuming compared to Photo Elicitation, as it requires ongoing work with participants for a long period of time (Rose 2012: 305), which was not possible within the frame of this research.

Participatory Video

Participatory Video has grown since the late 1990s in the context of Action Research and aims at diminishing the gap between researchers and communities by giving participants control of the camera (Jewitt 2012: 3). Jewitt comments that this process equips participants with cameras and training so that they can document an aspect of their lives, thus sharing similarities with the workshops that were conducted in this project. Participants in my research seemed to value the experience of creating their documentaries more than the final films, resonating with High et al. (2012: 37) who contend that the process of making the film and the associated benefits in terms of learning and building relationships are more salient for participants.

The origins of Participatory Video can be found in the Fogo Process (Crocker 2003 cited in High et al. 2012: 43). This documentary project was initiated by the National Film Board of Canada in the 1960s and was conducted in collaboration with the community of Fogo island in order to address poverty. The final films were used as tools for social change and enabled capacity building and widespread dissemination, reaching policy makers.

Ultimately, the impact of interactivity on research needs to be addressed, due to the interactive nature of the tool which was used in my fieldwork. Harper (2005: 751) discusses the pedagogical and research possibilities of the interactive ethnographic film "Yanamamo Interactive". The film was used for teaching purposes and the additional material which was added in the interactive version (such as tables, graphs and still images) invited students and researchers to ask new questions and to explore new knowledge. Added to this, Back (2007: 165) highlights that due to interactivity and the possibilities of New Media for iterative analysis, sociological texts may extend beyond research manuscripts.

Critique of Visual Research Methods

Buckingham (2009) provides a critique of Visual Research Methods in media research. He challenges the ability of these methods to provide insights in the participants' feelings and thoughts, arguing that this approach often neglects the role of the researcher, the formal characteristics of the media that participants use and the participants' understanding of the aims of research itself. Buckingham (2009: 635) emphasises the need for more reflexive understanding of "how research itself establishes positions" from which participants can express themselves. While conducting Video Elicitation interviews and writing up my research, I took on board this critique of Visual Research Methods and I developed a more reflexive approach, through keeping a research journal with my reflections on the workshops. These reflections were then analysed using Discourse Analysis and in conjunction with the interviews and the interactive films of the participants, which shed light on participants' perspectives. Buckingham also stresses the need for analysing all data in the context they need to be collected, the social relationships between participants and the resources they use. Ethical considerations should be addressed in "the wider social contexts, in which research is conducted, distributed and used" (2009: 648). Finally, Buckingham highlights the need to develop methods that relate to the visual dimensions of the data, instead of depending on participants' verbal accounts.

3.3 Methods of analysis

The stage of analysis has been problematised with regards to Action Research, Visual Research Methods and Ethnography. Action Research and PAR approaches are linked to participatory analysis, as participatory research foregrounds how "the various perspectives flow into the interpretation during the data analysis process" (Bergold and Thomas 2012: para 71). In this research, I used a PAR approach to think about the generation of objects (artefacts, field notes, interviews), which I then analysed using Discourse Analysis. The method of Discourse Analysis is in line with the theoretical perspectives in this research, which have been somewhat influenced by Post-structuralist critiques, and enabled the exploration of complex research questions which explore the discursive construction of participants' experiences.

In terms of visual methodologies, Knoblauch et al. (2008: para 7) raise a point about the difficulty of making a distinction between the production and analysis of visual data. In her discussion of the relationship between visual research and analysis, Pink (2004: 370) notes that analysis is an ongoing process. She mentions that the viewing of photographs may initiate more questions for the participants, thus assuming a reflexive process that occurs during the interview, and not as a separate method of analysis after the interview.

Jenkings et al. (2008: para 8) comment on the absence of a standardised approach for the analysis of data in Photo Elicitation, which relates to the method of Video Elicitation used in this research. Jenkings et al. point out that the reflexive collaboration between the researcher and the researched is not sufficiently discussed in relevant literature. They attribute this gap to the amount of emphasis that is usually placed on the role of the photograph as a source of information, instead of a means for promoting collaborative interaction between interviewers and participants (para 1). The authors argue that analysis is undertaken during the interview process and suggest an alternative approach to reflexive analysis, seeing participants as resources of analysis. This approach can develop the informant's self-awareness, thus creating new insights for the researcher.

Finally, Rose (2012: 314) points out that Photo Elicitation Interview transcripts are often subject to interpretation on the basis of "conventional social science techniques", such as content analysis. Buckingham (2009: 648) identifies here one of the main

problems associated with the analysis of visual methods. He stresses the need for developing methods that highlight the "visual dimensions" of the collected material, instead of depending on the participants' verbal accounts.

Regarding Ethnography, Pink (2007: 142) notes that analysis continues throughout the whole process of ethnographic research, although in some cases the distinction between fieldwork and analysis seems to be clearly defined. Research and analysis may be conducted in the same or different locations or time periods and researchers may develop insights into the relationship between research experiences, theoretical concepts and comparative examples at any point in the process of doing Ethnography.

The above-mentioned perspectives illustrate the complexity of analysis in terms of this research, which brought together the approaches of PAR, Visual Research Methods and Ethnography. For the purposes of this study therefore, I analysed the data using Gill's (1996) Discourse Analysis framework and followed the steps she suggests, thus adopting a broad Discourse Analysis approach. Gill (1996: 188) argues that Discourse Analysis emphasises the importance of discourse in constructing social life and provides a close reading that moves between text and context to examine the content, organisation and functions of discourse. Kate Nash's (2014a) documentary interactivity framework was also used to structure the data. The rationale for the use of these two approaches is considered below.

Documentary interactivity framework

Nash's documentary interactivity framework (2014a) provided provisional themes which offered a sensible approach to organising my analysis, however I was careful not to exclude any themes that could emerge from conducting Discourse Analysis within each dimension. Nash's framework comprises four dimensions: technology, experience, relationships and discourse. These were formulated based on research with Interactive Documentary audiences and Nash suggested her own epistemology/methodology (presented in Chapter 5), which I did not follow considering that the emphasis of my research is on pedagogy and my participants were young people who created interactive documentaries, but were also placed in the position of the audience in Video Elicitation interviews.

Nash's four dimensions were adapted to fit with the project's aims and scope, as these were not only relevant to the interactive documentaries that the young people created, but also emerged as important aspects of the educational process and context which made the films possible. In discussing the dimension of relationships, Nash foregrounds the communicative dynamic of interactive documentaries and how audiences are positioned in relation to the documentary content (2014a: 56). The relational dimension which emerged from this research, however, focuses on the relationships that developed among participants, between researcher and participants and also between participants and their interactive documentaries in the context of this research project.

The dimension of technology in Nash's framework concerns the technological features of a documentary (2014a: 53), whereas the technological dimension of this research project concerns the ways in which participants engaged with Interactive Documentary technology and added interactive elements in their documentaries. Nash suggests that the experiential dimension of her framework points to how Interactive Documentary audiences respond to the invitation to participate and what meanings they construct through their engagement (2014a: 58), but I wanted to extend this concept to address young people's understanding of interactivity and to position them as viewers of their own interactive documentaries, exploring their responses through a Video Elicitation interview. Therefore, the dimension of experience in this research is related to participants' engagement with interactivity.

Finally, the dimension of discourse in this project links to how the theoretical discourses of Critical Media Literacy shaped the project, due to the salience of the discursive construction of Critical Pedagogy in this research. Nash argues that the discursive dimension of her framework focuses on the relationship between user actions and the voice of the documentary, in terms of user agency and the rhetorical potential of interaction (2014a: 51). This relationship is not relevant to this research, as the forms of interactivity used in the interactive documentaries that participants made were basic and user actions have minimal effect on the arguments made by the documentaries (discussed in Chapter 6).

Discourse Analysis

As I illustrated in Chapter 2, at the heart of this research, lies an understanding of discourses as "systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes and courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak" (Lessa 2006: para 5), following Lessa's interpretation of Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). The three forms of data collected during fieldwork (participants' interactive documentaries, interviews with participants and researcher's field notes) are treated as discourses, pointing to the suitability of using the method of Discourse Analysis. The interactive documentaries and the interviews of participants are considered to be discourses in the sense that they represent participants' "systems of thoughts" regarding aspects of their lives and how these construct their identities. The interactive documentaries are treated as media texts, following McKee's (2003: 4) argument that "a text is something that we make meaning from". In addition, the field notes are discourses conveying the researcher's "systems of thoughts" and their impact on shaping the researcher's role and position.

I have been somewhat influenced by Gill's (1996) approach to Discourse Analysis, which draws on ideas from all the three traditions of Discourse Analysis (one based on linguistics, one inspired by Post-structuralism and one focusing on the action orientation of discourse), as well from the field of rhetorical analysis; in particular, by following her analytical sequence. My analysis also has links to the body of Discourse Analysis work associated with Post-structuralism, acknowledging the Foucauldian influences and the emphasis on issues of power. Gill picks up on the contested nature of the term "discourse" and identifies at least 57 varieties of Discourse Analysis (1996: 173). I accept the notion that the term "discourse" applies to "all forms of talks and texts, whether it be naturally occurring conversations, interview material, or written text of any kind" (Gill 1996: 174). She attributes four themes to this method: "a concern with discourse itself; a view of language as constructive and constructed; an emphasis upon discourse as a form of action; and a conviction in the rhetorical organisation of discourse" (1996: 174).

At this point, it would be worth considering the compatibility of this method with Ethnography, given the ethnographic influences of this research. Hammersley (2005:

2) argues that the "value of discourse analytic practice is best understood from within a broadly ethnographic orientation". He identifies three approaches to Discourse Analysis: those inspired by Post-structuralism and Foucault, those based on linguistics and those based on social psychology and sociology. Post-structuralism has had on impact on Ethnography as well, through shifting focus to discourse and language:

> More commonly today ethnographers pay closer attention to language people use in the course of what they are doing, and in describing their lives in interviews, with a view to understanding how in some sense they discursively construct the social phenomena that characterise the society to which they belong (Hammersley 2005: 5).

I would agree with Hammersley's (2005: 7) description of the similarities between Ethnography and Discourse Analysis. He suggests that both methods are qualitative with an emphasis on how meaning is constructed and relying on observational and/or interview data. Hammersley refers to a "radical critique" of ethnographic interviews, which "seems to require, in effect, the reconstruction of ethnography into a form that is much more like discourse analysis" (2005: 10) and deconstructs some of the arguments promoting the rejection of the standard uses of interview data in Ethnography. He concludes that although Discourse Analysis cannot replace Ethnography, Discourse Analysis can be used as a valuable resource for ethnographers towards a more detailed analysis of talk and text (2005: 15).

Interestingly, Hook (2001: 521) contends that there is no strictly Foucauldian method of analysing discourse, even though some methods of Discourse Analysis have been attributed to Foucault's work[38]. Hook observes that Foucault's thinking about the methodology of discourse was "complex, difficult, nuanced and, at times, flawed and contradictory" (2001: 543). He suggests that:

[38] This also resonates with Hewett's (2004: 29) discussion of the critiques of Foucault's conceptualisation of power-knowledge: "we can only, apparently, move from one regime of power to another regime of power without any method for which to judge them, or to judge the 'truth' about them".

> (…) the various methodological injunctions prioritised by Foucault can be better accommodated within the ambit of critical genealogical work than they can within any form of discursive analysis that (…) separates itself from the broader analysis of power, the consideration of history, materiality and the underlying conditions of possibility underwriting what counts as reasonable knowledge (Hook 2001: 542).

Hook concludes that Foucault's understanding of discourse is more closely associated with the interplay of knowledge, materiality and power than it is to language. This association stresses the need to consider elements such as historical contextualisation, the socio-political conditions of knowledge and the material effects of discourse. The combination of these conditions leads to a methodological perspective that moves "*in* and *out* of the text" (Hook 2001: 543, italics in original).

Gill (1996) also places emphasis on the contextual nature of Discourse Analysis, which is in line with the wider epistemological underpinnings of this research. She contends that discourse analysts "simultaneously" examine discourses and their interpretive contexts (1996: 176), resulting in "readings of texts and contexts that are warranted by careful attention to detail and lend coherence to the discourse being studied" (Gill 1996: 181). This point refutes some critiques of Discourse Analysis, according to which the language that discourse analysts use is also constructive, as discourse analysts often demonstrate an awareness and reflexivity of all language as being constructed and constructive (Gill 1996: 188). These views influenced the production of this thesis, which pays attention to the socio-political conditions within which the research took place, the positionality of the researcher and the function of discourse as an instrument of power (this function is further discussed in Chapter 6).

In terms of the steps of doing Discourse Analysis, Gill argues that analysis can begin as soon as the transcripts are ready. For this research, I transcribed the interviews which I recorded with participants and I looked at my field notes on Evernote. I also transcribed the audio part of participants' films. Gill suggests that the stage of coding produces categories determined by the questions of interest (179) and that the actual analysis of the data consists of identifying the patterns and functions of discourse

under scrutiny (180). The four dimensions in Nash's framework worked as an initial guide for structuring the data, as I originally organised my data in chronological order under each dimension.

A chronological approach could not address the complexity of the research questions however; therefore, I conducted discourse analysis under each dimension, finding themes which provided a more nuanced understanding of the data. These themes emerged after reading the transcripts and field notes four times, each time having a different dimension in mind. The first reading aimed at highlighting technology-related themes, the second concerned the relational aspects, the third focused on experience/engagement and the fourth placed emphasis on issues of discourse. While reading the transcripts, I was mindful of any unexpected aspects that could emerge and the process of analysing my data was further refined throughout my writing, which provided a form of critical reflective practice. The next stage was the process of interpreting the meanings emerging from the data, which was also refined though writing subsequent drafts of the thematic chapters. Discourse analysts should interrogate their own assumptions and how they usually make sense of things (Gill 1996: 178), a process which turned out be complex for me, as my views on discourses and emancipatory education changed throughout my field work and writing the first drafts of the analysis. The critical reflective practice of (re)writing enabled me to reflect these changes as part of interpreting the data. Reiterating the epistemological underpinnings of this research, according to which knowledge is "provisional, open-ended and relational" (Luke and Gore 1992: 7), it is important to recognise that other ways of interpretation are possible and that my methodological and analytical position provided me with particular perspectives of the data.

The process of interpretation also contributes to the plausibility of this study. Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2014: 89) suggest that plausibility relates to the idea of ensuring quality across the research and to the ways in which data have been managed and interpreted. This point links to issues of generalisability, reliability and validity in Discourse Analysis. Gill (1996: 186) mentions that discourse analysts problematise the idea of producing generalisable results, due to discourse being occasioned and linked to interpretive processes. Similarly, discourse analysts are critical of traditional methods for checking reliability and validity and, instead, they

suggest new ways for ensuring these, going beyond the norm of objectivity. Gill cites Potter (1996b), who points to four considerations for assessing reliability and validity: deviant case analysis, participants' understandings, coherence and readers' evaluations (1996: 187). Based on this fourth consideration, the transcripts of the interviews that were conducted in this research are available for the readers who might wish to make their own interpretations.

Finally, it is worth commenting on the data that did not fit into the themes which emerged from the analysis. It was not possible to address everything that participants mentioned in their interviews or included in their interactive documentaries, therefore I made choices in response to the themes identified as important to the thesis[39]. Some of the themes which I would like to follow up on are considered at the end of the thesis, as avenues for future research.

The following section expands on the ethical issues underpinning this research, by placing particular emphasis on the ethics of working with young people.

3.4 Ethics

Miller et al. (2012: 5) argue that ethics in qualitative research have been accentuated in recent years, due to the rise of digital technologies and their impact on research, creating new ethical questions. These sentiments are echoed by Hammersley and Traianou (2012: 2), who also attribute the increased interest in ethics to new technologies. The authors contend that the nature of qualitative research emphasises the development of close relationships between researchers and participants, so that participants' views can be better understood, and usually locates data collection within "natural" settings, thus creating distinctive ethical problems (2012: 1). The flexible design of qualitative research also makes it hard to plan how ethical issues might be dealt with (Hammersley and Traianou 2012: 7).

As noted in previous sections, the concept of validity is not compatible with critical theory, which informs the epistemology of this research, and the method of Discourse

[39] This was also due to the time constraints in conducting this research and the word limits of this thesis.

Analysis. Instead, the concepts of plausibility and trustworthiness are considered here. In their discussion of ethical considerations in Arts-related research, Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2014: 83) link trustworthiness to the researcher's pursuit of gaining trust, instead of establishing 'truth', and plausibility to establishing quality across the research and "acknowledging that the knower and the known are interlinked and truth(s) is/are negotiated through dialogue" (2014: 89). Plausibility in this research is grounded in interpreting the data, in line with the chosen methods of data collection and analysis which form my researcher's stance towards the evidence. The results of my analysis were critically discussed with my supervisory team, thus addressing trustworthiness. For future research involving participatory practices, it is intended that the analysis will be shared with participants, as an approach to further enhance trustworthiness, in terms of allowing participants to provide feedback on the findings.

Research ethics are essential in Action Research and Ethnography. Stringer (2014: 51) notes that privacy in Action Research is protected by ensuring confidentiality of information. All participants in this research were provided with Informed Consent forms and Participant Information leaflets. These documents can be found in Appendices 2 and 3. Hine (2008: 265) links informed consent to the responsibility of researchers to clearly state the purposes of their research and potential risks to participants, as well as to clarify that participation in the research is voluntary. Alderson (1995: 4) refers to information leaflets, which should contain details about the purpose, methods, timings, anticipated outcomes and risks of the research.

The anonymity of participants in this research has been preserved by allocating fictional names to participants, who were also provided with Information Leaflets explaining in detail what participation entails in order to reduce risks. In addition, I blurred the names of participants on the screenshots from the final documentaries which I used in my thesis. These decisions address beneficence and non-maleficence, which are connected principles in ethics, according to Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2014: 84). Beneficence refers to the balance between the benefits of participants' involvement in the research and any potential risks and non-maleficence to avoiding causing any harm.

Regarding consent, Valentine (1999: 143) discusses the notion that children and young people can only assent to participating in research until the age of 18, implying that there is a qualitative difference between the capacity of children and adults to provide consent. She points out that the knowledge which participants have, and how they use it, is more important regarding consent, which she sees as contextual and relational rather than developmental (1999: 144). Skelton expands on this approach:

> What must remain central is the willing participation of children and young people, their safety and comfort in their participation, respect and recognition of their value to the research, and the need for appropriate strategies of dissemination which ensure there is no harm caused but that there is positive benefit wherever possible (Skelton 2008: 33).

Valentine calls for the need to carefully consider the use of different methodologies when working with children and young people (1999: 150). Although such efforts might contribute to minimising 'adult-ist' approaches in research, there is the risk that such groups of participants might come across as in need of protection, whereas more emphasis should be placed on the similarities that might exist between groups of adults and children. All participants in this research under the age of 18 were asked to sign their own Informed Consent forms, and consent was also obtained through their parents, guardians or carers. This foregrounded the ability of participants to make their own decisions regarding their involvement in the research project, and to withdraw at any time. In addition, this research had to comply with the organisational structure of the youth organisation which hosted the workshops with the participants under 18 years old, according to which participants receive full consent to join their sessions.

All participants were informed that data would be treated as anonymous and confidential. They were also aware that the results of this research exploring the use of Interactive Documentary in the context of Critical Media Education would be published and that their interactive documentaries would be available online. There were no further incentives for participants, apart from participating in a series of documentary workshops and gaining media skills linked to the creation of interactive films. The majority of the participants seemed to enjoy their involvement in the

research and the withdrawal of those participants who did not complete the workshops cycles seemed to be a result of the external circumstances under which fieldwork took place. Whilst participants did not have control to remove any of the content/film/data interpretation, the fact that their anonymity is preserved contributes to minimising potential risks.

Furthermore, Stringer (2014: 49) raises the issues of access and permissions in Action Research, that must be obtained to conduct the research from people in positions of authority. Accessing groups of participants was challenging at the outset of this research[40] and subsequent efforts to undertake fieldwork in collaboration with various organisations in England turned to be more fruitful, albeit complex and time consuming.

With regards to the ethical implications for Educational Ethnography, Pole and Morrison (2003: 150) consider most Educational Ethnographies to relate to degrees of overtness, thus raising the point of the reflexivity on the part of the ethnographer. Research participants construct their own understandings and meanings about the research and the role of ethnographers, which can make research ethically complex. Reflexivity can be grounded on recognition and interpretation of the ways in which the identity of the researcher as "male or female, outsider or insider, youthful or mature", has an impact on the collection and analysis of ethnographic data. From the outset of my fieldwork, participants were aware of my dual role as researcher and educator in the Interactive Documentary workshops. The relationship of trust and respect which was established throughout the workshops (where I took on both roles) benefited the final interview sessions and the process of writing-up (where I took on the researcher's role), as it enabled more insightful understandings.

The final section discusses the ethnographic influences in this study. An ethnographic mindset was deemed useful in order to enhance my observation role as a researcher, which was weakened during the workshops due to my role in leading the sessions.

[40] As I already mentioned, the initial plan for data collection in this research involved conducting fieldwork with high school students in Greece, but this had to change as I did not have permission from the Ministry of Education in Greece.

Reflexivity in this study was articulated in practice through keeping a research journal. Hammersley and Atkinson suggest that reflexivity "has been given increasing attention by ethnographers (…), notably in the production of 'natural histories' of particular studies" (2007: 19).

3.5 Ethnographic influences

A purely ethnographic approach in this research was not possible, as there was no autonomous "Interactive Documentary youth space" prior to this study that I could observe. Instead, this community of participants was created for the purposes of this research. Therefore, the methodology is characterized by an ethnographic sensibility, which pertains to the emphasis on the "shared beliefs, practices, artifacts, folk knowledge, and behaviors" of the groups of participants (Goetz and LeCompte 1984: 2). Educational Ethnography, in particular, influenced this study, as it is an investigative process and approach to studying problems and processes in education, which has an interdisciplinary character, as it has been practiced by researchers from different traditions (1984: 17).

Mills and Morton (2013: 136) illuminate the connections between Ethnography and participatory research and suggest that anthropologists of education have drawn upon the traditions of participatory research and the radical educational tradition of Freire. Freire's approach has influenced educators interested in democratising research and involving young people in the research process. Among educational ethnographers, participatory methods have been used by those committed to Critical Pedagogy. Mills and Morton (2013: 137) refer to the risks of this politicised research, which can oversimplify questions of power and voice, echoing the feminist critique of Critical Pedagogy, which informs this research and is discussed in Chapter 2: Literature Review.

Ethnography's role involves political intervention, as ethnographic research should mobilise its findings to create change in order to be valuable. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 13) discuss Ethnography from a traditional Marxist point of view, according to which the distinction between facts and values is a historical product. The authors connect values with "the human potential that is built into the unfolding of

history" and establish the aims of "a science of society" as setting the basis for action to transform the world. This emphasis on Ethnography's political intervention aligns well with the PAR approach. The transformative potential of this study refers to the changes that were observed in the groups of participants after the interventions. It also refers to the researcher's changed perceptions of the theoretical discourses of Critical Pedagogy and Interactive Documentary, which need to be reconfigured in order to address some of the complexities and limitations that such approaches might entail.

While designing my fieldwork, I provisionally triangulated the data, which I collected, by collecting three different forms of data, namely the interactive documentaries created by the young people themselves, the interviews with the young people and my own research journal. These three types of data were chosen in order to enable a more nuanced understanding of the interventions and to contribute towards adding consistency to the findings, acknowledging that there is not one right answer to the research questions. For example, my field notes were used to illuminate aspects of the interventions which were not visible to participants, and were analysed in conjunction with participants' interviews and their documentaries. Cousin (2009: 114) comments on the suitability of Ethnography to test and extend theory, which emerges from the data, and on the principle of triangulation, which enables ethnographers to make more substantial claims (Cousin 2009: 114).

A reflexive approach to the interpretation of the data was at the heart of this research. The notion of reflexivity has been associated with Ethnography and its relevance to my research will be outlined next.

Reflexivity

In their discussion of reflexive research, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009: 9) link reflexivity to bringing attention to how "linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written". Reflexivity is supported by interpretation and reflection. Interpretation foregrounds the awareness of the theoretical assumptions and the pre-understandings which shape research. Reflection is defined as a "critical self-exploration" of the researcher's interpretation of empirical

data (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2009: 9). A “critical self-exploration” in this study was approached through an exploration of how the ramifications of my fieldwork in terms of technology, relationships, experience and discourse shaped my role as researcher and educator.

In terms of Ethnography, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 15) argue that the notion of reflexivity suggests that socio-historical locations shape the orientations of researchers. The production of knowledge by researchers might have implications on political and practical levels and it has the potential to change the character of the situations that were studied. Similarly, Delamont (1992: 8) sees research as a series of interactions and good research as related to the interrelationship of the investigator with the respondents. She concludes that researchers are the best data collection instruments, as long as they are self-conscious about their role, interactions and empirical material (1992: 9).

This study also acknowledges the researcher’s presumptions and the impact of various theoretical discourses in designing this research. In order to promote reflexivity, I kept a research journal throughout my fieldwork. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 151) suggest that analytic notes may be incorporated in the form of the fieldwork journal or diary, which provides an account of how research is conducted. The ethnographer’s personal feelings and involvement should be also included in the journal, due to their analytic importance. The fieldwork journal can enable the transformation of “private response into potential public knowledge”.

I recorded all the workshop sessions on an iPad and I also took pictures of the participants working together. The iPad recordings and the pictures provided a valuable record, as they allowed me to go back and reflect on the educational process. Due to my dual role as researcher and educator during the workshops, the recordings enabled me to observe participants’ responses more thoroughly. After each workshop, I created field notes using Evernote. Evernote provided a flexible means of recording these notes, because it is web based and can be accessed from various devices. I created separate notebooks for each of the cycles and added notes for each of the workshops, incorporating pictures of the participants in action. Evernote also allowed me to share my field notes easily, as it provides public links for each notebook.

According to Ladner (2014: 65), there are disadvantages with using Evernote, such as the non-hierarchical organisation of notes and the absence of data visualisation, but these did not seem to obstruct the process of keeping notes during my fieldwork.

During the period of conducting fieldwork, I also engaged in verbal reflexivity with my supervisory team. This reflexive response enabled me to take a step back from my educator's role and address the limitations that came up during fieldwork. For example, when Mozilla announced the withdrawal of the Popcorn Maker, I discussed this with my supervisors and then researched different tools that enabled adding interactivity without the need of coding skills, in order to replace the Popcorn Maker.

Participants were also encouraged to share their reflexive responses throughout the workshops, which were based on dialogue, and the final interview sessions. Whilst I did not explicitly share my reflective notes with participants, these notes contributed to shaping the themes for the interviews, which were also designed to promote the exchange of ideas.

Finally, Pole and Morrison (2003: 103) argue that reflexivity should inform research design from the selection of topics to writing up and dissemination of findings and that it connects ethnographic analysis with the final analysis as ethnographic text. The analytic stance that this research adopts is considered next.

Summary

A qualitative multi-method approach was considered suitable for conducting this research, due to its complex interpretive nature and its grounding in the lived experiences of people (Marshall and Rossman 2011: 2). The use of qualitative methods enabled a flexible research design for exploring nuances of meaning and for addressing the research questions, which revolve around the technological, relational, experiential and discursive dimensions of a series of interventions with young people and the reconfiguration of a Pedagogy of Difference. The epistemology of this research draws on critical theory and Post-structural feminism. These approaches highlight the contextual character of knowledge and the value-mediated nature of inquiry. This epistemology informs the chosen methods for data collection and

analysis, such as interviews and Discourse Analysis, as the knowledge produced in both cases is considered to be contingent and relational.

As this project has been influenced by Critical Pedagogy discourses, which promote a democratic pedagogy aiming at transforming participants and societies, the method of Participatory Action Research (PAR) was deployed. Empowerment is often discussed as one of the main purposes of Action Research, but as this is a contested term, this research foregrounds a more critical understanding of empowerment, as being context-specific. Action Research has been criticised on the grounds that it is political in contrast with other methods focusing more on personal and professional dimensions. This research is in line with the arguments of Carr and Kemmis (2009: 74) that "education is politics conducted by other means" and that Action Research is personal, professional and political. However, implementing a PAR approach was challenging, due to factors such as participants' commitment and limited resources, which will be further analysed in the following chapters.

Visual Research Methods were used within PAR, thus providing an innovative perspective in youth research, based on the analysis of participants' interactive documentaries, contrasted with verbal or written methods which are often deployed. The methods of Video Elicitation and Participatory Video enabled a thorough engagement with participants and aligned with the focus of the research on media production. Taking on board Buckingham's critique of Visual Research Methods, I developed a more reflexive stance towards visual data, through examining these in conjunction with my field notes and combining Video Elicitation with semi-structured interviews.

This research also drew on Educational Ethnography, which aims at producing "rich, descriptive data about the contexts, activities and beliefs of participants in educational settings" (Goetz and LeCompte 1984 :17). These influences enhanced my observation role, focusing on the notion of reflexivity that is central in Ethnography, relying on careful interpretation and reflection. The process of observation during the sessions was hindered due to my dual role as educator and researcher, but reflexivity was promoted through keeping a research journal and engaging in verbal reflexivity with my supervisory team. Throughout the process of conducting and writing up this

research, the researcher's presumptions and the impact of various theoretical discourses were also under scrutiny.

Nash's documentary interactivity framework (2014a) provided a tool for structuring the data, which were analysed using Discourse Analysis. All the forms of data collected during fieldwork are treated as discourses, based on an understanding of discourses as "systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes and courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak" (Lessa 2006: para 5). Hook (2001: 521) suggests that there is no strictly Foucauldian method of analysing discourse, therefore I followed Gill's approach (1996), which draws on the three traditions of Discourse Analysis.

Finally, this chapter illustrated some of the ethical concerns pertaining to this research. Based on good practice outlined in the literature discussing research ethics with young people, I provided participants with Informed Consent forms and Participation Information leaflets. Participants were asked to sign the Informed Consent forms, acknowledging their autonomy as individuals. At the same time, parental consent was obtained, as part of the project was delivered in conjunction with the youth organisation which hosted the workshops with adolescent participants, and therefore its ethical guidelines were respected.

The above-mentioned methodological choices led to the production of the findings that will be discussed in the following chapters. I will start with exploring the relational dimension of the Interactive Documentary workshops of this research, placing emphasis on the relationships which developed between researcher, participants and their interactive documentaries.

SECTION 2: ANALYSIS

Introduction

This section presents my analysis of the research data focusing on the technological, relational, experiential and discursive dimensions of this research. In the previous chapter, I introduced the method that I used for analysing my data, namely the interactive documentaries created by participants, the interviews that I conducted with them and my field notes. I followed the steps of a broad Discourse Analysis approach as suggested by Gill (1996). In this section, I will look at the ways in which participants engaged with Interactive Documentary technology and provide evidence critiquing young people's affiliation with digital technology. I will also consider the relationships which emerged in light of using this technology and expand on the notion of experience, which in this research refers to participants' engagement with interactive documentaries. I will place emphasis on participants' emotional engagement, how they engaged with their own interactive productions and the challenges of engaging young people in emancipatory projects. Finally, I will analyse the continuities and discontinuities that emerged from applying the theoretical discourse of Interactive Documentary and Critical Media Literacy. The challenges of combining an interactive tool with a participatory educational approach point to the need for a more nuanced understanding of pedagogy, which I will outline in the next section.

Chapter 4. Relational Technologies: Empowerment through Positive Interactions

In this chapter, I will present my analysis of how young people engaged with Interactive Documentary technology and I will then discuss the relational aspects of this technology. In order to contextualise my analysis, I will present the affordances of Interactive Documentary (as discussed by Gifreu, 2012; Dovey and Rose, 2012; Aufderheide, 2014; Nash, 2014a), highlighting that there is a scarcity of empirical research on how young people respond to this technology. This chapter also illuminates the ways in which young people's engagement with Interactive Documentary differs from the representation of that engagement in literature celebrating Prensky's (2001) concept of "Digital Natives", thereby critiquing claims regarding young people's affiliation with technology.

In terms of the relational aspects of this technology, I will use Dascal's[41] understanding of a "positive role of mind colonisation" (2009: para 59) in order to enable a broader understanding of the relationship between researcher and participants. Participants in this research developed positive relationships with their peers, evidenced by the interviews which I conducted with them upon completion of the Interactive Documentary workshops, and became more appreciative of the young people they worked with for the creation of their documentaries. Finally, I will provide an interpretation of the interactive documentaries which were created as a result of the workshops, with the aim of illuminating the relationship between participants and their interactive documentaries. This analysis revealed young people's perceptions of music, performance, dance, community and the impact of social media on young people's lives, although participants' choices of themes articulated some of the stereotypical adolescent concerns.

I start by briefly looking at the ways in which Interactive Documentary has been theorised as a relational item/entity, in order to highlight the contribution of this research to Interactive Documentary literature. My research provides empirical data illuminating the interactions between myself as the researcher, the research participants and their interactive documentaries, which occurred in the context of the fieldwork, thus moving towards a more complex understanding of the relational and technical dimensions of Interactive Documentary.

The relational dimension in current Interactive Documentary literature

In discussing the relational dimension in her proposed documentary interactivity framework, Nash (2014a) argues that establishing a communicative dynamic and inviting specific forms of participation serve to position the audience in relation to documentary content. Audiences might find themselves engaging with other individuals, such as other audience members or documentary makers and

[41] Dascal's alternative strategy for "decolonising minds" was introduced in the Literature Review chapter and the links to this study will be further taken up in the Discussion chapter. Dascal's concept of the "positive role of mind colonisation" was deemed useful for this research in terms of my intention to level hierarchies between researcher and researched. This intention was challenging to achieve, as I will outline in this chapter, although this research was based on an emancipatory framework, but the positive aspects of this participatory process were highlighted through establishing a relationship of respect and trust between researcher and participants.

participants, “building relationships that might transcend the project that initiated it” (Nash 2014a: 52). The communicative dynamic is considered within this research in another broad sense, encompassing relationships between the researcher, the participants and their interactive documentaries.

Sandra Gaudenzi (2013) elaborates on interactive documentary as a relational entity that has a life in itself, based on the heterogeneous and interdependent entities that form interactive documentaries, which she clarifies as “humans, machines, protocols, technology, society and culture” (2013: 15). Gaudenzi refers to the political and transformative power of interactive documentary, which she sees as inherent in any relational object, and concludes that by looking at interactive documentary as a relational object, the new dimension of co-emergence of reality comes into play. This research focuses on the potential of interactive documentaries as educational tools, suggesting that more nuanced understandings and concepts of pedagogy are needed for realising their transformative potential (as I will argue in Chapter 7).

Paolo Favero (2013) discusses interactive documentary as a relational item that reconfigures processes of viewing and encourages new, creative and non-linear forms of engagement and interaction between viewers, authors and texts. In light of Web 2.0 principles including participation, sharing and relationality, he suggests that images should be seen as “relational items situated amidst the events, socialness and physicality of actors’ everyday lives” (2013: 261). By looking at specific examples of projects utilising the affordances of Web 2.0, such as *Highrise* (2010) and *18 Days in Egypt* (2011), which make possible the connections between social actors in different locations and connections between individuals and situations surrounding them, Favero contends that interactive documentaries foster “new social relations and new forms of participation in the material, physical and social” aspects of everyday life (2013: 272). This study problematised the forms of participation of young people in a series of educational interventions, aiming at helping them to “become actively involved in their worlds” (Hoechsmann and Poyntz 2012: 112), and also their participation in aspects of their daily lives, as these emerged from their interactive documentaries. The following section elaborates on the analysis of the interactive features that participants used in their documentaries.

4.1 Interactive Documentary technology

Interactive features in participants' documentaries

The interactive documentaries which I examine in this chapter incorporated interactivity using two different approaches to technology, which were both open-source, the RGBD toolkit[42] (KWMC) and Mozilla's interactive video tool, the Popcorn Maker (PYF). The documentary *Social Media Evolution,* in which the Imagineer cycle resulted, is not interactive. The sessions for adding interactivity had to be missed, as Amy, the only participant who attended the editing sessions, started a new job. Amy's documentary is a compilation of images and clips from the Web[43].

RGBD toolkit

The Junior Digital Producers (JDPs) at KWMC used the RGBD toolkit for capturing video in 3-dimensions for filming, in combination with normal cameras. Then, they designed and coded the website which hosts their interactive documentary *The Glowing Divide,* using HTML and CSS[44] languages. One of the KWMC participants, Natalie, illustrated what the audience can do in relation to the content of *The Glowing Divide*; viewers can choose the path through which they follow the story of the three portrayed teenagers and engage with additional data on the issue of social isolation in young people. The JDPs gathered statistics while doing research with young people, which they used to create infographics alongside the videos with the teenagers. The infographics represent data such as the amount of time that young people spend online, gaming, being on Facebook, staying indoors and the reasons for social isolation. Viewers have the option to navigate between the stories of the teenagers and background information on the project, such as more context around the issue of social isolation. The challenges of using the RGBD toolkit are discussed at the end of this section.

[42] The RGBD toolkit is an open-source platform for volumetric filmmaking, which uses a depth sensor attached to a DSLR camera.
[43] Principally due to the fact that she did not manage to record original footage, again due to time constraints.
[44] HTML refers to Hypertext Markup Language for the creation of electronic (hypertext) documents for the Web. CSS refers to Cascading Style Sheets, which is a computer language for formatting instructions in terms of layout and style.

The Popcorn Maker

Regarding the technology used in the PYF films, the Popcorn Maker provided the best solution, as it was a free, open-source, web-based software allowing the creation of interactive stories without the need of a team of developers. The Popcorn Maker was launched in 2011 (Dovey and Rose 2012: 164) and provided users with the freedom to experiment with interactive media using video, audio and images from the Web. The interactive elements, which were available to all users, included text and hyperlinks, images, Google maps, Twitter searches, Wikipedia articles and pop ups with text and annotations. In the case of the PYF Popcorn Maker projects, the majority of the Web elements that participants added to their documentaries were pop ups, which included Web links, thus highlighting the concept of hypertext[45].

The Popcorn Maker was deemed appropriate for the purposes of this research, as it was web-based, easily accessible and simple to use. Most of the participants had no previous filmmaking experience, so the Popcorn Maker seemed to be suitable for introducing them to interactivity. The innovation of the tool lay in enabling interactive video creation without requiring coding skills, thus emphasising its democratising potential.

My decision to use the Popcorn Maker was also anchored in related literature. Dovey and Rose (2012) experimented with the Popcorn Maker shortly after it was released and reflected on their experience in the paper *We're happy and we know it: Documentary: Data: Montage*. The authors were involved in the project *Are you Happy?*, which was inspired by the 1960 documentary film *Chronicle of a Summer* by Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, who asked French people if they were happy. The *Are you Happy?* project investigated the question raised by Rouch and Morin, but in the new context of the World Wide Web. Filmmakers from different parts of the world were invited to reimagine the interview scenes of the documentary and upload their films to Vimeo. The Popcorn Maker was used to enhance these videos with related images

[45] McMillan (2002: 174) defines hypertext as blocks of text and the electronic links that join them.

and text from social media platforms and to "reinscribe the social and cultural context of the interviews" (Dovey and Rose 2012: 167).

Dovey and Rose (2012: 167) praise the simplicity of the tool, which enabled the combination of video editing with adding Web content. They also highlight the potential of the Popcorn Maker for spatial montage, a concept which was developed by Lev Manovich and emphasises the juxtaposition of images within computer screens[46]. Dovey and Rose (2012: 170) conclude by calling for further research on the Popcorn Maker and the use of Web content for stretching the boundaries of documentary. They summarise the advantages of this tool in introducing different voices into a linear text, the in-depth investigation of sequences, recontextualising documentary material, adding evidence and offering new ways of constructing arguments. The authors suggest that new forms of "visual and informational grammar" are needed, towards determining "a new set of understandings of the politics of search" in using content from the Web, in line with the development of new literacies for the attention economy (2012: 170).

Patricia Aufderheide (2014: 247) also refers to the Popcorn Maker and mentions its potential to provide commentary, attribution or other relevant information. She presents the affordances of the Popcorn Maker in the case of the Web documentary project *18 Days in Egypt* (2011). The interactive elements were used to annotate video incorporating various sources from different times, thus ascribing authorship and marking materials chronologically and geographically.

Mozilla's Webmaker

The Popcorn Maker was part of Mozilla's Webmaker, which promotes the Foundation's Web Literacy campaign and focuses on "Teaching the Web", aiming to "help people across the world become informed creators of a free and open web"

[46] According to Manovich (2001: 270), spatial montage "involve(s) a number of images, potentially of different sizes and proportions, appearing on the screen at the same time. This by itself of course does not result in montage; it is up to the filmmaker to construct a logic which drives which images appear together, when they appear and what kind of relationships they enter with each other. Spatial montage represents an alternative to traditional cinematic temporal montage, replacing its traditional sequential mode with a spatial one".

(Mozilla Learning Blog 2016). Mozilla's approach to Web literacy suggests that anyone can create and curate content for the Web, regardless of their skills and background. According to the Mozilla blog (2013), more than 50,000 projects were created on the site by people all around the globe.

Mozilla's mission to make the Web more accessible was problematised by one of the young participants at PYF. Reflecting on whether the Popcorn Maker served as a means to "Teach the Web", Stephanie noted: "Sort of, I don't know, we learned but I can also learn off Internet Explorer and Chrome (…)". Stephanie further supported this view, commenting on whether she could have found and used the tool without tutoring. She pointed out that she would normally use search engines, Chrome and Internet Explorer to find video editing applications and if the Popcorn Maker would not appear in the first results, she would not think of using Mozilla's Firefox browser just to access the tool. This response suggests that given the fact that young people access the Web in multiple pre-determined ways, the implications of choosing a specific browser would not self-evidently make a difference to them.

Although Mozilla foregrounds that their mission is to empower Web users, the democratising aspects of the Popcorn Maker were eventually undermined, as the tool was withdrawn in June 2015, while I was still conducting fieldwork[47]. In email communication that I had with the Director of Development Strategy at Mozilla about this decision, I was informed that the Mozilla Foundation "has narrowed its focus to digital skills and education" and that their focus shifted to putting "resources where they will result in more impact over time". Mozilla released the Popcorn Maker code to their users, in an attempt to encourage the evolution of the Popcorn Maker community, however this could only appeal to users with programming skills. Existing users were advised that the projects which were already created on the Popcorn Maker would still be available online in a read-only capacity (Mozilla Learning Blog 2015). This rationale reinforces the critique of the concept of Digital Natives. If we take into account the assumption that young people are media-savvy, then this need for coding skills should

[47] At the time of writing this chapter, all Popcorn Maker projects created for this research are no longer available online, and the only records exist in AVI format, which I captured using a screen recording software. Participants' response to the withdrawal of the Popcorn Maker is presented in the section 4.2.

have been less a barrier to people engaging with it, than something Digital Natives would be willing to learn in order to realise their digital nature.

Due to the fact that empirical studies on the Popcorn Maker were scarce, and in order to test the technical aspects of the Popcorn Maker before using it in my fieldwork workshops, I conducted a pilot study in 2014, the results of which are presented in the following. Some of the results of this study are aligned with some of the above-mentioned experts' insights (such as the simplicity of the tool and providing more information), but some of the problematic aspects of the Popcorn Maker were also highlighted, pointing to the limitations of this tool.

Popcorn Maker pilot study

For my pilot study, the Popcorn Maker was used by Level One Media Production students at Coventry University in the context of their module 'Creating Impact in Media Production'. Some of these students participated in a focus group interview[48], discussing different aspects of their experience using the Popcorn Maker. The students were invited to experiment with different media platforms for the needs of the module, thus becoming familiar with the latest advancements in the field of new media. One of their tasks was to create interactive documentaries of no longer than four minutes using the Popcorn Maker. The students, who took part in this pilot study, are anonymised here. It is worth noting that Level One Media Production students are on a course where they expect to encounter new technologies and where they have tutors, so any views they express about the efficacy of the Popcorn Maker need to take that into account.

Overall, the students described their experience using the Popcorn Maker as useful, although they thought that parts of the process were frustrating. They summarised the main disadvantages of the tool in limited capability, as there is no undo or autosave function. The application kept crashing not only during the tutorial session but also when the students were trying to complete the tasks at home. As a result, some

[48] This pilot study aimed to solely explore the technical aspects of the Popcorn Maker, and did not deploy the methods used for data collection. The method of focus groups was chosen as more suitable to explore issues related to the Popcorn Maker within the students' group context.

students lost their projects and had to start from the beginning, thus discouraging them from further using the software. These flaws were attributed to the fact that the Popcorn Maker was an early-stage software. This result of the pilot study raised my awareness of potential risks to their work, in terms of the software crashing, so throughout my fieldwork I made sure to remind the participants of regularly saving their projects.

The biggest advantage of the tool was considered to be the fact that it was web-based, and so anyone with a computer and internet access could use it. One of the students suggested launching a downloadable version, as this would allow users to link all projects in one file. The simplicity of the tool was also emphasised, as it reminded the students of basic editing techniques (dragging and dropping). This result reinforced the suitability of the tool for the participants in my research, given that their editing experience ranged from limited to non-existent.

In addition, at the start of the Popcorn Maker tutorial, the students were asked to remix a video of a user's Top-5 Nintendo games and to create their own Top-5 list of their favourite things. This task was designed in order to introduce the students to the interface and interactive features of the Popcorn Maker. The students found this task useful and "similar to making a documentary in a way". Based on this pilot study, I used the same task for the Popcorn Maker tutorial, which I delivered to participants in the workshops at PYF, acknowledging however the differences in the two groups.

Regarding using the Popcorn Maker in future workshops, the students suggested including more information on how to insert videos in the Popcorn Maker and how to solve any problems that could come up. They also suggested showing examples of Popcorn Maker clips before being asked to make their own interactive films, so that they can have a better idea of the final look of their interactive projects. This could help with avoiding misunderstandings, as relying on examples of more professional documentaries that use more sophisticated interactive technology could result in creating wrong impressions about the possibilities of Popcorn Maker films. I did take the students' suggestion on board, and I used some Popcorn Maker clips in the introductory workshops of my fieldwork, in order to provide participants with a better understanding of what their final documentaries could look like.

In general, the students agreed that the Popcorn Maker taught them about interactive documentaries, as they had never experienced them before. They also identified the problems with the process of creating, but not of viewing a Popcorn Maker video. After engaging with Popcorn Maker videos as viewers, they thought that from the point of view of the user, a Popcorn Maker video was successful, as viewers could interact with the final product and learn at their own pace.

Introducing the Popcorn Maker at the PYF

Participants at PYF were introduced to the Popcorn Maker through a tutorial workshop. I was planning to start the workshop with a Popcorn Maker activity/exercise, which aimed to encourage participants to remix one of their previous tasks. That task prompted participants to record interviews with someone they considered to be important and upload these to YouTube, but none of the participants responded to that, therefore I had to skip the activity. This point links to the critiques of Prensky's concept of Digital Natives, and is further discussed in the section 4.6.

In the tutorial session, I also rehearsed some of the potential problems that could occur with using the Popcorn Maker (which emerged from the pilot study with first year Media Production students), and I advised the participants to save their projects frequently. Then, the young people started using the computers in the room in order to experiment with the Popcorn Maker. The Popcorn Maker was designed to run on Mozilla Firefox browsers, which was not installed on the computers, so I downloaded it just before the start of the session, which was fairly easy to do.

The young people were asked to create their Top-5 list of anything (actors, bands, cars etc.), based on the task used in the pilot study. They all engaged well with the platform, and started changing the text and pictures of the original project, showing enthusiasm about creating an interactive clip with things that interested them. Most of them did not manage to finish their Top-5 projects before the end of the session, as we ran out of time, however they seemed to enjoy their first experience with the Popcorn Maker, leaving the session with a good understanding of how it worked.

Participants' engagement with the Popcorn Maker in terms of their interactive documentaries will be discussed in the following.

Acknowledging audiences

Participants' choices of interactive elements reflected an awareness of their potential audiences and were based on enabling communication between the makers and the audiences. Judy and Oliver created the documentary *Music in our Generation*, which is 1.57 minutes long and concerns music as perceived by young people today. The interactive elements are links to the documentary participants' YouTube channels, as well as a link to PYF's website. The young people who are interviewed by the documentary makers talk about how music can bring everyone together and some of them perform in front of the camera. The makers included parts of a dance performance in the film, as well as showing a young person playing the guitar.

Judy and Oliver found interactive documentaries to be more engaging and interesting than traditional documentaries, which they mainly associated with television documentaries. For Judy, the Web links in the former contributed to making available a wealth of information:

> If there is a part of the documentary that you want to focus on, say there is a link, to get more information, you can click on the link, get more information and go back and focus on a different part, so you gain more (Judy, Video Elicitation interview).

For Oliver, the links served as a way for the audience to find out more about the people portrayed in the documentary. His film, *Music in our Generation*, provides links to the YouTube channels of the young people who appear in the documentary.

> Without these links, we wouldn't have anything interactive in the video, it would just be a documentary. It gets people to, (…), want to know who these people are, but without these links it would be kind of hard to find these people. But then if you just have the link, you just click on it and it's there straight away (Oliver, Video Elicitation interview).

Stephanie and Michelle made the interactive documentary, *What You Sayin'?*, which was inspired by PYF. The film is 6.27 minutes long and the Popcorn Maker interactive elements are all links to the YouTube songs, which were used throughout the film. The interviews are intercut with extracts from a dance class and an "open mic" session. At the end of the film, all the people portrayed in the documentary say "thank you" to PYF for the help and support they had received.

Stephanie also thought that interactive documentaries were more interesting than traditional ones, as they provide more information through the various links. Michelle noted that the web-based element of the Popcorn Maker could be a disadvantage, as "not everybody can have the Internet". The two participants justified their choice of interactive elements in their documentary, on the basis that they aimed to enable the audience to identify the songs that they used. The young makers also showed an awareness of ethical considerations in using the Web. Stephanie mentioned that when she added the captions with people's names in the documentary, she was thinking about adding their social media accounts too. She decided not to do that in the end, as it would be "a bit too far", and she thought that just knowing who these people are was sufficient. This reticence suggests Stephanie's acknowledgement of the blurred boundaries between "private" and "public" on the Internet, and her concern not to invade someone's privacy.

The final interactive documentary of the first PAR cycle was *Passion and Inspiration* by Emily and Alexandra. The duration is 10.57 minutes. The interactive elements of the documentary are pop ups, showing how the makers feel about performance, which appear on the screen while a dance class is taking place. Emily also added YouTube links, "for music and then videos" and felt that the Popcorn Maker enabled her to use "pop ups and text and everything". The film talks about performance and how young people express themselves through dancing and singing. Towards the end of the film, two young people perform a song by artist Corinne Bailey Rae[49]. The makers decided to end the documentary with a YouTube clip, showing the artist's live performance of this song.

[49] Corinne Bailey Rae is a British singer, songwriter, record producer and guitarist.

Emily and Alexandra showed an understanding of their audience too. For example, Emily said that, at the end of the documentary, they decided to add the original song from YouTube, so that the audience could identify that song that she and another participant were singing in the previous clip. She also pointed out that they had to think about their decisions while editing so that people would not get bored watching it. For Emily, the interactive elements allowed their audience to interact with them as new makers of the documentary.

> Well, we have our video, our documentary but then we are being allowed to get links off YouTube for music and then videos and we can put pop ups and text and everything, onto our documentary to then make it interactive documentary, so that people, our audience, are interacting with us through all of those things (Emily, Video Elicitation interview).

Alexandra explained that the use of pop ups in their documentary served as a means of self-expression and allowed them to talk about their passions, why they dance or sing, as well as show how they feel about performance. This use of the Popcorn Maker for expressing participants' feelings emerged from this research and is not discussed in relevant literature. In one of the pop ups, Emily wrote: "Performing for me is a positive release for the stresses of everyday life" (Figure 5).

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Figure 5: Pop up in Alexandra's and Emily's documentary

This pop up reveals the perceived benefits of performance from Emily's perspective, who experiences performing as a form of stress relief. Alexandra shared the same feelings about performance in another pop up: "Performance to me is a way to show passion, it is my way to show who I really am. also it is really fun ☺". The content of this interactive element suggests that performance provides a means for Alexandra to express her true identity, while doing something that she finds enjoyable. Promoting such positive feelings about performance also served as a vehicle for Alexandra to challenge some of the stereotypes characterising young people. Alexandra felt that young people can be "passionate and proud" about doing things they love, in contrast with views on young people being disorderly. This intention to subvert stereotypes is further analysed in this chapter.

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Figure 6: Pop up in Alexandra's and Emily's documentary

Overall, Emily acknowledged the advantages of the fact that the Popcorn Maker was web-based, enabling users to enhance their clips with Web content. Although she considered her experience with the Popcorn Maker to be difficult (further discussed in the section 4.2), she thought that there is a future for Interactive Documentary, as people would be more keen to add interactivity using Web elements in their videos, due to technology advancements. Regarding taking this knowledge forward, Alexandra suggested that they could help each other in making a new interactive video, using the Popcorn Maker to "add different videos, add different music, get a few people involved in it". She also mentioned the usefulness of the tool in creating posters or presentations for school. Stephanie also thought that she could use the Popcorn Maker as a tool for creating posters and videos at school, especially for IT subject which she chose for her GCSE exams. Interestingly though, Stephanie mentioned in our follow-up interviews that she did not use the Popcorn Maker again after the workshops. This was possibly due to the fact that participants associated this tool with people "who like making videos", and they did not relate to being "filmmakers" - they were not used to creating media in their everyday life before the workshops. This point strengthens the critique of the "Digital Natives" discourse. Solely engaging with a technological platform is not sufficient for transforming young people's understanding

of themselves as makers, other factors are also required such as having something to say.

The second cycle of PAR at PYF resulted in the interactive documentary *What does the community mean to you?,* which is 3.24 minutes long and explores the understandings of community that young people have. John, who made this interactive documentary, moved to Australia shortly after the end of the project, so it was not possible to record a Video Elicitation interview with him, although I emailed him a few times about arranging an interview over Skype, to which he never replied. As John had some previous editing experience, he found the editing software (Wondershare Fantashow) easy to use. He also noted that the Popcorn Maker was an interesting tool to use.

John combined original interviews with other young people with an animation video and clips from YouTube, discussing people's views of community. He used two interactive elements. The first one is a Google map of Coventry which he incorporated in a panning shot of Coventry and the second is a pop up including a link to PYF website. The caption invites users to "get into the community", which in the eyes of John is represented by PYF. John's decision to address the users through captions suggests that he was also aware of his potential audiences.

Technical constraints

It is worth noting some of the technical problems which emerged from the implementation of technology in the fieldwork workshops, and how these influenced participants. These technical constraints pertained to the use of Wondershare Fantashow, the software for the initial editing of the documentaries at PYF, and the RGBD toolkit at KWMC.

I chose Wondershare Fantashow for my fieldwork at PYF as it provides a free and simple tool for image editing, again taking into account participants' limited editing experience. PYF participants were introduced to Wondershare Fantashow in a tutorial workshop. The young people found the steps to be straightforward and some of their

questions concerned basic actions, such as trimming clips and adding music files, which they would mostly need to do as part of their own projects.

The editing sessions in the first PYF cycle went smoothly for two of the three groups, and participants in these groups managed to successfully upload their films to YouTube, thus being able to start remixing their documentaries on the Popcorn Maker. One group, however, had some problems with exporting their project from Wondershare Fantashow to the PYF laptop, as an error message appeared, indicating that there was not enough disk space on the temporary folder directory for saving the project. The youth workers at PYF had given system administrator rights to an external IT company, so the problem with exporting the projects from Wondershare was finally resolved by the IT company technician. This problem came up in the second PAR cycle at PYF, and this time it could not be resolved. One of the participants, Kevin, installed Wondershare on his laptop and started editing at home, but we were unable to view his project either on my laptop or on the PYF laptop. Ultimately, only one participant, John, finished editing his documentary, as mentioned above.

These technical difficulties discouraged participants, who started skipping sessions, in combination with the fact that it was school exams period for the young people. Participants' responses to the technical problems suggest that the young people did not persist in overcoming the challenges that arose as part of their learning process, demonstrating a preference for more instant results. Developing young people's resilience in their learning is worth further investigation, although a more in-depth investigation of the construct of resilience is outside the scope of this research.

The JDPs at KWMC also faced some technical constrains while making *The Glowing Divide*. The RGBD toolkit was used to create the 3D effect in some of the shots (Figure 7). This was achieved through the use of a depth sensor which was attached to a DSLR camera. Natalie, one of the participants at KWMC commented on the problems they experienced with using the RGBD toolkit software to manipulate images:

> We tried to film every scene as well as on a normal camera but sometimes it wasn't practical, but we did try to use the footage wherever we could.

> The editing software for that was kind of in Beta mode so it would keep crashing a lot, we tried installing it in different places and it was a bit of a nightmare so I think we would have used more footage of that (…), if we could work the software better, which just had to do with what we could manage without crashing (Natalie, follow up interview).

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Figure 7: 3-D effect using the RGBD toolkit

The problems that Natalie describes point to the difficulties of incorporating open-source Interactive Documentary technology, due to the glitches of such early-stage software. As discussed in the Popcorn Maker pilot study section, the Popcorn Maker also crashed. Such constraints are not addressed in Interactive Documentary literature, but should be and need to be acknowledged in designing Interactive Documentary practices as part of community-based programmes. The challenges of using the RGBD toolkit created anxiety for the participants at KWMC, which will be further addressed in Chapter 5.

In addition, Alfred from KWMC talked about the difficulties that the JDPs faced with structuring the website. Alfred acknowledged that most of the time they were not sure about what they were doing and they had difficulties with interpreting the brief which was set to them (creating an interactive documentary). As James, one of the JDPs added, experiencing the website from the audience's point of view was challenging

because they were involved in making it, and therefore they knew how the documentary was structured. The JDPs received some feedback on the initial design of the website, which they found useful, as it gave them the idea to add a map in order to enable navigation through the website.

Nancy from KWMC further observed that the infographics were “tricky” to use and that they could not use gifs as they were “bad”, (suggesting that they were not of an acceptable visual standard). Time was also a limitation for the JDPs, as they had to build the website in parallel with filming and doing other tasks and many times they had to change the order of the scenes. The next section moves on to explore participant’s wider engagement with the Web, such as issues of copyright and the impact of social media.

4.2 Young people’s engagement with the Web

Lack of engagement with blog tasks

Technology played a key role in the design of my workshops at PYF. All lesson plans were posted on a password-protected blog (https://idocworkshops.wordpress.com/). The blog provided a flexible tool for teaching, as I could easily access it from anywhere and share all resources with the participants. Added to this, I was hoping to create a platform that the participants could interact with through weekly tasks, but this idea did not seem to work in practice. Although I encouraged participants in the first cycle of PAR at PYF to use the blog in order to write comments and upload their tasks online, participants neglected completing the tasks for each session and posting them on the blog. For example, one of the weekly tasks concerned writing a report on the differences between interactive and traditional documentaries and posting it on the blog. Only one of the participants responded to this task, Michelle, by creating a drawing which sketched out these differences, and gave it to me on paper, instead of uploading it online (Figure 8). This response to the blog tasks is contextualised in literature critiquing the concept of ‘Digital Natives’ in section 4.6.

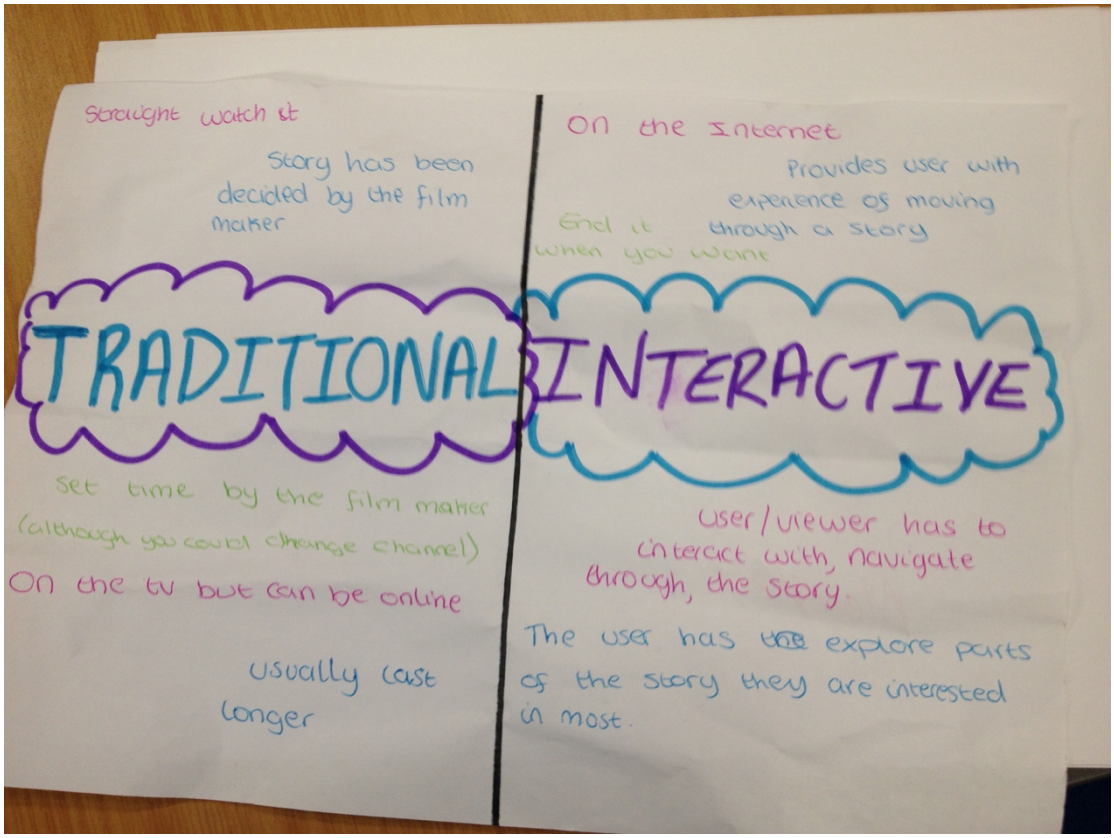

Figure 8: Michelle's drawing on the differences between traditional and interactive documentaries

Moreover, as I already mentioned, in one of the sessions, the participants were assigned to record an interview with someone they considered important and upload it to YouTube. The purpose of this task was to familiarise the young people with YouTube, as they had to upload their final documentaries to this platform, before importing the films in the Popcorn Maker and adding interactive elements. None of the participants responded to that task either. These instances demonstrated the inefficacy of this element, so I decided to remove the weekly tasks from the lesson plans. This lack of engagement with the blog illustrates that the young people might not prefer to use online platforms for learning/educational purposes, whilst they rely on them for social networking, thus suggesting that young people's experience with technology is not uniform, as discussed in the section 4.6.

The impact of social media on participants' perceptions of filming

Another aspect which emerged regarding participants' engagement with the Web concerns the association of their understanding of filming with mobile phone devices

and of editing with social media platforms. In the fourth session of the first PAR cycle with PYF participants, I asked participants about their previous filming and editing experience. Stephanie wondered if that would include "weddings and Snapchat videos", Instagram videos and videos of themselves. When I positively replied to her, she smiled and said "That's me!". Emily also mentioned making Vine videos. Ultimately, all participants agreed that they had done some sort of recording on their phones and that they would prefer to use their phones for filming. The laptops that would be used for editing were provided by PYF.

These responses illustrate the ubiquity of devices, such as mobile phones, and social media platforms in young people's everyday lives, and how these have transformed their perspectives about filming and editing practices. Whereas such practices are normally associated with cameras and video editing software programmes, the young participants in this research highlighted the enactment of these practices through mobile applications and social media such as Snapchat and Instagram. Social media also pertained to the interactive elements that participants added to their documentaries using the Popcorn Maker, as illustrated in the previous section.

Web authorship/copyright

In discussing the issue of the reliance of the Popcorn Maker on the Web with Stephanie and Michelle, the young people expressed their views on the "openness" of the Web. These participants chose a Jay-Z[50] song from YouTube for the opening of their interactive documentary *What You Sayin'?*. This clip was subsequently removed from YouTube due to copyright issues. As *What You Sayin'?* was already published on the Web, the opening of the online version of the documentary was muted due to the removal of the YouTube music clip. Michelle thought that this was "annoying", because the process of timing the song and synchronising it to the dance routine was painstaking. In the first interview session, Stephanie was positive about the Popcorn Maker, but this update led her to become more sceptical regarding the affordances of the tool:

[50] Jay-Z is an American rapper.

> I like the Popcorn Maker, but the fact that it's so reliant on places like YouTube is frustrating because things like that can happen, it's just annoying (Stephanie, follow up interview).

I explained that this problem was inevitable due to the ephemeral nature of the Internet and the technology of the Popcorn Maker. When I asked the young people if they would prefer traditional to interactive documentaries in light of this, Stephanie commented that she would prefer interactive but if she had the chance to do it again, she would be more cautious and back up everything in order to minimise the risk of losing her materials. Michelle said that she preferred traditional documentaries, which links to her lack of affinity with technology.

Regarding Popcorn Maker's remix button and the potential of other Popcorn Maker users to remix their interactive documentary without asking for their permission, Stephanie was in favour of protecting copyright:

> I feel like copyright should always be applied. You know when you're trying to take something off YouTube or you use something you have to ask for permission most of the time. As creators, I feel like they should ask for permission. It's cool and it's not like we are going to say no, it's nice if you're using our clip (Stephanie, follow up interview).

Michelle also wondered why anyone would want to remix their project. I positioned this approach in the context of remix culture and the openness of the Web, which provides users with more freedom compared to broadcast media. Both participants expressed scepticism about the idea of Web remixing without the maker's permission, as the purposes of the original project could be distorted and authorship could be lost. They argued that they made their documentary for "positive purposes", in order to encourage other people to join PYF, whereas another user could repurpose it in a negative way.

Finally, when I informed the participants that the Popcorn Maker was withdrawn, and that their projects could no longer be remixed by other users, Stephanie and Michelle

agreed that this would only affect people who make videos and that makers would be able to use other applications for editing and interactive storytelling.

The above-mentioned frustration stemming from participants' experience with the Popcorn Maker not only shows a more critical understanding of the tool after the process of the workshops, but also reinforces the critique of theories taking young people's affinity with technology for granted, especially such as Prensky's concept of 'Digital Natives' (2001a, 2001b), alongside studies critiquing the concept and how it developed (Bennett et al., 2008; Kennedy et al., 2008a; Koutropoulos, 2011). Stephanie's dismay aligns with these studies, as throughout her engagement with the Popcorn Maker, she became disenchanted with it, despite her young age. The final section of this chapter expands on the critique of Prensky's 'Digital Natives'.

In the following, I will focus on another aspect of technology with regards to young people, that of its influence on social isolation in young people, which is also under-researched. The impact of technology on social isolation is further discussed in the sections concerning the dimension of relationships.

Technology's impact on social isolation

Literature arguing in favour of "Digital Natives" disregards some of the negative consequences deriving from young people's dependence on technology. The data that the KWMC participants collected from young people in local schools and colleges showed that there was an increasing reliance on technology. Melissa, one of the KWMC participants, emphasised that the majority of the people they did research with would prefer to contact their friends online than going out. Nancy from KWMC followed up on this:

> Ella (…) said she finds it scary if the Internet did not exist, maybe it would push you to go outside because there was no alternative, if you can't turn off your computer and you're still managing to talk to people you think you're not missing out much (Nancy, Video Elicitation interview).

Helen from KWMC suggested that one of the challenges that they set to the teenagers portrayed in the documentary was designed based on this evidence, which illuminated the dependence of teenagers on technology. This challenge invited the teenagers who participated in the documentary to disconnect from social media for five days and to keep a video diary expressing their feelings and thoughts. For their video diaries, the teenagers talked directly to the camera, which was like "second nature to them", as one of the KWMC project coordinator noticed. It is also worth noting that one of the teenagers, Kyle, managed to spend only two out of five days without playing video games. Kyle's dependence on gaming had a clear impact on his life, as he preferred to interact with this friend online, compared to socialising with them outdoors.

These findings paint a complex picture of young people's relationship with technology, thus contributing to literature examining this relationship. Some young people in this research felt confused and unconfident with using technology. The different levels of confidence that young people demonstrated link to how their use of technology is normalised within their usual social context. Whilst some of them used technology for recording or for just sharing their views, purposefully creating a meaningful text seemed to be outside their experience. Also, data collected for the KWMC project pointed to the negative impact of extreme use of technology on young people's lives, seen as one of the main reasons for social isolation. The next sections focus on the relational aspects of Interactive Documentary, starting with the relationship between researcher and researched.

4.3 Relationships between researcher and participants

Qualitative research considerably relies on building good interpersonal relationships between researcher and participants[51], therefore in working with each group of participants for a period of approximately two months, I tried to develop good interpersonal relationships with the young people.

[51] According to Guillemin and Heggen (2009: 292), building rapport is necessary for methodological and ethical rigour. In addition, Bergold and Thomas foreground the importance of establishing collaborative and participatory research on a basis of trust: "this trust must be allowed to develop; it builds on long-term, honest relationships that are characterised by closeness, empathy, and emotional involvement" (2012: para 47).

In this section, I will deploy Dascal's (2009) alternative strategy for decolonising minds[52] as a means for approaching the relationship between researcher and researched in this project. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a full account of decolonisation theories critiquing colonialism, Dascal's strategy provides a useful tool for envisioning the development of positive relationships in emancipatory educational projects. Dascal placed emphasis on the positive aspects of "mind colonisation" as a condition for thought:

> Colonising each other's minds can indeed be conceived as a condition for thought in so far as it refers to the depth rather than to the superficiality involved in knowledge building communication – a depth that reflects respect rather than contempt for each other, trust rather than suspicion (Dascal 2009: para 59).

Building trust and respect

The following example illustrates the potential of Dascal's positive role of mind colonisation, as this was enacted in the first PAR cycle at PYF. In the fourth session, the young people were involved in a lively conversation, expressing concerns about manifestations of police violence and about signs of inequality in their school life. One of the participants sparked the conversation by commenting on the death of a black teenager, who was shot by a police officer in 2014. The youth worker, who was also attending the session, mentioned the riots of 2012 and condemned the behaviour of some groups of people, who used violence to retaliate for the police killing of a black person. Some of the participants then raised concerns about another case of police violence against a black person and also commented on some experiences from their school life, which they considered to be indications of racism.

In my field notes regarding this session (see Appendix 4), I wrote: "I considered this to be a good start for the session, as the participants felt comfortable with expressing their opinions about issues that concern their society, in a way that I would like them to express themselves in their interactive documentaries too". Revisiting my field notes

[52] The process of "colonisation of the mind" has been linked to the writings of Afro-Carribean psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon (1925-1961). Fanon expressed his anti-colonial position in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), in which he provides an analysis of the violence that colonisation brought "into the mind and into the home of the native" (1961: para 37).

afterwards, I felt that my aspiration to raise participants' "critical consciousness" of possible sources of "oppression", and to involve them in some kind of political filmmaking that could derive from this, operated in a way similar to mind colonisation, in the sense that this aspiration was rooted in my own understanding of what "liberation" from "oppression" means. The result of the two cycles of PAR at PYF, four documentaries about music, dance/performance and being part of a community, represented vital moments in the young people's lives and articulated some of their concerns, but in ways which were different from my expectations. This experience contributed to establishing a more nuanced communication between researcher and researched and in subsequent cycles I made an effort to detach myself from my preconceptions.

Respect and trust were also cultivated throughout the workshops, as participants felt at ease with talking about personal issues. In the Imagineer cycle, Claire was open about expressing her experiences of being socially isolated and considered sharing these experiences in her documentary. Two other participants, Jane and Amy, often talked about their young sons and their concerns in relation to the impact of social media on young people's lives, which they intended to illustrate in their documentary. Amy decided to talk about her son and younger brother in the voice-over of her documentary too, referring to their experiences with learning from iPads and interactive boards and with social media, which made the narration more personal. One of the other groups, that of David and George, were considering to make a documentary about the ways in which their experience at Imagineer has been transformative for them. I asked David how this would connect to this topic of social isolation, which was the theme for this cycle, and he said that when he first joined Imagineer, he was an introverted person but he gradually started interacting with people and, due to this experience, felt more comfortable in talking to others.

These accounts of the young people were encouraged through creating a welcoming and respectful learning environment, which I tried to develop in every workshop. It is worth noting that I was not able to support participants with regards to all the range of feelings which they expressed throughout my fieldwork, such as Claire's anxiety regarding making her documentary, as this would require an expertise that I did not possess (further discussed in Chapter 5). Such instances potentially required offering

psychological support to participants which surpassed my role and made me realise the challenges that researchers might face while working with vulnerable people. Throughout conducting this research, I realised the difficulties of pursuing authentic participation and the boundaries of the role of the researcher. Although my role was not to help participants with their problems, I tried to be as supportive as possible throughout our interactions in the workshops, so that all participants felt that their views were valued.

Additionally, eradicating the power imbalance between researcher and participants was not entirely possible, due to the fact that participants were aware of the research context of the project and the purposes of conducting the workshops for my doctoral research. In one of the Imagineer editing sessions, Amy said that she was nervous about recording the voice-over, as she was thinking about the outcome of the project: “it’s me but I needed to sound good because you want it to sound effective, like to mean something to someone who wants to listen to it”. Amy’s anxiety to “sound effective” was linked to her awareness of the purposes of this research and to her wish not to disappoint me, in terms of how she would share her experience for this research. I emphasised that her narration was powerful, as it was a genuine testimony of a young person talking about experiencing social media, and that she did not have to change anything. Then, we rehearsed the voice-over several times before recording it. At first, Amy was rather hesitant about scripting and narrating the voice-over for her documentary, as she thought she was not very good at writing. In the end, she was pleased with both the voice-over narration and the final edited film and she became more confident, which attests to a transformative potential of the workshops.

My relationship with Amy was gradually transformed, as our communication moved beyond the focus of making the documentary to talking about more personal issues towards the end of the workshops. As Amy was the only person who attended the editing sessions, we got to know each other better and started building rapport. The issue of young peoples’ dependency on technology, which was the topic of her documentary, made Amy think and talk about when she was younger. She commented that she used to spend a lot of her time with her friends, being outdoors, instead of relying on the social media platforms that were available at the time. In the last session, Amy asked questions about my personal life. I was about to travel to Greece

for a few days after the session, so she asked me about my life in Coventry, if I had made friends and if I was happy to go home. This was the last time that I saw Amy, as after my return, she had found a job and she was unable to participate in further sessions, due to time constraints. The above-mentioned examples, however, illustrate the importance of building good interpersonal relationships with participants, rooted in principles such as trust and respect. They also provide evidence of the dialogical process which I aimed at through conducting participatory research with young people, enabling forms of communication which sometimes expanded beyond my researcher's/facilitator's role and the process of capturing data.

The friendly atmosphere which was established in most of the workshops, particularly in the PYF and KWMC cycles, also had positive effects on the relationships which developed amongst participants, these are analysed in the next section.

4.4 Relationships among participants

Developing new friendships

The process of the Interactive Documentary workshops enabled participants to become more appreciative of their peers and to strengthen bonds with each other. One of the PYF groups, which benefited from the workshops and the filmmaking process most was that of Michelle and Stephanie. In the follow up interview that I recorded with these two participants, I asked them if the workshops had any kind of impact on their lives. Stephanie pointed to the relational dimension of the process, as she thought that it contributed to knowing each other better: "we'd walk and talk because we caught the same bus (…) but it wasn't like every day conversation and then we had to work together and it was pretty cool". Initially, Michelle and Stephanie wanted to be in different groups, but they were allocated in the same group and throughout the process, they supported each other in making their film. Stephanie used the editing tools and Michelle was the one making decisions, as Michelle felt less confident with using technology.

Additionally, in a previous interview, Stephanie said that the process of interviewing some of their other fellow workshop participants for their documentary contributed to

knowing them better too. For example, she did not know that Judy, whom she interviewed first, was shy. Overall, Stephanie felt comfortable with that group of participants, as it comprised students from her school with whom she shared similar interests.

Both Michelle and Stephanie also appreciated the youth workers at PYF more, one of whom they interviewed for their documentary. Stephanie compared PYF with her school and felt that there was “a lot of behind the scenes work going on” at PYF, which she used to take for granted as she was not aware of this before interviewing the youth worker. Shortly after the workshops, Stephanie became a volunteer at PYF and started running dance sessions. Considering how her position changed towards PYF, which was the topic of her documentary, she added: “I feel like at first I was just one of the kids and now I feel like we have our own roles, like our specific roles”. This sense of belonging and of having “a specific role” at PYF enhanced Stephanie’s community participation and enabled her to engage more actively with the youth organisation.

Furthermore, Emily realised that the young people in the group were “all different in their own individual ways, but (…) alike”, while making her interactive documentary. She came to this realisation through interviewing the young people who took part in her documentary, as she learned that they shared the same feelings towards dancing and performing. Alexandra echoed Emily’s sentiments and added that they were “all the same as a group” and that one of the reasons that they all joined PYF was their mutual love for dance, which constituted a positive basis for the relationships amongst them.

Emily also referred to the “common ground” that participants shared, as they all enjoyed being together and participating in various activities, which helped them to release their school related stresses. Emily got closer to her friends and learned how to appreciate her own strengths: “I’m so lucky (…) to have talent and to (…) have people that you are comfortable expressing yourself [to]”. Interacting with peers enabled Emily to improve her self-awareness too.

Teamwork

Participants at KWMC also referred to the relational dimension of their interactive documentary project, when I asked them about the ways in which it has been transformative for them. Two of the participants highlighted that working as part of a team and including everyone in the decisions was something new to them, and that it was interesting and fun. Christine became more confident due to her involvement in this project and Natalie made new friends among her fellow participants. Natalie and Helen pointed out that the process of making the documentary was stressful at times and that they all had different characters, however the team managed to communicate and collaborate well.

The participants in the Imagineer cycle knew each other already, as they had started rehearsing for an upcoming performance almost five months before the start of the Interactive Documentary workshops. As I was not aware of the relationships that had already been established between participants within that context, I initially observed their interactions as part of the workshops. In the first session, Amy asked how they would manage any disagreements or arguments that could come up in the groups, and compared it to being at school and working in big groups. I advised that we could discuss any problems as a group in the sessions.

In the next workshop too, Amy hesitated to share her ideas with the groups before filming, due to the possibility of other participants using her ideas in their documentaries. Amy's concern was possibly rooted in previous experiences within that group, which I was not aware of. Group dynamics within that group were not particularly effective, as none of the initial groups managed to do filming together. I tried to encourage teamwork throughout the workshops, asking participants to work in smaller groups for the preparation of their documentaries, but their groups were supposed to do their filming outside of the workshops under their own direction. As a result, I became aware of intra-group problems at the stage of the editing workshops, which only one participant attended. Such problems are likely to appear in projects involving young people in teamwork, and although these might be complex to resolve, it is important to reiterate the value of respecting everyone's ideas. Additionally, in line with views of interactive documentary as a relational object, its production requires collaborative teamwork and engendering more interpersonal collaboration might be seen as intrinsic to its aims and ethos as well.

The next section moves on to explore the relationship between the young people and their interactive documentaries, revealing how participants perceived of various aspects of their everyday lives, which was the main content of their interactive documentaries.

4.5 Relationships between participants and their interactive documentaries

This section focuses on the ways in which participants made sense of their world, through an interpretation of their interactive documentaries. The documentaries created at PYF are discussed first, followed by *The Glowing Divide* and finally the Imagineer documentary, which is not interactive. The documentaries and their respective topics can be seen in Table 5.

Music, dance, performance and community

The documentaries analysed in this chapter can be found in the USB memory device, which is submitted with this thesis[53]. The only exception is *The Glowing Divide,* which can be found at www.theglowingdivide.com. I used a screen capture software to create downloadable files of the other documentaries, but this was not possible for *The Glowing Divide,* due to the dynamic design of the website, which consisted of several clips.

For the first cycle of workshops at PYF, participants were given the freedom to choose their own topics. The three interactive documentaries that resulted from this cycle revolved around the young people's engagement with music, dance and performance and being part of PYF. As the participants explained in their interviews, these topics were chosen as they related to their everyday habits. The theme for the second cycle emerged from the documentaries of the first cycle and was related to the question "What does it mean to be a teenager?".

[53] As I mentioned earlier, the files in the USB stick are the only available versions of the Popcorn Maker documentaries, due to the withdrawal of the software in 2015.

Documentary title	Topic	Cycle	Makers
Music in our Generation	How young people perceive of music	PYF 1	Oliver, Judy
What you sayin'?	What it means for young people to be part of PYF	PYF 1	Michelle, Stephanie
Passion and Inspiration	What makes young people feel confident, what they love to do	PYF 1	Alexandra, Emily
What does the community mean to you?	What community means to young people	PYF 2	John
The Glowing Divide	Impact of technology on social isolation in young people	KWMC	Natalie, Melissa, Nancy, Helen, Christine, Alfred, James
Social Media Evolution	Harmful effects of social media on young people's lives	Imagineer	Amy

Table 5: Participants' documentaries and topics

The interactive documentary *Music in Our Generation,* created by Judy and Oliver, concerns music as perceived by young people. The makers interviewed young people in the same age group about music, which was seen as being "part of their life". The young people expressed views about music as uniting people and being transformative. Throughout the documentary, the makers added captions to clarify what participants said, as the sound recordings were not always clear.

The documentary starts with the title "Music in Our Generation" on black background. Then, we see a quote by musicologist Thomas Kelly: "Music may be defined by how

we behave toward the sound rather than by the sound itself". The young peoples' decision to start the documentary with this definition emphasised their choice to position themselves towards music through the lens of their own experiences with and feelings towards music. The next clips show the responses of some young people about the ways in which they "behave" towards music.

First, we see a close-up of one of the young participants in the documentary saying that "Music isn't really a big thing". Although one would expect that this view would not be popular among young people, it was probably included to support a variety of different opinions. The next shot shows young people performing a choreography inside a space which looks like a performance venue, thus suggesting that they could be rehearsing for an event. After this, we see the words "WHAT IS MUSIC" on black background. This is followed by a two shot of two young people facing the camera. The teenager on the left provides her answer: "music brings everyone together" (Figure 9).

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Figure 9: Screenshot from Music in Our Generation

The first interactive element is used here, which contains a link to the teenager's YouTube profile page. Then the teenager on the left gives her own view on music as being related to "songs, instruments, sound and everything". The makers then cut to a close-up of a younger person providing his own definition of music: "sounds that feel nice and sound really good and all". These responses suggest that the participants highlight the power of music to connect people and the positive feelings which music evokes.

This clip is followed by another shot of young people dancing in the performance venue, which we saw previously. The second interactive link is incorporated here, leading to the website of PYF, which provides dance classes for young people. The quote which follows belongs to musician W.C. Handy[54]: "Setting my mind on a musical instrument was like falling in love. All the world seemed bright and changed". This view further emphasised the transformative potential of music, as perceived by young people. The documentary ends with the title "What is music to you?". This title contributes to the communicative dynamic of the documentary, inviting viewers to consider their own feelings and opinions about music.

The interactive documentary *What you sayin'?* was created by Stephanie and Michelle. This group felt that they wanted to express their gratitude for the help and support they had received from the youth workers at PYF. PYF is a space where the young people spend a lot of their time, hence being part of their lives on a daily basis.

One of the young girl being interviewed by the documentary makers talks about the reasons why she started going to PYF, referring to her friends, the staff working there and the dance classes. She also talks about the benefits of PYF: "it helped me to build as a person, like my confidence", admitting that before joining PYF, she was shy. Another young person echoes the same sentiments, mentioning that PYF has improved her confidence "through the sessions and talking to people and the friendliness of everyone". The final sequence of the documentary comprises shots of young people sending messages of "thank you" to everyone involved in PYF. This suggests that young people appreciate the support they receive from PYF and that they benefit from taking part in the sessions.

[54] W.C. Handy was an African American composer and musician.

In addition, one of the youth workers at PYF is interviewed by one of the makers. The youth worker says that working with young people makes her feel like doing something worthwhile with her life. She then talks about the work and planning that young people cannot see, as there is "a lot of stuff that goes behind the scenes". This statement had an impact on Stephanie, who appreciated the support of the youth workers and started working as a volunteer at PYF after the end of the workshops, as discussed in the previous section.

The interactive documentary *Passion and Inspiration* was created by Emily and Alexandra. Emily mentioned that they chose singing and dancing as their passions to address the chosen topic area of activities that they would do almost on a daily basis, and which other people could also relate to. As specified in the title that this group chose for their film, the documentary is about "passions, themselves and their inspiration" and portrays some of the young people who attended the dancing sessions at PYF. Emily and Alexandra also chose this topic in order to subvert stereotypes on young people as being "troublemakers". As Alexandra pointed out, young people can be "rowdy" and "loud" at times, but they can also be enthusiastic about the things they love to do and use creativity to positively channel their passions, against negative representations of young people, which the makers intended to critique. The makers decided to end the documentary on a positive note, hoping to inspire the viewers to pursue what they feel passionate about.

In this documentary, a young person is being interviewed by the documentary maker[55] about her feelings towards dance:

> "I feel like when you dance it's like a way of expression, expressing your emotions, instead of like shouting at people, or like getting angry, like verbally, I feel like you can express yourself through dancing, through movement".

[55] It is worth noting that PYF participants did not receive interview training as part of the Interactive Documentary workshops, as this was offered in another session preparing participants for other aspects of the wider Media and Communication programme "What you saying?", in which I was not involved.

This perspective suggests that dance provides an outlet for anger and stress, enhancing positive feelings, such as happiness, in young people:

> "I just get really happy when I dance, but obviously when I'm like stressed, or whatever, or when I have so much emotion within myself, when it's just like dancing for the fun of it, I feel really happy".

The interviewee also highlights the social aspects of dancing, which can help young people to improve their communication skills and their confidence and to fight against insecurities, thus feeling, "like a new person". Another interviewee mentions that she prefers dancing to singing, as she feels more confident as a dancer, whereas with signing she might find herself in an uncomfortable situation. This young person enjoys having dance as part of her daily life:

> "…when I'm washing the dishes I'm dancing, when I'm cleaning my room, I'm dancing, (…) I dance everywhere, let's put it that way, school, everywhere".

Her passion about dance was also due to the impact it had on her confidence:

> "when I'm dancing, that's when I'm most confident. When I'm doing anything else, if I have to do like a speech in front of people, I get really nervous, but when it comes to dancing it's like ok, it doesn't really bother me as much".

The above mentioned excerpts reinforce the view that participants represented themselves in ways which are normally dominant in mainstream media, even though they felt that representations of the positive impact of performance on young people were rare, suggesting that they might find the negotiation of these representations to be challenging.

Finally, the interactive documentary which emerged from the second cycle of workshops at PYF has the title *What does the community mean to you?* and was

created by John. The documentary starts with a title containing the question “Would you want to live in a different community?”, which documentary participants set out to answer in the following. The first young person seems to pause and think for a while and then says: “I don’t know honestly”. This hesitation suggests that young people might feel confused and unsure about the meaning of communities, and by incorporating such views in the documentary, the maker seems to value diverse perspectives. Then, we see a close-up of another young person who articulates a definition of community more clearly, highlighting a sense of security and belonging: “My definition of a community would be like all your friends and family together, being able to be comfortable among each other, like even if it’s really quiet, you feel you belong there”.

The documentary ends in the title: “So, what would be your perfect community?”. The final interactive element has the caption “Get into the community” and contains a link to the website of PYF. This ending contributes to the communicative dynamic of the documentary, as in a similar fashion to the film *Music in Our Generation*, viewers are encouraged to think about their own understanding of an ideal community. John emigrated to Australia shortly after making this documentary, so I did not have the chance to interview him, as he did not reply my emails regarding having the interview remotely. However, the fact that he used a link to the website of PYF, which provides viewers with an opportunity to “get into the community”, suggests that the maker had young audiences in mind and that he saw PYF as a community that he felt part of.

These documentaries illustrate the perceptions of young people about aspects of their lives that are of importance and how having outlets/activities such as music, dance, performance and community helps them. The topics which emerged revolved around how young people perceive of music, what it means for young people to be part of PYF, what makes young people feel confident, what they love to do and what community means to young people.

The perceptions expressed by the young people point to some of the stereotypical adolescent concerns, even though participants mentioned their intention to subvert negative stereotypes about young people through their documentaries. Participants perceived of music as being transformative, connecting people and creating positive

feelings. Feelings of happiness were also linked to dance and performance, which were seen as positive activities, helping young people to express their creativity through music, dance and performance. Finally, the main views regarding community related to a sense of belonging, supporting each other and sharing similar interests and identities. The fact that the young people articulated these stereotypical concerns is possibly due to their engagement with mainstream media forms, which reproduce such stereotypes.

In the following, I will explore the meanings that young people made regarding the issue of social isolation, turning to the KWMC interactive documentary *The Glowing Divide.*

Social isolation in young people

The Glowing Divide has a non-linear narrative and viewers can navigate through the documentary by choosing different options. The documentary portrays three teenagers who are socially isolated, Charlie, Ella and Kyle. Viewers who visit *The Glowing Divide* website can start their journey from either the Teenagers section or the Background section. The Teenagers section comprises the stories of the three portrayed teenagers, who are all 16 years old. The Background section contains information about the team that created the documentary, the issue of social isolation and also the "Your Challenge" video, which invites audiences to disconnect from social media for five days (discussed in Chapter 5).

Each story in the Teenagers section comprises five videos, including the teenagers introducing themselves, the three challenges that were set to them by the documentary makers (the JDPs) as part of the project and their final interviews. Starting with Charlie, who is the first teenager from the left, the story begins with him being interviewed about his relationship with technology and his understanding of social isolation. Charlie talks about gaming, and playing open world games[56] in particular, expressing his belief that it has had "a very good impact" on his life, helping him to escape whenever he feels "down". Kyle shares this view as well, seeing gaming

[56] Open world games have non-linear structures and allow users to have more freedom in approaching objectives.

as a way to escape from the “troubles of everyday life” by becoming a character in the game.

Charlie also talks about his personal experience of cyber-bullying, which he found hurtful and which has had a negative influence on him: “even though it is over the internet, it can still take that sort of effect, because I kind of feel angry, it doesn’t really feel like anything is being done about it”. This perspective points to the effects that cyber-bullying can have on young people, which can be as detrimental as being bullied in real-world contexts. Charlie also expresses a frustration about what can be done in order to prevent cyberbullying. He refers to social isolation as being so immersed in Facebook, that one does not have a life “outside of that room”. In the end of his introductory video, Charlie presents the “5-day disconnect” challenge which has been set to him and concludes that it will enable him to learn more about himself and other people, as he would be able to spend more time outside his room.

Ella is the teenager who is portrayed in the centre of the Teenagers section. In her introductory video, we see her in her room, playing the guitar and singing, but also checking her Facebook profile (Figure 10). She talks about Facebook and Instagram and how these platforms can be addictive. Ella mentions that she feels isolated, as she prefers to talk to people online than face-to-face, which she finds easier. She attributes this to the fact that she has been bullied in the past, and being online allows her to be “someone else”. This suggests that young people might see the Internet as a safer place, as they can enact different identities online, which enable them to hide their vulnerability. Ella also refers to the “5-day disconnect” challenge, to which she is looking forward in order to spend more time with her family. She describes the benefit of disconnecting from social media as being able to talk to new people, rather than being “socially awkward”.

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Figure 10: Ella using Facebook

The third teenager is Kyle. In his opening video, he shares his understanding of social isolation as having no one to talk to in real life. However, Kyle does not consider himself to be isolated, as he believes that technology enables him to keep in touch with people who do not live nearby, although it prevents him from going out. Kyle says he has not experienced cyberbullying, but he thinks it is harder to escape from cyberbullying compared to other types of bullying, due to the pervasiveness of social media.

The first challenge about disconnecting from social media for five days is recorded in the form of a video diary and points to how hard it is for young people to disconnect from the Internet. Charlie seems to struggle while being offline. After spending one day at a friend's house, he realises: "When I'm out and about, I don't sort of feel that I need to get home to play video games", which suggests that spending time with friends outside the house can have positive effects. At the end of the challenge, Charlie says that it has been a good experience for him, although he feels "so happy to get back to gaming" the following day. Ella also reflects on her "5-day disconnect" experience in her video diary. She complains that she is bored and that she is tempted to check her

Facebook, as she has “eighty-two unseen notifications”. As the challenge comes to an end, she emphasises how difficult this experience has been for her and how glad she feels that she can use social media again.

Kyle did not manage to stop gaming during the five days of this challenge. He disconnected from Facebook, which he found confusing as he could not see what other people were doing online. Kyle admits that he misses Facebook and especially “being able to see everyone’s drama”. He believes that people prefer to complain about their lives on Facebook, whereas he thinks that talking to other people in real life would help with solving any problems. This element helps Kyle to talk to people of the same age because “with drama, I can associate myself with basically anybody”. Kyle here implies that it was possible for him to empathise with and relate to other people who expressed their problems and complaints about life on Facebook, which illuminates another reason for young people’s dependence on the Internet. He attributes this to the fact that “technology is taking over really”. This statement illuminates the complex relationship between young people and technology; whilst Kyle has a negative view of the impact of technology, he seems to be addicted to it.

Additionally, Kyle is asked to teach an adult how to play Playstation. In the beginning, he appears to be nervous about sharing that he did not know how to teach someone how to game, although gaming is second nature to him. When the adult asks him if he is addicted to gaming, he replies that there is nothing else he could do, as all of his friends stay at home to play games. Kyle then refers to his social anxiety, which he sees as a painful experience, as he is unable to do simple things like ordering a bus ticket or food and communicating with other people, out of fear that they might not like him. This social anxiety is related to his preference for staying at home and interacting with others online. The links between young people’s social anxiety and increased use of technology that Kyle traces here illustrate that young people might see the Internet as a safe space and opportunity for them to interact with others. At the end of the video, after the challenge and explaining to an adult how to game, Kyle shares in the documentary film how he feels more confident about talking to people, saying that this will help him to talk more with his parents too.

For the third challenge, the teenagers were asked to lead a guided walk in Bristol as part of the "Night Walks with Teenagers" performance project[57], where young people take adults on a tour in the city. This part of the interactive documentary illustrates that the teenagers gradually overcome the difficulties in interacting with other people in real-world contexts. Their transformation is evidenced in the final interviews of *The Glowing Divide,* which take place outdoors. The three teenagers talk about the ways in which their experiences as part of the documentary have been transformative. Charlie suggests that his participation in the documentary has improved his social confidence, in terms of doing more activities outdoors and spending less time and money on gaming. Ella describes her participation in the documentary as being 'eye-opening'. Her advice to socially isolated people would be to try all the three challenges that she experienced as part of the documentary project. Kyle admits that he finds it difficult to describe his experience with words. He learned that he could survive without social media, although it was hard because all his friends go online. He adds that the Night Walks project helped him to reduce his social anxiety, depending on the context and the person he spoke to.

All three teenagers reacted differently to the three challenges which were set to them and some found it harder to disconnect from social media than others. What they all had in common was a fear to communicate face-to-face with people, especially older than them, which goes someway to explain why they were drawn to online communication. By the end of the journey, the three teenagers point out how they benefited from their participation in the documentary, as their confidence had improved and they seemed to be more prepared to control the amount of the time they spend online.

Relationships between The Glowing Divide makers and teenagers

In an interview with the JDPs[58], who made *The Glowing Divide* and who were my research participants at KWMC, I discussed their experience filming the three teenagers for their documentary, Charlie, Ella and Kyle, and the relationships they

[57] The "Night Walks with Teenagers" project was conceptualised by the Canadian theatre company Mammalian Diving Reflex and co-produced by the In Between Time festival and Knowle West Media Centre in Bristol.
[58] Junior Digital Producers.

developed with them. Participants characterised the teenagers as being “expressive”, “friendly”, “articulate” and “bright”, which was different from the impression that they had of socially isolated people before their participation in the project, and which subverts stereotypes about such young people as being “destructive”. Anna thought that the teenagers’ courage was commendable, as they were brave enough to get involved in the documentary in the first place and share personal information, and she felt “lucky” to have worked with these teenagers.

Nancy mentioned that meeting the three teenagers motivated her to take action in order to benefit them. Alfred could relate to the teenagers in a more direct way, as he could empathise with them: “I’m basically one of those teenagers (…), I was pretty sure what the problems would be (…)”. He shared how this recognition had an impact on some of his decisions and opinions. For example, looking back at the project, Alfred expressed his regret about not interacting more with the teenagers, which could have been transformative for him and them.

In addition, interviewing the teenagers as part of *The Glowing Divide* and talking to people with expertise in supporting socially isolated young people, enabled Natalie to get a better understanding of the issue of social isolation. Natalie also felt the need to help the teenagers after meeting them. She thought that once she made contact with them, it was easy to encourage them to talk about their experiences:

> (…) because being 23 we are not seen as proper adults, so it’s kind of a bit easier for them to, you know, give information away. It was just the case of trying to make everyone comfortable especially on set, because a lot of stuff happen off camera, so you could just joke around with them or like speak to them like an old person, at first it was weird but then we generally got on well as it went on and that became a lot easier, it was quite natural, I was more worried about it than necessary (Natalie, follow-up interview).

Natalie here refers to how age barriers might obstruct communication, initially she was concerned about being able to effectively communicate with the teenagers. As a young person herself, Natalie managed to interact with the

teenagers in a natural way and to build a relationship of trust with them, so that they could talk about their concerns. Natalie also added that the best part of the documentary for her was seeing the positive change that it had on the teenagers, who became more confident and open. She gave the example of Ella who started having conversations with strangers as part of the Night Walks project in a confident way, although she was particularly introvert at the start of the project.

The experience of making *The Glowing Divide* was rewarding for Anna, not only in terms of helping the teenagers who took part in the documentary, but also in terms of the potential of the project to support other socially isolated young people. This change in the young people made the whole experience worthwhile for Anna, who referred to a conversation that she had with the mother of one of the portrayed teenagers after the premiere of the documentary. The mother expressed her gratitude for the positive change that she had seen in her son's behaviour, who became more outgoing after his involvement in the project.

Anna also saw a change in herself due to *The Glowing Divide*. Firstly, she revisited her views on young people and her assumptions about how they spend their time, as before she was making quick judgments about them. Also, while working with young people, Anna thought about the time when she was a teenager:

> I could relate to the problems they were experiencing in terms of not having anywhere to go, or being able to congregate outside without getting moved on by the police and (…) also feeling guilty about the fact that maybe there have been those quick moments where you are walking down the street and see a group of teenagers and suddenly feel alarmed or in danger, when actually it is a group of young people congregating in public space and there is nothing wrong or threatening about it except my own perception of it (Anna, video elicitation interview).

Anna suggested that negative stereotypes about teenagers can have considerable impact on how people feel about them or behave towards them, reiterating the potential of *The Glowing Divide* to show another aspect of the life of teenagers, highlighting the challenges they might face. Finally, Anna became more keen to support young people in engaging with outdoors activities and became more aware of her own relationship with social media, appreciating the amount of time that she could dedicate to other activities instead of being online. The Imagineer documentary *Social Media Evolution* illuminates another young person's relationship with social media, which is different from how *The Glowing Divide* teenagers engage with technology.

Social Media Evolution

Amy's documentary starts with the title *Social Media Evolution* on black background. We hear Amy's voice-over narration: "I've recently watched a few documentaries on the effects of social media on this day and age, showing how the youth of today can be led into feeling isolated, depressed and lonely". As this documentary resulted out of the second cycle of PAR with adults, Amy here refers to watching *The Glowing Divide,* which was used as a resource for the Imagineer workshops.

Amy's voice-over accompanies a series of still images throughout the film. Amy then goes on to talk about her youth and points out that when she was young, she used to spend time being outdoors with her friends, and she would only use social media after going home to keep talking to friends. Amy thinks that social media can be useful, depending on how people use them, which is a more critical view, compared with *The Glowing Divide* teenagers who used them heavily before participating in the documentary.

Amy talks about her son being in nursery and about kids learning from interactive boards at school, referring to the impact that technology has had on education. Amy considers such devices to be good tools for teachers as they enable learning while having fun, but also addresses how people have become socially isolated due to the developments of social media platforms and how social media have become so powerful, that they can determine human relationships.

In the end of the documentary, Amy shares her feelings about the future of social media: “If this is how social media is now, (…) then I don’t want to think about the future with it, it’s a scary thought. Social media has definitely taken over quicker than you think”. Amy sees social media as being threatening to human relationships and potentially harmful, which she finds intimidating. Despite the fact that Amy could be presumed to be one of Prensky’s Digital Natives (2001a, 2001b), as she was in her early twenties, she has a critical perception of social media and the use of technology, suggesting that not all young people interact with the Internet in the same way. In the final section of this chapter, I elaborate on the critique of Prensky’s concept based on the findings of this research.

4.6 Digital Divides

Literature on the educational potential of Interactive Documentary is scarce, focusing on projects created by students in Higher Education. Interactive Documentary has also been theorised as a new learning system, maximising the benefits of Web 2.0 and offering new ways to approach, understand, play and learn from reality, and new ways of spreading content and gaining knowledge (Gifreu and Moreno 2014: 1306). Gifreu and Moreno celebrate the reconfiguration of technological paradigms, due to the rise of Web 2.0, and they see this as offering opportunities for enhancing some of the classic principles of education and establishing new learning logics. The authors suggest that interactive documentary is a beneficial tool for knowledge transfer because it “proposes a challenge, provides data to make decisions and forces the brain to retain the data to make sense of the story and connect knowledge” (2014: 1312-1313).

Gifreu (2012: 4988) further outlines some of the benefits that new technologies can offer to education, including the creation of networks of learning, facilitating the exchange and dissemination of information, providing new ways of evaluation and overall greater flexibility. He summarises the advantages of “digital teaching and learning systems” in interactivity, collaborative learning, multi-directionality and freedom of publication and dissemination (2012: 4994). He also contends that “nonlinear narrative could be a possible solution to increase student motivation, by

mixing the storytelling and the information/knowledge context" (4994), concluding that the interactive nonfiction as an educational strategy should offer experiences that combine entertainment with educational dimensions.

Gifreu premises the efficacy of Interactive Documentary practices within educational contexts on the concept of "Digital Natives". This term was coined by Marc Prensky in 2001 and refers to "today's students", who "think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (Prensky 2001a: 1). Prensky attributed this change to the rise of digital technology (this concept is further contextualised in my Literature Review). In a similar vein, Gifreu argues that Interactive Documentary practices can engage young students, who "understand the applications and assimilate the information that contains them because the printed media or static websites are now for them a thing of the past generation" (2012: 4991). In light of my field work these claims seem rather unsubstantiated, this and other digital native conceptions are challenged by the results of this research, as I will illustrate in the following.

PYF participants

As mentioned in previous sections, PYF participants did not respond to a series of blog tasks designed to enable their engagement with online resources. Additionally, they did not complete one of the tasks encouraging them to record an interview with someone they consider important and then upload this to YouTube. This lack of engagement with the blog and the YouTube platform resonates with Bennett and Maton (2010: 325), who argue that "skills, interests and values developed in everyday technology-based activities" are not necessarily transferred to educational contexts. This view suggests that young people might engage with blogs and YouTube on a daily basis, but this does not mean that they have the skills or interest in uploading content to such platforms, nor that they have a preference for using such tools as part of a teaching and learning process.

Regarding the simplicity of the Popcorn Maker, participants at PYF expressed mixed feelings, which link to the divergent levels of skills and confidence of participants. Oliver thought that the Popcorn Maker was complicated, whereas Judy found it to be

simple and useful. This contrast was reflected in the interview with Stephanie and Michelle as well. Stephanie said that the Popcorn Maker was easy, simple to understand and nicely laid out. She felt that “you can work your way around the Popcorn Maker, there is not really anything you can’t do on it, it’s very good”. Michelle, on the other hand, mentioned that she was not “good at technology” and that the Popcorn Maker was “a good tool, for people that would like it”. Michelle reiterated that she had a bad relationship with technology at the end of the interview too, emphasising that she did not like it, “not even recording”.

Michelle’s sentiments about the Popcorn Maker were echoed in the interview with Emily and Alexandra, as both participants agreed that the Popcorn Maker was difficult. Emily was struggling to apply the transitions between shots and Alexandra commented that it was hard to think about “where to put things on the video”, suggesting that some decisions were aesthetic rather than just technical. Both participants felt, that although the Popcorn Maker was a challenging task, they managed to complete it on time and that if they had to do it again, “it would be quicker than how long it took us this time” (Alexandra, Video Elicitation interview).

Furthermore, Emily thought that the interactive elements could be a disadvantage, as people would not be interested in additional information. Alexandra expanded on this, pointing to the unusual experience of watching interactive documentaries:

> … (the people) could start getting really annoyed with all the pop ups that come up, because if I was watching a documentary, I wouldn’t expect, like all these links to pop up but in a way, it’s, like good, because you learn more things about the thing that you are watching and gather more information about it. Say if it was a documentary about music and then you, like click that link to find out more about what you can do to get involved (Alexandra, Video Elicitation interview).

Emily and Alexandra agreed that the majority of the people were still unaware of interactive documentaries and where to find them. Alexandra felt that, although she was not aware of the possibilities of creating an interactive documentary before the

workshops, she developed a better understanding after a few sessions. Emily added that the session on writing a story enabled them to "add more depth" to the development of their documentaries. The contribution of the workshops to raising awareness of interactive documentaries was also highlighted by one of the youth workers who was present during that interview. Her view also offers a critique of interactivity, suggesting that interactive applications are not automatically educative:

> I don't think I had a clue about this before we met Danai. I wouldn't even call it documentary, if I clicked something online and then it'd take you to something else and then something else, you would just think you are on the Internet, not that it's actually teaching you anything (Youth worker, Video Elicitation interview).

Imagineer participants

Participants at Imagineer had no prior experience of filming, and the majority of them were involved in acting/performing in front of the camera. The only exception was Amy, who attended media classes at school and then used cameras and editing tools for her final year project at college, where she studied Dance.

Amy was the only participant in the Imagineer cycle who completed the practical editing workshops. Amy did not seem to be very surprised about the fact that the other participants did not participate in the editing sessions, as she acknowledged that they had other commitments (work, family, rehearsals for the Imagineer performance), which they prioritised over the Interactive Documentary project. The challenges of engaging Imagineer participants are analysed in Chapter 5. The result of these workshops was Amy's documentary, which is not interactive. The final session, which would focus on adding the interactive elements to the documentary and recording the final interview, was cancelled, Amy started a new job and 'could not afford time on the project'. Despite numerous subsequent efforts to record an interview with her, I was unable to capture her in-depth response to technology.[59]

[59] Therefore, the data that I use in this section was collected through my field notes.

Overall, Amy felt that she was “rubbish with technology”. She was hesitant when I suggested recording her interview via Skype, as she said that she did not know how to use it. Throughout the workshops, I tried to enhance her confidence and ease the pressure by emphasising that her point of view was important for this project. Amy found Apple computers “confusing to use”, so for the process of editing, I used the editing tool (Wondershare Fantashow) and Amy selected the materials and decided on the structure of the documentary. Also, in one of the workshops, Amy recorded a voice-over narration for the documentary, expressing her thoughts on social media, which she was initially “scared” to do, because she would “hate” hearing her voice. I reassured her that the recording was good and after hearing it, she agreed and seemed to be more confident for the rest of the session.

The above-mentioned responses towards technology suggest that young people’s experiences with it vary significantly, depending on their backgrounds, social experience and levels of education. Such empirical data challenge assumptions regarding the existence of “a homogenous generation with technical expertise” (Bennett et al. 2008: para 18) and need to be taken into account for the design of youth programmes using Interactive Documentary.

The next chapter moves on to explore the experiential dimension of this research, further contextualising some of the analysis in this chapter and illuminating participants’ understanding of interactivity and their responses as viewers of their interactive documentaries.

Chapter 5. The Pursuit of Engagement

In this chapter, I will explore the notion of engagement that emerged from this research and which refers to participants' engagement with interactivity, in terms of their emotional engagement with it and how they perceived interactive audiences, their engagement as audiences of their own interactive documentaries and the challenges of engaging young people in a participatory project. I draw upon the experiential dimension in Nash's (2014a) documentary interactivity framework, which pertains to Interactive Documentary audiences and their response to the invitation to participate.

This chapter takes a further step by placing the participants (and makers of their interactive documentaries) in the role of the audience, examining how they responded to their own interactive productions, based on the analysis of data collected through a series of Video Elicitation interviews. Participants' emotional engagement with Interactive Documentary revealed emotions such as excitement, empathy but also anxiety and confusion. Finally, I present the difficulties of maintaining young people's commitment to the Interactive Documentary workshops which comprised my fieldwork, as some of them did not participate in the stages of filming and editing of their own interactive documentaries.

In order to present a contextual understanding of the concept of engagement, I start by clarifying the relationship between the dimension of experience in Nash's framework and the concept of engagement within the context of this research. Nash suggests (2014a: 57) that the experiential dimension calls attention to the meanings that audiences take away from their engagement with Interactive Documentary. This chapter explores the meanings that participants created regarding interactivity and how audiences might engage with it. Factors that shaped participants' engagement with interactivity, apart from their emotional responses to it, included familiarity with other media and interest in the content of the documentary. Participants also stepped into the role of the audience, viewing their own productions, thus demonstrating an analytical awareness from a 'maker's' point of view[60]. Furthermore, the concept of engagement in this research encompasses the challenges of promoting participation

[60] The young people were not professional documentary makers, therefore they were in a hybrid position.

in community-based educational projects, which emerged throughout my fieldwork with young people.

In the following, I will outline the ways in which Interactive Documentary audiences are discursively constructed as immanently "active", before I move on to illuminate participants' perceptions of such audiences and how they responded as viewers of their own documentaries. The literature on Interactive Documentary frequently conceptualises the audience as being more "active" compared to traditional audiences. These views also informed participants' understanding of the role of interactive audiences, although their actions as audiences of their own interactive productions seemed to contradict such perceptions, as I will illustrate in the following sections.

Discursive constructions of Interactive Documentary audiences

Claims about Interactive Documentary audiences as being more "active" and "empowered" compared to film and television documentary audiences are lacking in empirical substantiation. Nash (2014a: 57) challenges these views on the experiential dimension of documentary interactivity on exactly this basis: being under-researched. Jenkins (2006) suggests that young people have become media producers, distributors and critics, but still lack autonomy, as the advancement of media technologies does not translate into liberation. Interactive audiences possess more power within "the new knowledge culture" (2006: 136), although media industries still operate in ways that safeguard their interests within this new setting[61]. Jenkins argues that the combination of new media tools, discourses around DIY media production and economic shifts supporting the spread of media across multiple platforms has had an impact on participatory culture, changing the relationships between media consumers, texts and producers.

Flynn further investigates the potential of Interactive Documentary to provide subjects and communities with "voice and agency" (2015: 155). His research calls for the need for new frameworks and theories expanding definitions of "impact" and "engagement",

[61] Guy Standing provides an account of how capitalism and powerful institutions retain the monopoly of intellectual property, making much of it unavailable, in his book *The Corruption of Capitalism: Why Rentiers Thrive and Work Does Not Pay* (2016).

through the incorporation of both qualitative and quantitative methods to address the multifaceted nature of Interactive Documentary user experience. Flynn suggests making a distinction between social impact, audience development and innovation, which he sees as necessary for expanding the concept of impact in interactive documentaries (2015: 146). This research suggests that the concept of engagement in Interactive Documentary is worth a more nuanced exploration, due to its complexity, one which moves beyond social impact, audience development and innovation, particularly within an educational context, as explored within this study.

Noguiera (2015) also considers Interactive Documentary audiences to be "active" and comments on the relationship between interactivity and meaning-making in Interactive Documentary[62]:

> In an interactive documentary audiences are expected to be active, since, irrespective of whether the hyperlink is represented through words, images, shapes or colours, its signifier is meant to be manipulated to perform its interactive function. Therefore, audiences must activate the hyperlink to create meaning (Noguiera 2015: 84).

In her analysis of the documentary game *Fort McMoney* (2013), Noguiera uses a social semiotic approach, which foregrounds the ways in which the audience interprets the text (2015: 82) through the semiotic options available to the audience. Noguiera argues that *Fort McMoney* empowers audiences, as it provides them with a sense of control over the narrative's construction (they can choose how to navigate through the documentary), with a sense of place (they can feel as if they are physically visiting the location where the documentary takes place), with a positive sense of self (audiences are given opportunities to "act heroically") and finally with a sense of belonging, as the game contributes to a community feeling (Noguiera 2015: 91-92).

[62] These accounts of meaning making on the part of the interactive documentary audience remind us of meaning making in Post-structuralism, which suggests that different audiences can create different meanings, thus deemphasising the role of the "author".

The above-mentioned discourses regarding the empowerment of Interactive Documentary audiences need to be further interrogated, through empirical studies with interactive audiences for example, which are scarce in current literature and are exemplified in this chapter through the work of Kate Nash. Nash's research builds on previous studies on how users experience interactive media, considering criteria like presence, playfulness and connectedness to others, as well as the system's responsiveness (Quiring 2009: 902), suggesting that the process of interacting could potentially undermine the audience's engagement with the narrative of the documentary (Nash 2014a: 58).

In terms of methodology, Nash combined textual analysis, semi-structured interviews and screen capture software to examine the interactive documentary with an emphasis on interaction and participation (2014c: para 10) and the audience's physical responses to the interactive documentary. This methodology aligns with calls for new methods for measuring the engagement of interactive audiences. Furthermore, David Dufresne (2014), creator of the documentary game *Fort McMoney,* highlights that the quantitative methods often used in television audience research are not suitable for interactive projects, which signal a wider shift in media production practices, and other measures are needed. The methodology of this research foregrounds approaches such as PAR and Visual Research methods for data collection and Discourse Analysis for data analysis, in order to highlight the politicising nature of my fieldwork and the discursive aspects of participants' engagement with Interactive Documentary, thus providing an alternative approach to researching this field.

Nash (2014b: para 8) also suggests that Interactive Documentary makers enable audiences to contribute to the "voice" of the documentary and shape "relationships between audience contributions and other content[63]". In terms of the interactive documentaries which were created for this research, user actions have minimal effects on the arguments made by the documentaries. Participants used simple forms of interactivity, as these would be less intimidating for young people with no

[63] Interactive documentaries allow the users to add or change content, which is different compared with meaning making in semiotic analysis, where the reader cannot re-shape the content.

filming/editing experience and the process of creating the documentaries was more important than the final products. I will expand on this in Chapter 6.

The next section (5.1) explores young people's engagement with interactivity in more detail, and starts with participants' understandings of interactive audiences as being more active, resonating with the above-mentioned literature review. The analysis of the empirical data collected with participants in this research further highlighted issues such as participants' emotional engagement with interactive documentaries, their familiarity with traditional media and their interest in the topic of the documentaries. The following section (5.2) elaborates on participants' responses as audiences of their own interactive documentaries, which contradicted their understanding of the audience as being empowered through physically interacting with documentaries.

5.1 Participants' engagement with interactivity

Participants' perceptions of the active role of interactive audiences

The young people shared a common understanding of Interactive Documentary audiences as being more active, which they expressed as a result of the workshops. Judy and Oliver, makers of the interactive documentary *Music in our Generation,* highlighted that interactive documentary is about interacting with the documentary instead of just consuming information. Oliver described interactive documentary as "a documentary that you can in any way or form interact with, whether it could be like typing something or clicking on something rather than watching it and not doing anything". He summarised the advantages of interactive documentary in being 'fun', 'new' and 'interesting'. Judy emphasised the audience's ability to collect more information from a variety of sources. Both participants agreed that interactive documentary is more engaging and interesting than a traditional documentary film and could not think of any disadvantages related to it. Alexandra also felt more interested in making interactive documentaries, instead of traditional documentaries, "because it's different to what everyone else would do", and Helen from KWMC suggested that interactivity can be more engaging, as it is something new and impressive. These comments suggest that young people showed a preference for more innovative forms of media, which have the potential to provide audiences with new experiences, beyond the affordances of traditional media, and provide makers with possibilities to explore new ways of storytelling and to move beyond standard media practices.

Michelle, who co-created *What You Sayin'?* with Stephanie, mentioned the advantage of gaining more information from interactive documentary. Michelle expressed her difficulty in understanding a "long definition" of interactive documentary. Her interpretation of the term was that "you can interact, it's what it is in the name, (…), because it's just interactive with documentary, that's what it is". Michelle's hesitation to affiliate with a more complex definition of interactive documentary can be linked to the fact that young people might find it difficult to achieve a more critical understanding of interactivity, or might not be interested in doing so. Michelle acknowledged that interactive documentary offers the possibility to "interact", without further questioning what this interaction could entail and how this could be done. In Chapter 4, I emphasised Michelle's expressed difficulty with using technology, which also needs to be taken into account in evaluating her overall engagement with interactive documentaries, as affiliation with technology plays an important role in developing familiarity with interactive media.

Stephanie expanded more on her definition of an interactive documentary, pointing to the interactive features: "it's like a video including links and descriptions of what's going on, pop ups and things like that". For her, interactive documentary was more interesting than traditional forms. She referred to watching a television documentary, during which "you can only rely on what they tell you", whereas interactive documentary was seen as providing the tools for doing more research on the topic of the documentary. Michelle mentioned one disadvantage of interactive documentary, which concerned the fact that "it's on the Internet and not everybody can have the Internet", thus suggesting that for her possibly everyone has a television.

The web-based nature of interactive documentary was seen as a disadvantage by some KWMC participants too, who noted that some people might be excluded from watching it as they might not have access to a computer. Helen and Melissa commented that the fragmented narrative of interactive documentary could be problematic, as viewers could miss some information depending on the clips they choose to watch. James said that some people prefer to watch a documentary in a more traditional way and receive information in a more passive way, instead of interacting with it, and Alfred called for the need to use interactivity purposefully, as it might end up merely adding one more layer of difficulty. From a similar perspective,

Emily from PYF thought that the abundance of information provided by interactive documentary could discourage certain users, as they might find the amount of information overwhelming and therefore not want to engage with it, for her this pointed to audiences who prefer to be more passive in consuming media content, because of the norms and expectations of low participation established by traditional media channels and forms.

The young people at PYF used basic forms of interactivity in their documentaries, as the nature of the Popcorn Maker allowed the incorporation of simple web elements like links and Google maps, and audiences cannot influence the narrative of the documentaries. KWMC participants employed more sophisticated technology to create their interactive documentary *The Glowing Divide*, but the way it addresses and positions audiences only enables the audience to have impact on the film in terms of their choice of the order in which they prefer to watch the stories of the three teenagers portrayed in the documentary. This reminds us that audiences are not always as "empowered" as presented in relevant literature; interactive platforms themselves quite often limit the user's actions which can be built into interactive documentaries for the audience to perform.

In expressing their views on interactive documentaries, however, KWMC participants highlighted the agency of the viewers. Helen described interactive documentary as "a documentary that the viewer has some element of control over whilst watching it". Christine added that the experience of viewing an interactive documentary varies depending on how viewers interact with it and James emphasised the possibility of the viewers to choose how they prefer to watch it. KWMC participants drew attention to the web-based nature of interactive documentary, as it has to be "on some sort of computer" in order to be interactive. Nancy and Melissa emphasised its participatory character, allowing viewers to be participants of the documentary at the same time. Participation for Nancy and Melissa is promoted through the viewer's ability to make decisions and choices regarding how to navigate through an interactive documentary, an option which is not available in traditional documentary.

KWMC participants thought that their understanding of the role of the audience was transformed throughout making *The Glowing Divide*, and compared Interactive

Documentary audiences to traditional ones. Anna pointed to the potential of interactivity to have an impact on the audience's "enjoyment or understanding of the subject matter". Christine gave the example of the documentary game *Fort McMoney*, which participants played in one of the workshops that I conducted with them at the start of their project. She noticed that, because she was online while watching *Fort McMoney*, she was pausing to find out more information about it online, whereas with a traditional documentary, viewers are less likely to do additional research while they are watching it.

In that session, *Fort McMoney* was part of an activity asking participants to identify the social functions of recording/preserving, civic engagement and persuasion in the game, which Nash (2014b) identified as the social functions of documentary. The participants observed that this game serves the function of recording and preserving, because it conveys factual information and personal experiences. Additionally, users can get information from surveys, which are not normally found in a traditional documentary. In recognising how this game tries to persuade the audience, the participants demonstrated a critical understanding of its forms of persuasion. They mentioned that the filmmaker promoted an agenda, which was evident in the fact that viewers can only choose from three specific questions to ask the characters in the game, thus confining audience participation.

The nature of the role of the audience also came into play in discussing whether participants incorporated interactivity in all stages, including pre-production, production or post-production. Helen noted that their documentary "was always going to be interactive", because their target audience was going to be young people, who spend a lot of their time online according to research that they conducted, so it made sense to create a web-based documentary. Anna added that the short length of the videos was also in line with the habits of their target audience and Natalie felt that the short videos were more likely to keep viewers' attention span.

Helen linked interactivity to the ongoing research process, as it could enable them to collect data regarding the audiences of their documentary, and explained that the "5daydisconnect" challenge was designed to serve as a method of data collection. The "5daydisconnect" challenge links to the "Your Challenge" video, which can be found

in the Background section of *The Glowing Divide* website. This video, made by the JDPs, invites viewers to participate in one of the challenges that the teenagers had to do as part of the project, and asks them to disconnect from social media for five days. This challenge proved to be ineffective in terms of audience engagement. In an online search that I conducted on Twitter using the relevant hashtag (#5daydisconnect), there was no evidence of audience members undertaking the challenge. Similarly, on KWMC YouTube channel, there are only two videos in the #5daydisconnect playlist, which were both created by Charlie, one of the teenagers featured in *The Glowing Divide*.

I was interested in participants' responses to this, therefore, in our follow-up interview, I asked Natalie about her views on the effectiveness of this challenge in engaging audiences and she said that she did not have any information about this: "I don't know personally because it was after the premiere of the film and shortly before the end of the project, (…). I really don't know how it went". Natalie's lack of awareness regarding the ways in which audiences engaged with the participatory aspects of *The Glowing Divide* reveals the complexity that makers might face in implementing and monitoring ongoing data collection in interactive projects.

Christine also suggested that interactive documentary turns data collection into an ongoing process and allows makers to know what audiences they reach, through the collection of analytics regarding the demographic factors of the audience. However, this data collection is complex to achieve. The JDPs considered collecting analytical data from Google, in order to know what kind of audiences were watching the documentary and what kind of decisions they made while watching it, although this intention did not come to fruition.

Added to this, Natalie talked about her idea to create a forum, where socially isolated people could communicate with each other, but this idea was not realised either, as moderating the forum would require considerable investment in terms of time and human resources, which the JDPs could not afford as their internship only lasted six months. These insights suggest that the potential of engagement and ongoing data collection regarding audiences was hard to realise for the young people, requiring resources and time which were not available to them.

Finally, KWMC participants emphasised the ability of the viewer to influence the story when they explained interactivity to the three teenagers who they interviewed and portrayed in their documentary. In their first meetings with the teenagers, the JDPs showed the teenagers some of the visualisations they were working on, but did not further explain the ways in which the documentary was going to be interactive, as at that point they did not know exactly how they would incorporate interactivity.

Anna commented on how the teenagers first responded to the fact that they would participate in an interactive documentary. When she first spoke to them about the type of the documentary, Anna emphasised that the film would be hosted on a website and that the audience would be able to choose how to navigate through the story. The teenagers were interested in being part of it, as it sounded "new and cool", but they only fully understood what interactivity meant when they saw the final version of *The Glowing Divide*, as the JDPs suggested in their interviews.

The next section moves on to elaborate on participants' emotional engagement with Interactive Documentary. This consideration is important as participants demonstrated a range of feelings such as excitement, empathy but also anxiety and confusion.

Emotional engagement

One of the feelings that participants expressed with regards to interactive documentary was that of empathy. Anna from KWMC suggested that the stylistic decisions in *The Glowing Divide* contribute to enabling empathy, as the teenagers addressed the camera directly:

> (…) we felt that the intimate nature of speaking to the teenagers in the interviews and how open they are about their experiences is really helpful in terms of breaking down stigma around teenagers, because they are lovely young people so it's easy to empathise with them, so creating that empathy helps all the generations to understand why teenagers spend so much time on technology (…) (Anna, Video Elicitation interview).

Anna's expressed perspective regarding empathy being enabled by the aesthetics of the documentary was shared by other participants as well, aiming at challenging stereotypes about young people's relationship with technology, which was the message that the JDPs were trying to convey. Alfred from KWMC further mentioned that interactive documentary can enable viewers to develop intimacy with the subject of the documentary, as it "creates emotions which might affect your judgment".

The potential of *The Glowing Divide* to create empathy was evidenced in one of the Imagineer sessions, while watching the stories of two teenagers portrayed in *The Glowing Divide*, Ella and Kyle. Jane from Imagineer empathised with Kyle, in the sense that she also found it very difficult to disconnect from Facebook, denoting the impact of social media on young people's lives. Being on Facebook had become a habit for Jane: "I go on Facebook and then I'm on it again. Why do you want to read about other people? You can't stop doing it". Jane found herself in the same position as Kyle, which enabled her to sympathise with him. Jane's constant use of Facebook points to the prevalence of young people's dependence on social networking platforms, the reasons for which, however, seemed to remain unknown for Jane. She pointed to the habit of reading about other people's lives, but she was not able to articulate what she found appealing about this. This reliance of young people on social media was discussed in Chapter 4.

Jane felt that Ella coped better with the challenges compared to Kyle, as he did not manage to give up gaming for all the five days, suggesting that some young people might struggle with disconnecting from technology. She also expressed her concerns about the safety of young people when they go online, which for her was becoming more threatened than when they were outside, playing outdoors for example. Claire drew parallels between Charlie's story and her own experiences, as she also preferred to spend more time reading or writing in her room than going out, whereas Jane said that she had to be outside, due to her claustrophobia.

Participants also seemed to be excited about engaging with interactive documentaries. In the second session at Imagineer, we watched the interactive music video *The Wilderness Downtown* (2010), which is an interactive interpretation of the song *We Used To Wait* (2010), by the Canadian band Arcade Fire. User input is

important in this music video, as audiences can provide the postcode of where they live (or where they grew up as stated on the homepage) and watch Google map images of that area as part of the video. Amy thought that this video was interactive due to the use of point of view shots, "because the camera was moving as if it was the person's eyes", and Jane noticed that the users could influence the experience of viewing by providing data. We first used Jane's postcode and then Amy asked to replay the video using the postcode of her area. When Google Street View images of her neighbourhood appeared on the screen, she stood up and approached the screen, enthused about recognising her old house and her mother's house as well. This signifies that the potential of interactive media to tailor content to their audiences and provide a personalised viewing experience appeals to young people, as engaging in a more intimate interactive experience enables a more emotional engagement with it[64].

Participants also engaged with the interactive documentary *Out my Window* (2010), which depicts life in high-rise buildings in different countries. The main interface of this documentary allows viewers to navigate through the story using three different options, a map on the top of the page, the flats in the middle and the characters at the bottom of the page. Participants at Imagineer particularly enjoyed watching the story of a character in Amsterdam, which includes an interactive music video shot with a 360-degree camera, and thought it was "cool". This comment links to the newness and uniqueness of watching a clip in 360 degrees, which was something unusual for the young people. Reflecting on *Out my Window*, Stephanie from PYF also commented: "it was not so fake, felt like you can connect to the people, (…), I understand it a lot more now". Jane, however, thought that the existence of too many possibilities in navigating *Out my Window* was confusing, as she could not decide which way to choose.

[64] Amy's response to recognising her house on the screen can also be interpreted in light of Vivian Sobchack's (2004) work on spectatorial engagement with familiar places. Sobchack sees "home" as "a place that protects us and is familiar and intimately responsive to our intentions and desires; and where our consciousness (…) lives in a relative state of transparency, unselfconsciousness and comfort" (2004: 182). It is this form of embodied knowledge that is made possible through interactivity in this project and that sparked Amy's enthusiasm.

Other participants expressed scepticism about aspects of interactivity too, noting how it can create confusion. In one of the Imagineer sessions, we watched an interactive clip, which was created with Mozilla's Popcorn Maker and was based on the Lumieres' film *Exiting the Factory* (1895). The interactive clip combined different screens showing variations of the original film and workers exiting contemporary factories in Germany and Russia. Claire found the experience of viewing this clip to be annoying: "they were pretty similar but still different and you don't know what to look at. You're not sure if you're missing something".

KWMC participants also found annoying the use of interactivity in certain websites, such as 'pop-ups' asking users to sign up for newsletters. Melissa and Nancy shared the same opinion about interactive advertisements, which serve as means for collecting data on people's consumer behaviour, and made a plea for a more meaningful use of interactivity. It is also worth noting how seamless interactivity has become for some young people, whereas for others interactive documentaries were unknown before the workshops. Natalie from KWMC commented: "probably I don't realise that things are interactive after time, because lately everything is being interactive so I wouldn't think this is interactive, I probably don't realise how much of it there is". Natalie here refers to the abundance of interactive advertisements and interactive media with commercial purposes, promoting products and services, which participants considered to be "pointless". Natalie's comment that "everything is being interactive" today can be seen in contrast with Stephanie's perspective, who, before the workshops, "didn't realise there was interactive documentary". As discussed in Chapter 4, KWMC participants were trained in some kind of media before starting their interactive project, which enabled a more sophisticated understanding of interactivity.

Emily from PYF noted that the process of watching her interactive documentary made her feel uncomfortable. This reaction was likely related to the fact that the documentary included a clip of Emily singing a song as part of a live performance, which she found "cringey", suggesting perhaps her lack of confidence in herself as a performer. Reflecting on the young people portrayed in her documentary, who were all her friends and participants in the workshops, she noted: "As a viewer I feel like, because we don't know the people in the interviews, we'd be like what are they going on about? And we'd probably say ok, I want this to end now!". Emily felt that not knowing the young

people in the documentary could estrange some of the viewers, which seems to contradict her views on adding interactive elements “so that people, our audience, are interacting with us through all of those things”. This perhaps indicates some of the conditions of successful interactivity, such as a sense of connection with the subjects of interactive documentaries, which the viewer feels.

Alexandra’s take on the documentary that she co-created with Emily was more optimistic. Her views suggest that their documentary could help to subvert stereotypes about young people, similarly to *The Glowing Divide.* Alexandra highlighted the positive effect that the documentary could have on their viewers, who would think that:

> “… (the documentary participants) are really confident people and that they are passionate and proud to do what they do, and they like to have fun with what they do. Obviously, everyone has a passion and inspiration in their life, as said in the clip, but sometimes it’s hard to find what your passion is, and I think if people watch this, they may think that this may help them find their passion” (Alexandra, Video Elicitation interview).

Alexandra here considers the benefits that their documentary could have on supporting their audience, placing emphasis on building confidence in young people, promoting emotions such as pride and passion, as positive messages. Creating positive feelings was seen by Alexandra as an alternative to negative stereotypes about young people, which are often conveyed through traditional media representations of young people - “troublemakers”. This aspect was also discussed in Chapter 4.

Finally, KWMC participants seemed to experience feelings of anxiety while making their interactive documentary. For Nancy, the element of interactivity was something that they forgot about on occasion and that turned out to be a source of anxiety. As Natalie put it, interactivity “created more barriers than opened doors” and had a negative effect on their creativity, as they were conscious of making a documentary that had to be interactive. She concluded that, “when you know it has to be interactive, it makes you not want it to be interactive, because it drives you insane”. Natalie’s views

of interactivity were related to the complexity of using interactive elements as part of a documentary project and the implications this can have for inexperienced makers, as efforts to understand what interactivity entails could hinder the creativity that is inherent in young people's alternative media production. This is one of the challenges being addressed in this research and will be taken into account for suggesting a reconfiguration of pedagogies for teaching and learning with interactive documentary, which I will expand on in Chapter 6.

Familiarity with other media

Participants' engagement with interactive documentaries was influenced by their familiarity with other media. This finding aligns with Nash (2014d: 226), who observed that participants in her empirical study made decisions on how to interact based on their familiarity with interactive media and their personal experiences and motivations.

In expressing his understanding of interactive documentaries, David from Imagineer asked if interactive documentaries were similar to the YouTube videos, "where they speak to the person watching the video", evoking the "YouTubers react" series. Amy compared the user's ability to change the content of interactive documentaries to radio stations, as listeners can have the option of what they want to listen to. Participants also compared interactive documentaries to television documentaries. Michelle from PYF compared the interactive form to television documentaries and added that, depending on the type of interactive documentary, you can ask more questions. In commenting about the use of colour in one of the interactive clips we watched (some of the clips were in black and white), Jane felt that "something serious" was going to happen and Claire associated black and white with security cameras and camera footage on TV news. All these views suggest that participants expressed their understanding of interactive documentary through comparing them with other media platforms with which they were familiar.

Interest in the documentary content

What was of particular interest was the importance of content in influencing the engagement of the young people, which Nash highlighted in her empirical research. Nash noticed differences in how much her participants wanted to interact with

documentary content (2014d: 226). In terms of this research, in the second session of the first PAR cycle at PYF, I asked participants to play the documentary game *Fort McMoney*. The participants had mixed feelings about playing the game, as they thought it was hard for them to relate to the story, which concerned the oil industry in Canada. One participant thought that "there was nothing happening", and another commented that she did not "mind" the fact that it was interactive, but she had no interest in the topic, although the game made audiences focus due to the audio narrative.

Highlighting the importance of content, KWMC participants felt that creating a web-based project on social isolation would engage more young people. Helen and Natalie highlighted that this type of documentary would allow the makers to connect with and support their target audience, comprising mainly young people. This decision was informed by the results of the research that the JDPs conducted in colleges and schools, which showed that increasing numbers of young people would spend their time online.

Apart from young people, James from KWMC suggested that parents and adults were also potential audiences of *The Glowing Divide*, in terms of raising their awareness of social isolation in young people. Melissa referred to the audience of the *The Glowing Divide's* premiere night at KWMC, the majority of which were young people, who were interested in exploring the three stories first, compared with adults, who preferred to learn more about the background of the project, in order to better understand it.

5.2 Participants' engagement as audiences of their own interactive documentaries

Participants considered the Video Elicitation process of watching their films and expressing their feelings and thoughts about them to be challenging, because they were asked to step out of their role as makers and position themselves as viewers of the documentaries. The Video Elicitation interview and the process of engaging with their own documentaries allowed the young people to "step back from immediate experience" (Buckingham 2010: 299), better enabling them to analyse their own media production. This allowed them to express an analytical awareness from a maker's perspective, which would have otherwise not been possible.

Engagement as analytical awareness

Stephanie demonstrated a critical understanding of the limitations of the tools she used, which focused on technical aspects. For example, she said she could have faded the music in certain parts, if she had the option, but the editing tool did not allow her to do so - unless she paid for a Premium account. She also said that she noticed a detail related to editing, after watching the interactive documentary that she made with Michelle, as she used the same part of an interview twice, although it was meant to be at the end of the film. In general, she found their documentary to be good, but some of the transitions were abrupt.

The young people developed a more critical awareness of their own practical work, through engaging with their peers' productions too, as they were able to appreciate the diversity of the projects. Stephanie and Michelle watched all four interactive documentaries created at PYF in our follow-up interview. Michelle found them to be "really good" and Stephanie emphasised the use of different effects and different interactive elements in all four documentaries. She provided the example of the links to YouTube channels, which were included in one of the documentaries, compared to the links of the YouTube songs that they used in their documentary. When I asked Stephanie and Michelle if that screening changed their views on their own film, Stephanie thought that the others were better and Michelle added that all groups approached their interactive documentaries differently, which reinforces the need for reconfiguring a Pedagogy of Difference.

Judy and Oliver mentioned that they had not shared their interactive documentary online, but that they would not mind doing so. As viewers of their documentary, the two young people felt that they could see the message about different views on music that they were trying to convey as its makers and that the point was straightforward. Interestingly, none of the PYF participants clicked on any of the interactive links while watching their documentaries, which may have been due to the fact that they already knew the content of the pop ups, as they had created them. When I asked them, however, if they would click on the links to find out more about the participants, Oliver said that he would "probably automatically" do so.

This lack of participants' physical interaction with their interactive documentary call into question their above-mentioned views on a more "active" audience. It also links to Nash's research (2014c), who recorded the responses of participants engaging with the interactive documentary *Bear 71*, which was produced by the National Film Board of Canada in 2012. Nash observed that almost 1/3 of her participants did not interact with the computer, either because they were unaware of the potential of interacting or because they were preoccupied with the audio narrative. She also noted that participants immersed in the audio showed high levels of engagement with the narrative, which could not be measured in clicks.

The lack of physical engagement also applied to the ways in which participants responded to the simulation game *Asylum Exit Australia* (2011). This simulation positions users as asylum seekers, whose goal is to "find a safe place for them and their family" (Asylum Exit Australia 2011). Forms of emotional and playful engagement emerged from participants' responses, as the majority of participants "self-structured" (Nash 2014c: para 31) their interaction depending on their personal values, and experienced a range of feelings, but very few of them were willing to share their experience on social media platforms. These insights resonate with Bucy (2006), who argues that affordances in interactive media might be present but not used, as seen in the case of Judy and Oliver.

I also recorded the responses of KWMC participants as viewers of *The Glowing Divide*. Participants found this process of engaging with their documentary as viewers to be difficult, as they were already involved in the content as makers of the documentary. Melissa was confused about how she would navigate through the story, saying that she was "biased" due to her involvement in the project. Nancy, on the other hand, felt that the process of viewing the interactive documentary was beneficial, as it helped them to have a better understanding of how viewers might experience their project. She hoped that the audience would watch all three stories, as there was a positive message at the end, but there are no analytics regarding audience engagement to suggest how audiences actually interacted with *The Glowing Divide.*

The use of the trailer in *The Glowing Divide* website provides another example of how participants' engagement with their project enhanced their learning process, as it

enabled them to make sense of their choices as makers and how these could be improved. Helen thought that the trailer which appears when users click “Begin” could be confusing for viewers who had already seen the trailer on other platforms, such as Facebook. Alfred added that, although the trailer provides a good summary of the documentary, there should have been some additional explanation about the project in the beginning. KWMC participants also thought that there was a need for a written explanation regarding the challenges that the teenagers undertook, and that the structure of the documentary might not be as clear to the viewers as it was to them. The use of the navigation map served as a good tool providing viewers with an overview of the available options, which Melissa compared to a traditional film synopsis.

Engagement as difference

Participants’ different approaches to navigating through interactive documentaries were evidenced in the interviews with KWMC participants. Viewers are presented with two options in order to navigate through *The Glowing Divide*, the ‘Teenagers’ and the ‘Background’ sections (Figure 11), from which Helen would click on Background, as she would prefer to know more about the project before choosing the stories of the teenagers. Natalie, however, would go for the Teenagers section, as, for her, the young people were at the heart of the story.

Some materials have been removed from this thesis due to Third Party Copyright. The unabridged version of the thesis can be viewed at the Lanchester Library, Coventry University.

Figure 10: The Teenagers and Background sections of The Glowing Divide

Melissa added that the audience attending the documentary premiere chose Charlie's story first, as this is on the left (Figure 12) and relates to how people are familiar with reading even on screen, although she would go for Ella's story, which is in the middle, because she is the only girl, thus denoting the impact of personal motives in engaging with interactive documentaries.

Amy from Imagineer also asked to watch Charlie's story first. Regarding Charlie's first challenge, which was about giving up gaming for five days, participants highlighted the transformative potential that it had on him, it became an opportunity for him to make more friends and start spending more time away from his computer.

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Figure 11: The Teenagers section of The Glowing Divide

Natalie noted that, instead of watching the other two clips of Charlie's story, she would watch the other teenagers' video diaries, as she would feel the need to know more about how the other teenagers coped. She added that having an overall idea of all three teenagers would enable viewers to select the one they could relate to the most and then follow his/her story. Interestingly, Melissa would do the exact opposite, as she would not like to interrupt the flow of Charlie's story and she would prefer to watch the stories of the three teenagers separately.

These different choices that participants made resonate with Nash's findings (2014d), on the differences in how much her participants wanted to interact with the interactive documentary content. The final section moves on to illuminate the challenges of engaging participants in the Interactive Documentary workshops, focusing on Imagineer, which turned out to be the most complex cycle in terms of engaging participants.

5.3 Challenges of engaging young people in participatory projects

In discussing the concept of engagement in this research, the difficulties which emerged in maintaining participants' commitment to the workshops are worth further

exploration. The KWMC cycle was the smoothest in terms of engaging participants, as the young people participated in the KWMC programme until completing *The Glowing Divide*. I managed to collect all research data as planned, and the final interactive documentary is the most sophisticated in terms of style and use of technology. This is possibly due to the fact that participants were recruited by KWMC for a six-month paid internship, therefore they showed higher levels of commitment. Although participants did not refer to the financial reward as being a key factor for their engagement, I suggest that the nature of the paid internship provided the context for a more structured and sustainable experience. It is worth noting that KWMC originally recruited eight young people, but one of them had to withdraw for personal reasons, leaving the team with seven members, resulting in some changes in terms of their roles.

Participants in the first PAR cycle at PYF also showed engagement. The young people mentioned in their interviews that they enjoyed the process of the workshops. Judy thought that “the workshops were really fun” and that I was a good teacher. Stephanie mentioned that she would do it again as “it was pretty cool” and Michelle noted that it “was fun, but not for a long-term thing personally”. Michelle emphasised her uneasiness with technology and her difficulty in understanding a complex definition of interactive documentary, therefore she continued to resist seeing herself as a maker with an interest in creating interactive media after the end of the cycle.

The second PAR cycle at PYF was problematic in terms of engaging the young people, as three out of four participants did not create an interactive documentary. This was possibly due to the fact that participants were discouraged by the technical problems that emerged and they also had their school exams, which they prioritised over the workshops. These sessions took place in the school that participants attended, instead of the PYF office, which also hindered my communication with the young people.

Regarding the Imagineer cycle, six participants started on this project, from which only one, Amy, attended the final editing sessions, which resulted in the documentary *Social Media Evolution*. A workshop on adding interactive elements to this documentary, followed by a Video Elicitation interview, was initially scheduled to take

place at the end of the cycle but had to be cancelled, as Amy started a new job and was unable to afford time to the project.

Imagineer participants experienced difficulties in keeping pace with the project, and in this section I will reflect on the challenges that they faced. I gained access to the Imagineer group of participants through a Coventry-based charity, which put me in touch with the team behind Imagineer. The group of participants who took part in this cycle comprised young mothers, unemployed and young adults with learning difficulties. Participants had responded to an invitation from Imagineer to get involved in a performance project, which concerned young people (18-24), who were not in education, employment or training. This had implications in terms of their commitment to my research project. The tone was set from the first session, when Amy said that she did not watch films, as she did not have the time to do so, as she had a little boy. Also, the Imagineer participants were simultaneously taking part in rehearsals for the performance that would take place after the scheduled end of this project, so I had to make sure that all sessions did not clash with these rehearsals. I also had to use the space where the rehearsals took place, the Daimler factory in Coventry, for the Interactive Documentary workshops. This obstructed the smooth running of the sessions, because the space was also used by several people who were involved in various tasks in preparation for the performance.

The challenges of working with this group were further highlighted by the director of the performance, in one of her emails. She wrote that some members of the group needed more support, rather than being able to work independently, which is one of the reasons why they had joined the performance project. She also highlighted that the day of the Interactive Documentary workshops was clashing with rehearsals and some participants made a choice not to attend the workshops on that basis.

Two of the participants had other commitments at the time of the editing workshops: David started an apprenticeship, and George was away due to his college course. Additionally, there were difficulties within the working groups, which the director also addressed in an email. She felt that one of the participants, Paul, was not fully aware of the requirements and commitment of the film project, despite my attempts to ensure everyone understood what was entailed at the start. Paul missed some of the

introductory sessions and although I emailed each participant individually regarding the schedule of the workshops, the director noted that Paul did not seem to understand that he should have attended the editing workshops, and never replied to my emails. He also had problems with working as part of a team, as he did not seem to understand that he should have done filming with Claire. The case of Paul, however, was an exception to how young people perceived team work, considering that participants in the other cycles appreciated the benefits of working as part of a team overall, as I outlined above in Chapter 4.

Claire decided to withdraw from the project before the editing sessions and sent me an email to let me know about this decision. In the first session, she had the idea of talking about her own experiences in her interactive documentary, as she said that she was suffering from social isolation. In the third workshop, I provided participants with storyboards, a usual process as part of pre-production, considering that this would help them with planning their narratives. Claire found this process to be stressful and she said that she was struggling with expressing her ideas, as she did not know where to start. During the workshops, I tried to support Claire with the ideation process, by suggesting ways to develop her story. I asked if she could find some pictures on the Internet to illustrate her story, but she said that she could not print, so I suggested that she could use my laptop to show them. In the following session, Claire did not bring any pictures at all.

In her email, Claire explained that she did not feel comfortable with the project, and although she did enjoy the other sessions, every time she tried to work on it, she felt very stressed. As my previous efforts to support her in the workshops were not fruitful and I was cautious not to put more pressure on her, I reiterated that her participation in the project was voluntary and that she had the right to withdraw at any time. I also asked her permission to use the data I had already collected during the sessions. Claire gave her consent and also signed the relevant ethics form, as other participants had.

Claire's case illustrates the complexity of engaging young people in community-based participatory initiatives and the above-mentioned interactions uncover the scope of challenges which might emerge throughout such processes. In my role as researcher

and facilitator of the workshops, I tried as much as I could to support participants, but I was not able to manage anxieties such as the ones that Claire expressed. Such challenges need to be highlighted in reimagining New Media pedagogies, as the discourses of Digital Natives and Critical Media Literacy have failed to address that young people might be in situations confronting them with multiple conflicts. It is also important to acknowledge that such challenges pertain to wider societal issues, and that it might not always be possible to respond to all the demands which researchers and facilitators might confront in implementing a participatory project.

Consequently, only Amy attended the editing workshops in the Imagineer cycle. Initially, we had four sessions planned, the last of which would focus on adding the interactive elements and recording the Video Elicitation interview. As mentioned above, the final session had to be cancelled due to Amy starting a new job. After discussing this outcome with my supervisors, the idea of providing Amy with an incentive to undertake a final follow-up interview emerged. I contacted her through Facebook (as I did not have her phone number), suggesting that I would be happy to offer a gift voucher in recognition of her time, so that we could discuss her views of the project. However, this was not fruitful either and so after almost two months of trying to communicate with Amy, I decided that I should focus on field notes that I had collected from the workshops, not least because I had to move on with the analysis of the data.

In the next chapter, attention is shifted to the discourses of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary and how these shaped this research.

Chapter 6. Critiquing the Discursive Construction of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary

This chapter will explore the theoretical discourses of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary and how these link to the Interactive Documentary workshops, which I conducted as part of my fieldwork. Emphasis will be placed on the continuities and discontinuities of attempting to apply these discourses in complex settings. I will look at the ways in which the workshops addressed the democratising potential and core concepts of Critical Media Literacy, through an analysis of how participants responded to these concepts and their derivatives. Notwithstanding the critical engagement with Freire's concepts in my earlier chapters, emphasis will still be placed on the notions of student "voice" and "empowerment", which are commonly found in the theoretical discourses of Critical Media Literacy. This chapter will also consider the extent to which the workshops correlated with the literature theorising Interactive Documentary as a new learning system.

Before I turn to these discourses, I will refer to Nash's understanding of the discursive dimension in her documentary interactivity framework (2014a) and explain why this understanding is not straightforwardly applicable to this research. It is also important to reiterate at this point the impact of Foucault's perspective of discourse on this research. Foucault sees discourse as both "instrument of power" and "point of resistance" (Foucault 1978: 101). In previous chapters, I examined and critiqued various discourses concerning manifestations of power, including the power of the researcher over the researched and the authority of the educator (Chapters 3 and 4). In Chapter 4, I also examined the power/impact of mainstream media forms on the documentary films created by the participants, in terms of how they represented themselves (section 4.5). In this chapter, I will expand on the Foucauldian perspective of discourse and present discourses which both promote and critique notions of student "voice" and "empowerment".

Nash's discursive dimension

The discursive dimension is proposed as the fourth one in Nash's documentary interactivity framework and "asks us to consider the relationship between user actions

and the voice of the documentary", with an emphasis on user agency and the "rhetorical potential" of interactivity (2014a: 51). The latter refers to the possibility of constructing arguments in interactive documentary "because of the way in which possible user actions are structured" (Nash 2014a: 59).

In this chapter, I will highlight the notion of student "voice" in education, rather than the voice of the documentary, focusing on different aspects of the discursive dimension, as I will highlight the ramifications of the discourses of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary for my fieldwork. Nash's particular definition of the discursive dimension (within those interactive media texts) is not particularly useful to this research because the forms of interactivity used in the documentaries created in the context of my fieldwork, were basic and user actions have minimal effect on the arguments made by the documentaries (they were very simple discursive forms in themselves). What is more pertinent is the wider notion of the discursive formation of Interactive Documentary and how it framed the activities of the participants and also my interpretation and critique.

The voice of the documentary

Based on the findings of this research, the interactive documentaries created by the young people did not successfully develop a relationship between the voice of the documentary and user actions, in the sense that Nash (2014a) suggests, as viewers' impact on the arguments made by the documentaries through physically interacting with them was limited. Nash (2014a) explores the meaning of the voice[65] of interactive documentaries and highlights that the relationship between the arguments made by interactive documentaries and audience actions is instrumental, due to the fact that the notion of authorship in online environments is contested. The discursive dimension in Nash's framework poses the question of the extent to which user actions have an effect on the arguments made by the interactive documentary and consequently to which they have agency with respect to discourse (Nash 2014a: 60).

[65] Nash builds on Bill Nichols's definition of the voice of the documentary, which he sees as constructed by the elements of "technique, style and rhetoric", as the means by which arguments represents themselves to the audience (Nichols 1991: 140).

In terms of this research, the PYF documentaries contained links that the viewers could click on and collect more information about the topics, but they do not have control over the narratives of the documentaries. It would be worth noting that these documentaries could have an impact on the viewers in terms of how they interpret the messages, similarly to what happens with traditional documentaries for example, but the focus of this chapter is on the affordances of interactivity to enable user actions with regards to the arguments of the documentary (such as changing or adding content to the system).

This lack of association between user actions and the voice of the documentary was further exemplified in the follow-up interview with Natalie from KWMC, who commented on the impact that viewers can have on the messages of the documentary: "I guess it was kind of for everyone to interpret individually and to take away from it what they can". This kind of response can be encouraged by traditional documentaries as well, so the use of interactivity in this case does not necessarily have any additional effect on the arguments that the documentary constructs.

The key messages of *The Glowing Divide* were intended to subvert stereotypes about young people and placing emphasis on their perspectives:

> (…) I think a lot of us wanted to know about what social isolation really was for young people and how it impacted them. One thing we definitely wanted to do is challenge older generations' ideas about young people, because especially in Knowle West they got a bit of a bad reputation as troublemakers and just hanging out on street corners or sitting in all day on their phones (…). We wanted to be on the young persons' side and tell it from their point of view as much as possible (…) (Natalie, follow-up interview).

Natalie added that this stance was influenced by their own subjective positions: "We grew up without technology and technology came along when we were teenagers and that's when it took over properly. We've got solid memories of what life was like before everyone was on Facebook (…)". This lived experience of the JDPs and their

understanding of the potentially harmful effects of social media reinforced their positions as makers of *The Glowing Divide,* aiming at raising awareness on the issue of social isolation. Viewers can only filter the key messages of the documentary through their own interpretations and they can choose how they prefer to navigate through the stories, but their actions in interacting with the documentary do not have any further impact on its arguments, as Nash's discursive dimension would suggest.

The following section sheds light on literature emphasising the empowering potential of Critical Media Literacy, which shaped my research, as I was hoping to achieve the empowerment of my research participants by giving them "tools to express their concerns" (Kellner and Share 2007b: 9). The tools in this research were interactive documentaries, which the young people were encouraged to create in group contexts, while interacting with other young people with the aim to share their own perspectives.

The design of the Interactive Documentary workshops was inspired by Freire's culture circles (2000), as participants in the first cycle of PAR were invited to choose their own topics for their documentaries (I will refer to culture circles in section 6.2). The workshops were structured in three phases: the first sessions were theoretical and aimed to provide participants with a better understanding of traditional and interactive documentary. In the second phase, participants did their filming and in the third phase they participated in editing workshops. Despite my intention to cultivate a collaborative ethos and to "share power" with participants, this was not always possible, as participants were conscious of the research context and my role/position as researcher/educator (see Chapter 4 for further analysis). This finding resonates with Buckingham's critique of creative research methods as a means of enabling participants to "tell their own stories" and with his argument towards a critical understanding of "how research itself establishes positions from which it becomes possible for participants to 'speak'" (2009: 635).

6.1 Critical Media Literacy discourse and core concepts

The theoretical discourse of Critical Media Literacy aligns with that of Critical Pedagogy. In their discussion of the benefits that media production offers to media education, Hoechsmann and Poyntz (2012: 104) foreground creative work as "a

powerful form of praxis" and "a way of learning by doing". They argue that media education can contribute to a "critical citizenry conscious of the ways all meaning (…) has a social and historical context, a form of contingency that is susceptible to change" (2012: 200).

This understanding resonates with Freire's concepts of "praxis" and "critical consciousness". The latter refers to "learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire 1996: 17). Critical consciousness, according to Freire (2000: 58), is a "joint project" in the sense that it can be realised when people enter into a dialogue with each other, "united by their action and by their reflection upon that action and upon the world" (2000: 59). The element of praxis is essential in turning critical consciousness into an attainable project, "not through an intellectual effort alone but through praxis, through the authentic union of action and reflection" (Freire 2000: 61). The Interactive Documentary workshops of this research aimed to promote action through involving young people in the creation of interactive productions and thus raising their awareness of their selected topics. These productions were envisaged as catalysts for young people to act against what they perceived as the oppressive elements of their societies, however this turned out to be problematic and complex in practice, as some participants did not make lasting commitments to the projects, which posed emotional and experiential challenges (these challenges were analysed in Chapter 5).

The practical and lived experience of the Interactive Documentary workshops clearly did not conform to the image offered within the theoretical discourses of Critical Media Literacy, which, inspired by Freirean approaches, promotes democratic change through a critical consideration of how media operate.

Core concepts of Media Literacy

In the paper *Toward Critical Media Literacy: Core concepts, debates, organisations and policy*, Kellner and Share (2005: 369) call for reconstructing education to include Media Literacy and they relate literacy to acquiring skills "in effectively learning and using socially constructed forms of communication". The authors suggest that media education and alternative media production can contribute to establishing "a healthy

multiculturalism of diversity and more robust democracy" (370). Additionally, Critical Media Literacy should rely on the analysis of the codes and conventions of media, the interpretation of the meanings and messages of media texts and the subversion of stereotypes. This model differentiates from other approaches in Media Literacy as it promotes the use of media for self-expression and social activism and offers the tools "to help students become subjects in the process of deconstructing injustices, (…) and struggling to create a better society" (2005: 382). It was hoped that the Interactive Documentary workshops of this research could have a similar effect on participants, through articulating their concerns and enabling them to act towards changing oppressive situations. In practice, what the workshops tended to highlight was the immense difficulty of undertaking such learning, especially with already marginalised groups.

In this above-mentioned paper, Kellner and Share refer to the five core concepts of Media Literacy, as identified by the Centre for Media Literacy (CML) in the United States:

1. Principle of Non-Transparency: All media messages are "constructed" (374)
2. Codes and Conventions: Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules (374)
3. Audience Decoding: Different people experience the same media message differently (375)
4. Content and Message: Media have embedded values and points of view (376)
5. Motivation: Media are organised to gain profit and/or power (376).

The authors expand on the first principle of Non-Transparency: "media do not present reality like transparent windows or simple reflections of the world because media messages are created, shaped and positioned through a construction process" (2005: 374). Taking this principle into account, I designed the Interactive Documentary workshops with the overarching purpose to highlight how all types of documentary are constructed, as I will present in the following.

Enhancing participants' understanding of documentary

The workshops had a positive effect on young people's understanding of documentary, in line with the principle of Non-Transparency, according to which all media messages are constructed. The principle of Codes and Conventions was also taken into account, suggesting that media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules (Kellner and Share 2005: 374). One of the first activities in the first theoretical session of each cycle invited participants to express their own understanding of documentary film, aiming to explore what they already knew about it.

Participants at KWMC defined documentary as "visual representation of information through moving image in subjective ways". KWMC participants had some background in media before starting their internship, so this definition reveals that they already had an idea about the lack of objectivity in documentary representations. Some participants said that the purpose of documentary is "to communicate and critique the conversation of an idea". They also associated documentary with story and subject matter.

PYF participants had a different understanding of documentary. They emphasised the fact that documentaries are about "real people and real stories", having original content. They also talked about "real time filming" and mentioned that "nothing is cut out". They characterised documentaries as "honest", as they show an event in "the way it is". Their views placed emphasis on the truthfulness of documentaries.

One of the participants in the second cycle of PAR at PYF said that traditional documentaries can be boring, depending on the theme. When I asked these participants about the objectivity of documentaries, they commented that documentaries are objective as they aim "to persuade people to do different things" and they can be "informative". Chris was wondering if wildlife documentaries are staged too, and I replied that even these documentaries take shape in the editing suites so the filmmakers need to decide how to structure them. These views reveal an uncritical understanding of documentary, reinforcing how challenging it was to transform participants' perspectives and encourage critical engagement.

Participants at Imagineer demonstrated many of the characterisations common to conventional understanding, such as simply associating documentaries with reality.

Jane referred to documentaries that can be reconstructed and I took this opportunity to talk about the lack of objectivity in documentary and for example the genre of mockumentaries, which concern fictional characters. Jane had difficulties with understanding how documentaries do not depict real events and she asked if one could make a documentary about something that is not real. In contrast, Amy commented that all documentaries are staged and interestingly, Jane gave the example of the reality series *Made in Chelsea*. Jane used this example to suggest that the people portrayed in the documentary have to make it interesting, thus expressing her understanding of *Made in Chelsea* as a documentary. She referred to a meeting between characters in the series as being "staged", in contrast with what happened when the characters met, which was not "staged", because she "could see their reaction". Jane's views about what was and was not staged in *Made in Chelsea* illustrate a lack of awareness of the constructed nature of documentaries as well as of the scripted nature of reality shows.

Jane further commented: "I don't get how it's a documentary if it's not real. I get it for a film, but I don't get it why you are trying to tell people information about something that is not real". This initial confusion was later replaced by a more critical understanding of documentary as Jane participated in the workshops. In a subsequent session, she realised: "I'm never going to believe a documentary again! Is that the point?". This analytical awareness could have been further cultivated if Jane had got involved in editing her own documentary, which did not happen in the end as I have already mentioned, because Jane withdrew from the project.

It is also interesting to note how young people associate documentary with reality TV shows, suggesting that their understanding is highly influenced by their familiarity with other media formats – which merely deploy the construct of "reality" as a format device (further discussed in Chapter 5). In one of the first sessions with PYF participants, I showed them the opening of Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie camera* (1929), which is considered to be a reflexive documentary[66]. I chose this film as a good example of exposing the constructed nature of documentary. The young people understood reflexivity by saying that the filmmakers decided to show what the viewers were watching on the theatre screen (this happens in the opening scene), acknowledging

[66] Reflexive documentaries place emphasis on the constructed nature of documentary.

their presence. Michelle compared this process of watching a screen to the reality TV show *Gogglebox,* which shows viewers commenting on TV shows. Additionally, the youth worker who attended the sessions with the second group at PYF used the example of *Made in Chelsea*, to illustrate the "constructedness" of documentaries.

Further examples indicating the young peoples' experience of documentary, which are shaped by subject matter rather than form, are clear form Jane (from Imagineer) who said that she prefers watching documentaries, especially "serious" ones, as she likes to learn, whereas Claire said that, with the exception of documentaries "about Egypt", she does not like watching them. David's engagement depends on the topic of the documentary and how interested he is in it. He added that some documentaries are about "ordinary people". Amy commented that a documentary could be too serious, and sometimes not interesting. She expressed her preference for documentaries about crimes, which she characterised as "like real life ones".

A sign of participants' improved understanding of documentary is linked to one of the PYF sessions. Michelle gave me a piece of paper summarising the differences between traditional and interactive documentaries (Figure 8, p. 125), which she came up with in response to the blog task of the previous week. The paper was divided in two parts, with traditional documentary occupying the left side and interactive documentary the right side. For Michelle, traditional documentaries are about stories which are decided by the filmmaker and which viewers can watch straightforwardly. These can be found on TV and online and they usually last longer than interactive documentaries. The running time is set by the filmmaker, although one could change channel. Interactive documentaries can be found on the Internet and provide users with the experience of moving through a story. Viewers have to interact with and navigate through the story, and they can end it when they want. Finally, users can explore parts of the story they are interested in most. I found Michelle's remarks to be very astute and I was pleased to see the positive effect of the workshops on her understanding of documentary. When I asked Michelle in the Video Elicitation interview about the most important things she learned from the workshops, she replied: "I learned that these documentaries are staged, all this time I thought it was all natural".

Regarding the differences between the traditional and interactive documentaries, one of the participants in the second PYF group mentioned that in traditional documentaries there is often a presenter speaking towards the camera. This demonstrates an awareness of the basic conventions of expository documentary film (Nichols 1991: 34), which involves a narrator. The above-mentioned instances illustrate participants' perceptions of the "creative language" (Kellner and Share 2005: 374) of documentary, as outlined in the theoretical discourse of Critical Media Literacy, which is clearly at a fairly basic level, albeit clearly developing through the project interventions.

Participants' perceptions of fiction and truth in documentary

The sessions which I conducted also introduced participants to the relationship between fiction and truth in traditional documentary and to how this relates to interactive documentaries – as a means of initiating a critical engagement with their assumptions about documentary. The teaching and learning activities on this relationship can be found in the lesson plans of the respective workshops on the PYF and KWMC blogs and are exemplified in this section. The blurred boundaries between fiction and truth are at the heart of documentary scholarship, hence the design of the workshops to address these important issues. As Stella Bruzzi suggests, documentary is seen as "a negotiation between reality on the one hand and image, interpretation and bias on the other" (2000: 4). This resonates with my understanding of the blurred boundaries between fiction and truth in documentary, which constitutes a creative challenge from the point of view of the documentary maker and also serves as a useful introduction to interactive documentaries.

The rationale behind structuring the fieldwork workshops on issues of fiction and truth is linked to the fact that interactivity poses further questions in relation to the objectivity often associated with documentary. Quoting Galloway et al. (2007: 328): "How can factual information be portrayed objectively if that portrayal can be altered in response to viewer input?". It is suggested that user actions in interactive documentaries have the potential to modify the content of the documentary, thus undermining the veracity of the information presented in the documentary.

This issue of the objective nature of documentary and the modification enabled by interactive documentaries was brought up in my interview with KWMC participants, when I asked them about the ways in which their perceptions about interactive documentaries changed after their involvement in *The Glowing Divide* project. Helen thought that the loss of control from the side of the media-makers contributes to enhancing the objectivity of interactive documentaries, which is in contrast with the above-mentioned perspective by Galloway et al. Helen suggested that although interactive media- makers still have certain control of the content of their films, interactive media have provided viewers with the ability to choose in what order they prefer to access that content, and in some cases with the ability to change content or add to it. For Helen therefore, the objectivity of a documentary film is enhanced through removing the biases of the makers:

> I think interactive documentaries are open to manipulation but in some ways I think they can be more objective than traditional standard documentaries. In traditional documentaries, you have no control because the director/producer, they are showing you their side of whatever story but in the interactive documentary you have control over how you view it and therefore that's what makes it more objective (Helen, Video Elicitation interview).

Helen considers the agency of the viewers as a means to enhance the objectivity of the documentary. The findings of this research, however, suggest that the control that viewers have over how they engage with interactive documentaries is limited, although participants expressed perceptions of interactive audiences as being more active. This contradiction is further discussed in Chapter 5.

Another view on how participants perceived of the relationship between the objective and subjective nature of documentary is illustrated by Christine. Participants seemed to equate control with objectivity in expressing their understandings. Christine mentioned that the process of viewing interactive documentaries could be an objective experience, as viewers are provided with the option to watch them in their preferred ways, but interactive media makers still have plenty of options under their control, so interactivity cannot always safeguard the objectivity of the documentaries. She also

provided the example of the documentary game *Fort McMoney* (2013). While playing this game, she was able to pause it and search online in order to inform herself about the topics raised in the documentary. This option of doing research is not directly encouraged in traditional documentaries, where viewers could say "I will look it up later and you never actually do it" (Christine, Video Elicitation interview). Stephanie from PYF expressed the same views on watching TV documentaries, in which case "you can only rely on what they tell you", suggesting that interactive documentaries enable viewers to do more research on the topics that interest them, as they could provide links to other media.

This discussion around the objective nature of documentaries is linked to a certain manipulation of events, which is inherent in documentary film[67]. The following dialogue between KWMC participants Natalie and Nancy illuminates the challenges that the JDPs faced in terms of making decisions in editing *The Glowing Divide* and of "manipulating" the truth. Referring to the process of creating their interactive documentary, Natalie commented:

> Natalie: (…) it made me realise that documentary is hard to do, it's partially structured and partially not, it's a strange thing to film.
> Nancy: We were kind of manipulating the truth, I don't like that idea.
> Natalie: But in the end, looking back, did we actually manipulate the truth?
> Nancy: I mean you have a choice to.
> Natalie: I don't think we actually did, the story that you came up with is great, it completely relied on the teenagers, we said you don't have to do it but if you don't just tell us why, I think we kept it completely honest.
> Nancy: Editing made me realise how much you can change something.
> Natalie: We are very attached with it, we could not cut it out.

[67] Quoting Bruzzi: "documentary's driving ambition is to find a way of reproducing reality without bias or manipulation, and that such a pursuit towards unadulterated actuality is futile" (2000: 68).

Both participants expressed a critical understanding of the nature of documentaries. Nancy seemed to be more worried about the ability of the documentary maker to alter events while editing, but Natalie felt that the representation of the teenagers was truthful, as it relied on their own perspectives. The participants became more aware of the complex process of editing in documentary and appreciated the emotional engagement that makers might have with their footage, thus making it difficult to edit it.

In order to encourage participants to think further about manipulation in documentary, I designed a learning activity incorporating examples of traditional documentaries using elements of fiction, ranging from Lumière's *Exiting the Factory* (1895) to Michael Moore's *Roger and Me (1989)*.

As part of this activity, I showed the trailer of Roger and Me, which is a more recent documentary example of how events can be manipulated in the stage of editing. The documentary portrays Michael Moore in his pursuit of the CEO of General Motors Roger Smith, with the aim of investigating the closing of several factories in his hometown Flint. One of the criticisms that Moore received is that he presented certain events out of chronological order (Ebert 1990: para 3).

KWMC participants expressed an interest in the film in terms of the filmmaker's personal commitments, politics and beliefs. When asked if documentarists should manipulate events in the service of having impact, they said that this kind of manipulation is not necessarily bad because filmmakers can achieve their goals in this way. They pointed out, however, that the filmmakers have an obligation to be true to their subject matter. In terms of their own interactive documentary *The Glowing Divide*, this obligation could be linked to their efforts to convey the authentic accounts of social isolation that the portrayed teenagers shared with them (through the use of video diaries for example, as analysed in Chapter 4).

PYF participants wondered why Moore decided to advertise his film in the trailer and observed that film trailers today are very different, as they mainly include elements of the movie, without revealing too much about the plot. For Stephanie, this type of trailer was confusing, as she would expect to see more of the actual documentary, which

points to her understanding of a trailer as a commercial means of promoting the film. Participants also thought that some filmmakers might manipulate the representation of reality merely to increase the publicity of their films for commercial gain, which they considered to be bad, especially if filmmakers do not clarify the changes of events and do not communicate these to audiences. The young people concluded that the ethical quality of manipulation depends on the aim of the filmmakers, as whether it was done for entertainment, to create interest or to draw more attention to their work. The youth worker who was attending the session commented that manipulation can be good, as "maybe real life is actually boring" and participants agreed with her, suggesting that a certain manipulation of events could be required for more engaging results, which shows how relatively under-developed the participants' views, are since this perspective exemplifies exactly the kind of populism that they criticised above – however coming from a youth worker they seem easily influenced to take a contradictory view seriously.

Imagineer participants' reactions to the trailer were similar. For Jane, manipulation in documentary could be good for attracting more viewers to a worthwhile message and bad if the subjects of the documentary are not aware of it. Jane wondered if manipulating the representation of events means that the documentary is not "true" and she was struggling to understand how that works. I added that this would make more sense when she would get to the editing process, deciding on how she would structure her documentary, which in the end did not happen, as Jane withdrew before reaching the editing stage (as discussed in Chapter 5).

Exiting the Factory

Participants also watched the first film ever made, Lumière's *Exiting the Factory (1895), which is also considered to be the first documentary,* and made some interesting comments, which further demonstrated their understanding of documentary. I chose this film as the Lumière brothers deployed fiction film techniques, instructing the workers how to move in front of the camera. KWMC participants highlighted the sociological nature of the film and wanted to know more about the type of the factory, as the majority of the workers leaving the factory were women. Participants clearly noticed the elements of fictionality in this earliest

documentary, observing that the workers seemed to avoid the camera. One of the participants characterised this film as the "world's first corporate video", as it presents factory workers.

On the other hand, the young people at PYF were surprised by the fact that *Exiting the Factory* was silent and one of them asked if it was scripted. Chris, one of the participants in the second PYF cycle, thought that the film was "weird", because "there were just people walking out of a factory". John said that the film looked "unnatural", as the people were walking too fast. I explained that this had to do with the different frame-rate, which was used at the time. In order to make a point about the conventions of documentary filmmaking to connote naturalism, I asked if the people in the film were instructed not to look at the camera. John noticed that they were trying to avoid the camera, because "if you walk out from work, you would go straight".

In the case of the Imagineer participants, Amy thought that the film was "real life", as it portrays workers getting out of a factory. She also wondered why people would go to the cinema to watch that film. David followed up on this and compared it to the emergence of 3D, which was something new and exciting for people at the time. Claire thought that some of the people in the film looked similar to each other and Jane commented that people change their reactions when a camera present. These views suggest that KWMC participants demonstrated a more sophisticated understanding of the 'fictionality' of *Exiting the Factory compared with PYF and Imagineer participants, which is likely to be a consequence of the fact that KWMC participants* had already received some kind of training in media before starting *The Glowing Divide* project. All participants however became more critical in their engagement with documentaries as the fieldwork progressed.

Cinema Vérité and Direct Cinema

Due to KWMC participants' background in media, I incorporated some additional elements of documentary fictionality in our first workshop. The first part of the workshop ended with a comparison between Cinema Vérité and Direct Cinema. The first style involves the filmmaker as part of the reality portrayed, whereas, according to the second style, the filmmaker remains unobtrusive. The participants commented on an extract from Jean Rouch's documentary *Chronicle of a Summer* (1960). Their

concept was further revealed in their mentioning that real people were interviewed so the film was in some ways objective, but the documentarist chose specific people to take part in the film and directed their answers through asking them specific questions. The participants were also asked to compare this film with an example from Direct Cinema, Fred Wiseman's *Titicut Follies* (1967). They observed that both films were staged, but that the Direct Cinema example invited a more open interpretation from the audience.

At the end of the workshop, the participants agreed that they left with a better understanding of the use of fictionality that is inherent to documentary. All the participants confirmed that before starting their internship at KWMC they had not heard about interactive documentaries. Natalie in particular mentioned in her interview, that the theoretical workshops, alongside speaking to an expert in interactive games, introduced her to this form and gave her a good idea of the field.

The workshop on documentary fiction and truth invited KWMC participants to address questions related to their own production. For example, the makers aimed to involve the community in their film so they would consider how to use interactivity in order to do so, as well as how to showcase their film. The participants mentioned that after this session, they became more aware of the necessity to define the reasons why they wanted to make an interactive, instead of a traditional, documentary. The participants had already defined the aims and purposes of their interactive documentary, but after this session they realised the need to think about how they could use interactivity to better achieve these aims and the implications of utilising this approach.

The following section explores the notions of student voice and empowerment, which are prominent in Critical Pedagogy discourse, with regards to how these influenced the delivery of the Interactive Documentary workshops.

6.2 Student voice and empowerment

Freire's concept of critical consciousness directly influenced this research in terms of the design of the workshops. Critical consciousness promotes the empowerment of learners, alongside enabling them to find their voice through a dialogical process, and

aims at harmonising critical thought with critical action. The process of raising critical consciousness can help people to feel “empowered to think and act on the surrounding conditions” and associated them with forms of power in society (Shor 1993: 31). Shor adds that the Freirean pedagogy - trying to develop critical consciousness - is a student-centered dialogue which problematises generative themes from everyday life (1993: 32).

These themes from everyday life were explored in Freire’s culture circles. In a similar way, the workshops which I conducted sought to enable participants to explore themes from the lives of the young people who participated, through the creation of interactive documentaries.

The culture circles

Freire sheds light onto the ways in which dialogue has the potential to reinforce education through the culture circles. He sees the role of the educator as to enter into dialogue with the illiterate about “concrete situations” (Freire 2007: 43) and offering them the instruments with which they can teach themselves reading and writing. In the culture circles, participants offered the topics for the debates and group debate was encouraged to clarify situations and consider what action could be taken in response to the topics. The culture circles were based on the belief that: “whoever enters into dialogue does so with someone about something, and that something ought to constitute the new content of our proposed education” (Freire 2007: 41). Smith (1976: iv) further elaborates on Freire’s pedagogy, which aimed to help “the illiterate, ‘voiceless’ poor to ‘read’ their socio-political and economic situation, to understand how the system victimises and oppresses them, and to take appropriate, collaborative, democratic action to transform the system”.

Freire’s culture circles were organised in five phases. The first phase included researching the vocabulary of the groups and choosing words with “existential meaning”. In the second phase, generative words were chosen from this vocabulary. In the third phase, codifications were created, which represented typical existential situations of the groups. In the fourth stage, these agendas were elaborated and in the final stage, cards were prepared breaking down phonemes. Having addressed the

critiques of Freire's work in previous chapters, it is still possible to use the notion of dialogic pedagogy and the model of culture circles as an approach, since most of the critical commentaries was mainly directed at his lack of a gendered and contextual perspective. The organisation of Freire's culture circles influenced the structure of the Interactive Documentary workshops, and the creation of participants' interactive documentaries reflected a "codification" of situations in young people's lives.

Finding voice

In line with these perspectives on the salience of dialogue in teaching and learning, one of the purposes of Media Literacy is to enable young learners to find their voice and to "become actively involved in their worlds" (Hoechsmann and Poyntz 2012: 112). This purpose was considered while designing the workshops for this research and it was envisaged that the interactive documentaries could serve as vehicles for the young people to "become actively involved" with the topics they selected.

This section focuses on discourses which foreground the "voice" of young people, as these had a significant impact on the design of the fieldwork and its aim to help participants with articulating their concerns. In practice, realising this aim was challenging. As I had decided to reach young people from disadvantaged communities, this meant that the context of fieldwork was often informal and voluntaristic. This proved to be more complex than I had anticipated and I had difficulties with finding and accessing such groups of young people. Additionally, some participants struggled to commit to the project (an analysis of the challenges to engage participants can be found in Chapter 5).

According to Kellner and Share (2005: 371), Critical Media Literacy highlights the importance of valuing student's voice for deconstructing and making media and provides tools for marginalised and misrepresented people to express their concerns. Critical Media Literacy is seen as providing people with power over their culture and encouraging them to create their own meanings and to transform the material and social conditions of their culture. Kellner and Share (2005) expand on this:

> Coming to voice is important for people who have seldom been allowed to speak for themselves, but without critical analysis it is not enough. Critical analysis that explores and exposes the structures of oppression is essential because merely coming to voice is something any marginalised racist or sexist group of people can also claim. Spaces must be opened up and opportunities created so that people in subordinate positions have the opportunity to collectively struggle against oppression to voice their concerns and create their own representations (Kellner and Share 2005: 371).

This emphasis on critical analysis contributes to empowering learners and points to a democratic pedagogy which involves teachers sharing power with students:

> The process of empowerment is a major aspect of transformative education and it can take many forms, from building self-esteem to creating alternative media that voice opposition to social problems. (…) When groups misrepresented in the media become investigators of their representations and creators of their own meanings the learning process becomes an empowering expression of voice and democratic transformation (Kellner and Share 2005: 371).

A similar discourse of empowerment is related to participatory culture. In their discussion of the benefits of participatory culture, Jenkins et al. (2006: xii) foreground the importance of peer-to-peer learning, the development of skills needed in the workplace and "a more empowered conception of citizenship". Participatory culture also encourages young people to deepen their civic engagement and political empowerment, which stem from making meaningful decisions within a real civic context.

The association of creative work with empowerment and developing self-identities has led to the creation of community-based youth media production programmes which are considered to provide "a youthscape, an environment shaped by social, political

and cultural forces that nurtures the perspectives and points of view of new creative voices" (Hoechsmann and Poyntz 2012: 118), thus empowering young people. Hoechsmann and Poyntz, however, point out that there are "political, social and cultural forces" (123) that need to be taken into account whenever young people engage in creative work. As my research highlighted, there are differences in engagement that can arise between participants depended on the material and social specificities of their lived experience. Hoechsmann and Poyntz conclude that these considerations have resulted in educators and young people looking beyond questions of voice when discussing the ways in which media production could stimulate youth agency.

Hoechsmann and Poyntz (2012: 118) attribute the problematic results of some community-based youth initiatives to the assumption that all self-expression can be liberating, whereas self-expression can sometimes be "a limiting or disempowering act". The authors provide the example of a study, which involved young people in producing "so-called authentic representations" about their life (Fleetwood 2005 cited in Hoechsmann and Poyntz 2012: 122). The study resulted in replicating some of the stereotypes used to characterise young people in contemporary culture, thus reinforcing social inequalities, instead of undermining them, which emerged in the findings of my study as well. Another aspect that educators need to pay attention to is that of a latent form of regulation, which could serve the needs of the Information Age (Hoechsmann and Poyntz 2012: 123).

Buckingham addresses his critique of the democratic promise of New Media technologies in the light of consumer-driven economies as well:

> Far from precipitating a democratic revolution in communications, these new media are merely part of much broader moves towards individualisation, self-surveillance and self-promotion that are characteristic of how identities are formed and lived out in neo-liberal consumer societies (Buckingham 2010: 295).

Overall, the attempt to mobilise the supposed empowering potential of combining community-based programmes with interactive media in this research, revealed the

complexity of this confluence, the various dimensions of which I described in the previous chapters. The combination of interactive technology with community-based interventions resulted in a critique of claims suggesting that technology alone has the potential to maximise community engagement. Rather than being a natural affordance of the engagement of participants in voicing their authentic concerns (and thereby developing a critical consciousness), the attempted utilisation of Interactive Documentary technologies actually revealed the immense complexity and the challenges facing any disenfranchised young person in such an educative project. The results of this research aligned with feminist discourses, which emphasise the contextual character of teaching and learning. These discourses were introduced in Chapter 2, and feminist critiques focusing on "voice" and "empowerment" will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

The contextual character of doing fieldwork

The theoretical discourse of Critical Pedagogy places emphasis on engaging marginalised groups of people, providing them with "tools to tell their stories and express their concerns" (Kellner and Share 2007b: 9), but omits a crucial set of issues in working with such groups, those of access, differential prior experience and the interaction between the participants' engagement with the project and their daily life, which is addressed in this research.

Throughout my fieldwork, I faced a lot of difficulties in recruiting young people from disadvantaged communities[68]. The process of looking for research participants in England proved to be time-consuming, as I had to negotiate with people from various organisations who could put me in touch with youth community groups. This was not always successful, as it was challenging to engage hard-to-reach populations. Even when I managed to a find a group of young people, it was difficult for participants to commit to the project, due to having other priorities. In total, eight participants did not make it to the end of the projects. Two of the participants who finished their

[68] Initially, I was planning to carry out fieldwork with high school students in Greece, which could serve as an example of "a society in transition" as defined by Freire (2007), due to the financial crisis it is undergoing. This plan had to change, as I could not get permission from the Ministry of Education in Greece.

documentaries were unable to record interviews and one of them did not add any interactive elements to her documentary. These instances could be seen as indications of "student silence", instead of "student voice". These challenges are further analysed in Chapter 7.

Furthermore, in my attempt to work with young people from disenfranchised communities, I designed the Interactive Documentary workshops as part of an informal education and learning context, aiming at after school programmes. Formal education contexts would have been an inappropriate context within which to undertake the series of workshops I had conceptualised. As a consequence of the choice of informal contexts, there were no further incentives for participants to complete the cycles, apart from learning new skills and participating in a creative project alongside working with other young people[69]. This lack of further incentives possibly influenced the levels of engagement which participants demonstrated, and which were further discussed in Chapter 5. The final section moves on to address the ways in which the workshops did not conform to Interactive Documentary literature about its educational potential.

6.3 Interactive Documentary discourse

In his paper exploring the interactive non-fiction as Web 2.0 educational strategy, Arnau Gifreu (2012: 4994) argued that using interactive documentaries in Higher Education settings can increase student motivation and offer experiences that combine entertainment with education. Among the advantages of digital teaching and learning systems, he highlighted collaborative learning, multi-directionality and freedom of dissemination. Additionally, in the paper *Educational Multimedia applied to the interactive nonfiction area, using interactive documentary as a model for learning,* Gifreu and Moreno (2014: 1306) suggest that interactive documentaries have benefits in educational contexts, as they offer new ways to approach, understand, play and learn from reality, and therefore new ways of spreading content

[69] It is worth noting that participants would be unlikely to see the form of critical consciousness as an end in itself and since it was at the heart of the research questions, this could not be granted in advance.

and gaining knowledge. The authors emphasise that for many years, film has been used for educational purposes and for creating social and political awareness. They acknowledge that the Internet and the rise of Web 2.0 offered opportunities for enhancing some of the classic principles of education, suggesting a reconfiguration of technological paradigms which supports new learning logics, according to which the student is immersed in a technological learning environment based on the feedback of information (1307). Gifreu and Moreno (2014: 1313) point out that interactive documentary provides an interesting educational tool as it proposes a challenge, provides data to make decisions and forces the brain to retain the data to make sense of the story and connect knowledge.

Some of the benefits of interactive learning systems could not be delivered in the complex informal educational settings of this research, amongst other things because of the anxiety which was created among participants about incorporating interactivity into their documentaries (outlined in Chapter 5). The withdrawal of the interactive storytelling tool, which was initially promoted as a revolutionary technology with democratising potential (outlined in Chapter 4), was more than just an incidental hindrance – it highlights the actual challenges and necessary levels of resilience and resourcefulness required of creative practitioners in this space. Qualities that take time, resource and development that many people lack. The tool of interactive documentary did not increase participants' motivation either. This was particularly evident in the Imagineer cycle, as only one participant completed the editing sessions. Claire decided to withdraw from the sessions as she found this experience too stressful. David was unemployed at the time he joined the workshops but started an apprenticeship shortly after and was unable to continue. The workshops failed to engage the two participants with learning disabilities who were also part of the team. These findings highlight the need for articulating more nuanced and contextually sensitive pedagogies for integrating interactive media in emancipatory pedagogies, premised on empirical evidence which interrogate Interactive Documentary's theoretical discourse.

Summary

This section illuminated the analysis of the data that I collected while conducting fieldwork with participants in Coventry and Bristol. Chapter 4 explored the ways in which the young people responded to Interactive Documentary technology, pointing to a new and more complex understanding of the relationship between young people and digital technology, which moves beyond the technological determinism often found in literature. Overall, the technical constraints that emerged (interactive documentary technology in BETA stage, limited resources etc.) had significant impact on the educational process and need to be acknowledged in designing youth programmes on Interactive Documentary. These findings point to the shortcomings of some of the theoretical discourses of Critical Media Literacy, which omit addressing potential challenges with implementing technology in emancipatory youth projects. Negative implications of technology, such as its contribution to social isolation in young people, need to be further explored in youth research and more empirical studies are required on the role that technology plays in young people's lives.

This research also challenges assumptions about young people's straightforward affinity with technology due to their age and their lifetime exposure to the digital. Regarding their levels of engagement with Interactive Documentary technology, results varied depending on participants' previous experiences with making media and their previous training. In the 14-16 group, most participants did not feel at ease with using the Popcorn Maker and they had mixed responses regarding the tool's simplicity. Socio-economic factors also need to be taken into consideration, as participants' backgrounds had an effect on the extent to which they engaged with technology in the workshops.

In terms of the relational aspects of this research, I approached the relationship between the researcher and the participants through Dascal's (2009) positive understanding of "mind colonisation", which foregrounds trust and respect as necessary elements of communication between heterogeneous groups. At the start of the project, I had specific views about the potential of the workshops to emancipate participants. Although I made an effort to detach from any preconceptions throughout my fieldwork, eradicating the power imbalance of the research context was not possible, as I outlined in Chapter 4. However, treating participants with respect and

building a relationship of trust contributed to establishing a connection with participants, which was important for methodological and ethical rigour.

The workshops had positive impact on the relationships which developed among participants. The young people at PYF appreciated their peers and cultivated stronger friendships. In terms of the relationship between participants and their interactive documentaries, the young people chose topics which they thought were relevant to their everyday lives and interviewed their fellow participants on topics that matter to them. The final documentaries illustrate how young people make sense of their world, through their perceptions of music, dance, performance, community and social media, illuminating their feelings, thoughts and opinions about them. These interactive documentaries reproduce typical adolescent concerns, even though the makers suggested that they aimed to subvert stereotypes about young people as being troublemakers.

Chapter 5 expanded on the notion of engagement in this research. This refers to participants' engagement with interactivity, in terms of their emotional engagement with it and how they understand interactive audiences, their engagement as audiences of their own interactive documentaries and the challenges of engaging young people in a participatory process. This concept also points to factors such as familiarity with traditional media and interest in the content of the documentary, which emerged in this study.

This chapter illuminated a contradiction between young people's perception of interactive audiences and their responses as viewers of their own documentaries. Participants themselves expressed the presumption of Interactive Documentary audiences as being more "active", however they did not engage in physical interaction with their own interactive productions. Participants' understanding of Interactive Documentary seemed to focus on the audience's participatory potential - they thought that viewers gained more control over the documentary through navigation. The benefits of the interactive form were summarised in terms of its providing more information, contributing to an ongoing research process and keeping viewers' attention span. The web-based and fragmented nature of the Interactive Documentary

narrative were considered to be disadvantages, as they might inhibit some people from watching it or from assessing all the information.

These results have implications for the process of meaning making. The fact that participants did not click on any of the interactive links in their own documentaries was partly due to the fact that, as makers, they already knew the content of the links. However, not physically interacting with the computer did not hinder participants from making meaning (which could have been the case as these were interactive documentaries), as most of the links (eg. in the PYF films) were used to provide additional information and context to the documentary. Added to this, participants experienced mixed feelings in engaging with interactivity, ranging from empathy to anxiety. In some cases, interactivity was seen by participants as a source of anxiety, affecting their creativity and creating more constraints than opportunities. The variety of possibilities for navigating through interactive documentaries created confusion for some participants, and some felt that the 'pop-ups' distracted them from following a story.

The Video Elicitation process contributed to raising participants' awareness as makers, pointing to what Buckingham (2010: 299) identified as the need for young people to "step back from immediate experience" in order to be able to analyse and reflect on their media production. Through the process of Video Elicitation, participants were able to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of their works and to identify the different approaches to interactivity.

Finally, the evidence discussed in Chapter 5 suggests how complex it us to engender engagement in less privileged settings. In my role as researcher and facilitator, I faced challenges in terms of coping with anxieties that participants expressed, the management of these anxieties required sensitivity and also expertise which was not something I expected to have to possess. These experiences point to the challenging nature of working with vulnerable groups, which is also omitted from the theoretical discourse of Critical Pedagogy.

Chapter 6 explored the theoretical discourse of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary in relation to the design and delivery of the workshops that I conducted for my fieldwork, through the lens of concepts such as "empowerment", "voice" and

“critical consciousness”. This research acknowledges the Foucauldian perspective of discourse, seen as both “instrument of power” and “point of resistance” (Foucault 1978: 101), therefore this chapter presented discourses on the empowering potential of Critical Media Literacy, as well as discourses critiquing such claims. Considering that each technology (discourse and practice) produces different kinds of subjectivity, this chapter illustrated that Interactive Documentary does not free young people from power. It enables new discursive forms to come into existence, but simultaneously enmeshes those who produce and engage with these new forms in new relationships of power.

This chapter shed light on the continuities and discontinuities of applying Critical Media Literacy discourses in complex settings. Regarding the continuities, the workshops had a positive impact on the ways in which young people understood documentary and contributed to raising participants’ awareness. At the heart of the theoretical sessions of my fieldwork there was an intention to raise issues of fiction and truth in documentary. Participants were invited to reflect on the manipulation of events which is inherent in documentary films and through these reflections, they demonstrated a critical understanding of documentary.

In terms of discontinuities, this research problematised one of the central aims of Critical Media Literacy: to enable learners to find their voice, emphasising their political empowerment. The results of this research align with feminist critiques of such claims, which suggest paying more attention to the contextual nature of such educative projects, as many of the findings of this study could be seen as indications of “student silence”, as of “student voice”.

To conclude, this chapter interrogated Interactive Documentary discourse, theorising Interactive Documentary as a new learning system, offering new ways to approach, understand, play and learn from reality, and therefore new ways of spreading content and gaining knowledge (Gifreu and Moreno 2014: 1306). Whilst the tool might be beneficial in Higher Education settings, its use in more complex environments requires a more nuanced understanding of its potential to engage participants, which is discussed next.

The following section brings together the findings discussed in previous chapters and points to the reconfiguration of a concept found in Critical Pedagogy literature, that of Pedagogy of Difference. I will argue towards Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 and outline some of the characteristics of this new approach to pedagogy.

SECTION 3: FINDINGS

Chapter 7. Pedagogy of Difference 2.0

In this chapter, and in light of the analysis presented in the previous three chapters, I will argue for the development of a Pedagogy of Difference 2.0, thus reconfiguring a concept often deployed in feminist and Critical Pedagogy discourse, that of a Pedagogy of Difference. A Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 would reflect the complexity of teaching and learning in today's interactive media landscape and acknowledges the challenges of the community-based informal educational projects presented in previous chapters, such as the contextual character of classroom interactions, the pursuit of participation and raising awareness. Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 is also grounded in aspects of technology, relationships, experience and discourse, as these emerged from a series of Interactive Documentary workshops with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The previous analysis chapters have presented that the combination of participatory interactive tools with participatory interactive pedagogies does not necessarily result in improving participants' engagement, as the combination of the theoretical discourses that accompany interactive tools and pedagogies would suggest. This research introduced the tool of interactive documentary in a series of workshops designed on the basis of Critical Media Literacy. In doing so, this research was premised on the theoretical discourses of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary. The theoretical discourse of Critical Media Literacy was selected due to its transformative and empowering potential in terms of cultivating participants' critical thinking skills and encouraging them to act towards changing oppressive situations in their lives and societies. Interactive Documentary has been theorised as a new learning system, offering educational benefits such as collaborative learning and increasing students' motivation, thus providing an ideal platform for realising Critical Media Literacy's democratic promise.

Considering the challenges which emerged in my pursuit to engage participants in the above mentioned series of Interactive Documentary workshops, this thesis provides a critique of such discourses, in line with feminist critiques of Critical Pedagogy

discourse, which foreground “the contextual nature of all classroom interaction” (Orner 1992: 82). This chapter will discuss how reinscribing the discourse of Critical Media Literacy is required to bring attention to some of the challenges, which educators might face in combining participatory approaches with interactive media – especially outside of the relatively privileged contexts of Higher Education. Firstly, I will provide an outline of the concept of a Pedagogy of Difference, before I move on to illustrate what a Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 entails.

Pedagogy of Difference

The concept of a Pedagogy of Difference is discussed in several feminist discourses influenced by Post-structuralism and which promote the rejection of the “universal subject”. The epistemology of Post-structural feminism is based on a radical concept of difference as constitutive of all identity positions and which acknowledges the contextual character of knowledge. Carmen Luke (1994: 38) associates a Pedagogy of Difference with feminist pedagogy which “extends into anti-racist pedagogies and includes teaching *for* and *about* difference not only in terms of gender and sexual identity, but intersecting differences of class, ability and able-bodiedness, race, ethnic, religious and national identity” (italics in original). This pedagogy encourages students to critically analyse discourses in order “to interrogate the socio-cultural and historical contingencies of difference, exclusion and marginalisation” (Luke 1994:44).

Kathleen Weiler (1994) elaborates on feminist Pedagogy of Difference, suggesting that a feminist pedagogy acknowledges and validates difference and as such provides a more complex realisation of Paulo Freire’s vision of fighting against oppression, although both pedagogies encourage social transformation and see human beings as subjects. Bill Green (1998) further discusses difference as an essential resource for learning and teaching. He presents the work of what he called the “London” tradition (namely the work of J. Levine and D. Buckingham), which provides accounts of practices, institutions and discourses of mainstream schooling. In this tradition, learning is discussed in terms of the production and engagement of difference and teaching is seen as contextual rather than causative with regards to learning (1998: 179). The author concludes by emphasising the need for Critical Pedagogy to “become sensitive to, and aware of, the limits of its own (im)possibility, and accordingly more

patient and modest in attending to the complexity of educational enterprise" (1998: 191). This idea is addressed in this research through a careful consideration of what this "(im)possibility" could entail, in terms of the challenges of engaging participants and the constraints of delivering Critical Pedagogy's politicising potential.

Finally, Giroux (1992) provides a definition of literacy as part of a broader democracy and politics of difference. He argues that postcolonial discourses provide "theoretical insights that can be used to redefine literacy as part of an attempt to connect educational struggles with broader efforts to democratise, pluralise and reconstruct public life" (1992: para 1). In a postcolonial context, literacy helps to emphasise that meaning is not fixed and to connect liberation to a dialogical process "with the multiple languages, discourses and texts of others who speak from different histories, locations and experiences" (Giroux 1992). Based on this premise, I sought to use Dascal's (2009) strategy for a positive role of "mind colonisation" (see Chapter 2) to illuminate the relationship between the researcher and the researched[70].

Dascal (2009: para 59) refers to Freire, whose "problem-posing" education model opposes "a typically mind-colonising educational paradigm", which Freire called the "banking" model. According to this model, knowledge is deposited from teachers to students, which Dascal sees as an example of "the characteristic *epistemic* nature of mind colonisation" (italics in original). It is worth noting that Freire's model of education also needs to be problematised, in the sense that Freire wrote about the concept of "critical consciousness" as being unified and universal, thus not acknowledging the concept of difference in his writing, apart from the difference between the "oppressors" and the "oppressed".

[70] Dascal (2009: para 59) envisions mind colonisation as a "condition for thought", which enables "communication between others that are different" and foregrounds trust and respect. This conceptualisation of mind colonisation is relevant to this research, as it can be linked to the communication which I developed with participants. Even though I was different from the participants (in terms of levels of education, age, ethnicity and race in some cases), throughout the workshops I refrained from the "banking" model education and I tried to promote an ethos of participation whereby researcher and researched could learn from each other, respecting different views. Levelling hierarchies turned out to be a challenging but insightful process, which was nevertheless based on trust and respect as Dascal suggests (analysed in Chapter 4).

Giroux adopts a Post-structuralist approach in this understanding of literacy, however he does not address the ways in which he produces discourse through his own writings. He sees literacy as conceived in ethical terms concerning how relationships are constructed and uses this definition to question the spaces “that intellectuals inhabit as they seek to secure authority through specific ways of reading or misreading their relationships with the world and others” (para 5). What Giroux omits from his definition of literacy is how he replicates these forms of authority from the position of the intellectual which he is critiquing, as his arguments are not supported by evidence in terms of classroom practice.

Giroux suggests the reconstruction of literacy to encompass difference as a means to support freedom and equality:

> If a politics of difference is to be fashioned as an emancipatory rather than oppressive practice, literacy must be rewritten in terms that articulate difference with the principles of equality, justice and freedom in mind rather than with those interests supportive of hierarchies, oppression, and exploitation. In this case, literacy as an emancipatory practice asks people to write and speak in the language of difference, a language in which meaning becomes dispersed and resistant to a permanent closure (Giroux 1992: para 10).

Giroux argues that rewriting the discourse of literacy and difference should provide students with opportunities for “oppositional languages and practices” (para 27). A re-written discourse should help students to explore “diverse cultural zones that offer a critical resource” (para 24) for reconsidering how the relations between unequal groups are constructed and how they might be reconfigured to promote democracy. He proposes a politics of literacy and difference that encourages students to question how categories of race, class and gender are formulated within configurations of power and to read “history as a way of reclaiming identity and power” (para 26).

However, this rewriting of the discourse of literacy that Giroux suggests does not provide simple insights or direct suggestions on how “oppositional languages and

practices" can be implemented in practice, and therefore has little relevance to educators seeking to use interactive media in the context of critical teaching and learning approaches. The pedagogies that Giroux and Freire suggest in their writings can appear to be abstract and there is a need for a more tangible vision of the construct of difference, and how this operates as part of teaching and learning in the contemporary interactive media landscape. Perhaps though what is indicated is that it was more important that someone engaged with these particular groups of young people in ways that were not the traditional banking hierarchical pedagogy, than the measureable success of each project in terms of completed interactive documentaries produced. What mattered here was the educative process, not the creative product.

The concepts of "voice" and "empowerment" have been problematised in feminist discourse, which, from a Foucauldian perspective, operates as a form of resistance to master narratives. The feminist critiques which informed the construction of Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 are briefly presented in the next section.

Feminist critiques

Orner (1992) provides a critique of the demands for student voice in liberatory education from a Post-structuralist feminist stance[71]. She highlights the importance of the "contextual nature of all classroom interaction" (1992: 82) and suggests that there might be occasions when students do not feel safe to speak. These occasions should not be perceived as cases of resistance or internalised oppression but rather educators should pay attention to the heterogeneous environments in which silencing and speaking take place. Orner concludes that a great potential for change lies in the "gaps and ruptures in practice, the breaks, confusion and contradiction that are a part of the interplay in teaching" and which radical educators should try to embrace (1992:

[71] Orner argues that such calls position both teachers and students in ways which are problematic as they presume the existence of fixed identities and unified subjectivities and ignore the diverse "identities, unconscious processes, pleasures and desires" in all subjects (1992: 79). Student voice is seen as an "oppressive construct" which sustains relationships of domination and disregards the educators' embodiment of "privilege and oppression" in the classroom (1992: 75). The author raises doubts about the motives behind the institutional validation offered by certain critical educators and emphasizes that the teacher's authority cannot be eradicated, not even in the name of progressive education.

84). This approach is associated with feminism, and resonates with Rose's (1997) views of the research process being "uncertain", due to the "absences and fallibilities" (1997: 319), which might emerge from the researcher's interpretation of the data (as discussed in the Introduction chapter). These views influenced the development of Pedagogy of Difference 2.0, which promotes the contingent nature of knowledge.

McLeod et al. (1994) further elaborate on the prominence of voice and difference in feminist pedagogy and challenge related literature which foregrounds finding voice as an important stage in the process of "conscientisation" in women. The authors point out that the theoretical discourse of feminist pedagogy does not have a clear vision of what it means to address the ways in which difference operates in classroom and that it needs to combine the concepts of student voice and difference with better concepts of curriculum, learning and the teacher.

Finally, Gore (1992) also foregrounds a Foucauldian analysis to power, which questions the idea that power can be given from one to another[72]. In her conclusion, Gore suggests that radical educators should strive to exercise power towards achieving the purposes of progressive education in ways which promote "humility, skepticism and self-criticism" and link empowerment to pedagogical practice and knowledge production (1992: 68). This reinforces the need for critical and feminist discourses to acknowledge the importance of the contexts in which empowerment takes place and also to provide a clear vision for the actions of the teachers they hope to empower. In terms of this research, the context in which my fieldwork took place shaped the outcome of the workshops to a significant extent, as I outlined in Chapter 6.

What this inquiry has illuminated is a Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 emerging from empirical evidence, resulting from fieldwork using the tool of interactive documentary,

[72] Gore (1992) argues that some critical and feminist discourses promote a collective and political notion of empowerment, which is accompanied by assumptions such as the agent of empowerment, power as property and the unreflexive use of the term. Such claims to empowerment convey a sense of arrogance, as teachers are seen as already empowered, and ignore the reflexivity which is required for critical practice. Gore expresses her concern "that these claims to empowerment attribute extraordinary abilities to the teacher, and hold a view of agency which risks ignoring the context(s) of teachers' work" (Gore 1992: 57).

initiated by a researcher who also had the role of the educator and conducted research with young people from disadvantaged environments. This research makes a contribution to knowledge from this perspective, as there is no previous research on the pedagogical implications of combining the fields of Interactive Documentary with Critical Media Literacy. A Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 also acknowledges the various manifestations of difference in terms of the discourse, technology, experience and relationships linked to teaching and learning with interactive media, moving beyond a fixed conceptualisation of difference, such as the one that Giroux and Freire elaborated on. This Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 will be outlined in section 7.3. Next, I will highlight some of the insights which emerged from this research with regards to the discourses of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary, summarising the continuities and discontinuities of this research with the respective discourses, which shaped the need for arguing towards a Pedagogy of Difference 2.0.

7.1 Critical Media Literacy discourse

In my attempt to work with young people from disenfranchised communities, I designed the Interactive Documentary workshops as part of an informal education and learning context, aiming at after-school programmes. This was due to the fact that there were no formal education contexts within which I could implement the series of workshops which I conceptualised. As a result of this informal context, there were arguably few incentives for participants to complete the cycles, such as learning new skills and participating in a creative project alongside working with other young people. This lack of incentives possibly influenced the levels of engagement which participants demonstrated, and which were discussed in Chapter 5.

The pursuit of participation

The methodological underpinnings of this research intended to enable a participatory process of developing dialogue between the researcher and the researched. Some of the research cycles remained incomplete and did not produce the outcomes which I expected, but generated evidence regarding the complexity of pursuing engagement. Four participants undertook the initial sessions of the second PAR cycle at Positive

Youth Foundation (PYF), of which only one made it to the editing stage and completed the interactive version of his documentary. Some of the sessions had to be cancelled due to half term holidays and exam periods, and there were various technical difficulties, including the incompatibility of PYF laptops with the editing software, which discouraged participants[73]. In addition, communicating with these participants was difficult, as the sessions took place at the participants' school instead of the PYF office. We had little control over the outcome of the second cycle workshops, due to the fact that we could only meet those participants as part of the sessions, whereas participants in the first PAR cycle were involved in other activities at PYF, which made it easier to contact them.

John was the only participant who managed to finish his interactive documentary, but he emigrated to Australia shortly after the end of workshops. Although I tried to reach him via email for the final Video Elicitation interview, I did not hear back from him, so data collection for this cycle of PAR was based on my field notes and the final film.

I also conducted a research cycle in the context of a Young People's programme, designed for 9-19 year olds. The youth organisation is anonymised as I was unable to collect consent forms from participants, in terms of their participation in my research. The programme was structured around after school drop-in sessions, encouraging young people to learn new skills. One of the difficulties in this cycle had to do with the nature of this programme (drop-in sessions), as none of the participants were not regular attenders. The programme co-ordinator mentioned that they could not control the attendance of the young people and that they could not push them to participate, as the sessions were supposed to be more relaxed and a break from school. An intensive workshop during Easter holidays was organised, but this had to be cancelled too, due to poor turnout.

Difficulties also arose during the Imagineer cycle. Six participants started on this project and only one made it to the editing sessions. Participants were unable to afford

[73] For example, one of the participants prepared a rough cut of his project, using the editing software on his laptop at home, but was unable to open his project on the laptops that we used in the sessions. Another participant had problems with transferring files from his phone to the laptop.

time to the project due to other constraints, including family commitments and their involvement in the performance project, which brought them together in the first place. Claire decided to withdraw from the sessions as she found this experience to be stressful. David was unemployed at the time he joined the workshops but started an apprenticeship shortly after, so he was unable to continue as he had other priorities. The workshops failed to engage the two participants with learning disabilities who were also part of the team. Amy took part in three editing sessions, which resulted in the documentary *Social Media Evolution*. This documentary is not interactive, as we were unable to meet for the final session[74].

These instances reveal the complexity of realising the mission of Critical Media Literacy in terms of ensuring participation. A reconfigured Pedagogy of Difference needs to be sensitive to the different experiences of participants and to encourage informal learning which can be engaged with, in order to address the transformational potential of Critical Pedagogy.

It is worth noting that apart from the above mentioned challenges, this research resulted in some positive aspects, which aligned with the focus of Critical Media Literacy on analysing the constructed nature of media and on raising participants' awareness. The next section moves on to discuss these continuities with Critical Media Literacy discourse.

Raising awareness

The workshops did produce successful outcomes in raising participants' understanding of documentary (see Chapter 5). One of the participants (Stephanie from PYF) demonstrated improved civic engagement in becoming more aware of the kind of work that goes into the activities of the youth organisation and appreciated it more after her participation in the project. As a result, she became a volunteer at PYF and started getting more actively involved in PYF sessions, demonstrating civic

[74] Amy started a new job and it became difficult for her to participate and to reach her. Despite my efforts to record an interview with her, this was also not possible, thus limiting evidence for this cycle to my field notes and her final film.

engagement in terms of community participation. As she said in our follow-up interview, the workshops enhanced her sense of "belonging" to PYF: "I feel like at first I was just one of the kids and now I feel like we have our own roles, like our specific roles".

Raising consciousness/awareness is another concept often found in Critical Pedagogy discourse, which came up in my interviews with participants[75]. Participants at Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) referred to raising awareness, which was one of the reasons why they decided to make a film on the topic of social isolation. The young makers felt that the project could help teenagers to understand what social isolation is about and to get more people interested in it, such as parents and organisations. They also pointed to the suitability of documentaries for disseminating information:

> "it gets a message across in a way that people are comfortable with, maybe not with interactivity, but the sense of a documentary they have chosen to watch it, it comes across in a way which is not abnormal" (Melissa, Video Elicitation interview).

Melissa placed emphasis on the choice of the audience to engage with a documentary and the messages it conveys, whilst acknowledging that interactivity might not always support this purpose.

Participants thought that the element of interactivity could enhance raising awareness, as it enables dissemination and "if you want to be involved it's more likely to get you involved, you have to make conscious decisions, but they are there for you to make which is good" (Nancy, Video Elicitation interview). Nancy associated interactivity with "conscious decisions" which are "available" for viewers to make while engaging with interactive media. This perspective, however, conceals what Manovich (1996) called "totalitarian interactivity" (introduced in the Literature Review chapter), in the sense that viewers can only follow pre-existing associations, which in *The Glowing Divide* took the form of decisions for viewers to make. Natalie mentioned the

[75] The concept of Freire's critical consciousness has been critiqued in terms of being fixed, in this section I expand on participants' understanding of documentary as a means of raising awareness.

“5daydisconnect” challenge (analysed in Chapter 5) as one of the benefits of interactivity in their documentary, which was designed as a means for further promoting and raising awareness, but this did not turn out to be effective in engaging audiences. Natalie added that documentaries can create debates and conversations without having to read a lot of text, which could be problematic for people who learn visually, as Helen added. Helen mentioned that documentaries can be more engaging as well, especially for young people who are more used to watching things.

In terms of participants’ understanding of social isolation, the project helped them to comprehend this phenomenon more fully. Natalie explained that this was a complicated issue to tackle, due to the fact that it is not easily diagnosed: “people who are socially isolated are probably the last ones to admit, there is a difference between this and loneliness, it goes deeper than that”. Natalie’s comment demonstrates her enhanced insights into the issue of social isolation, which emerged from her engagement with *The Glowing Divide.*

Alfred was one of the participants who had a better understanding of the challenges that socially isolated young people face before working on the project, as he could empathise with them. Participants became more aware of the link between social anxiety and social isolation and realised to their surprise that the issue influences young people. Melissa attributed this surprise about the impact of technology on young people to belonging in a different generation, as social media were not so widespread when they were teenagers:

> When we were growing up we were the last generation to have a bit of the computer and the offline world because the Internet happened when we were young (…) when I first had Facebook one of the things to do was write on each other’s walls but now I can't remember the last time I wrote to someone's wall, inbox straight away, message, it's something very private now whereas it used to be very social (Melissa, Video Elicitation interview).

Melissa expresses here an understanding of the evolution of social media from “social” to “private”, which exposes their harmful effects, resonating with the fact that spending time online was seen by the teenagers as one of the main causes of social isolation in young people. It is worth noting, however, that privacy in social media has been eroded, due to their increased surveillance.

Finally, participants acknowledged that *The Glowing Divide* project was a transformative experience for them. Natalie and Nancy felt the need to act in a way that would benefit the teenagers involved in the documentary. Helen reflected more on her own relationship with social media and learned new skills while working on this community engagement project. Christine thought that the project improved her confidence and Natalie found the project to be empowering for both documentary makers and participants. She highlighted that she was very pleased with the positive effects of the project on the portrayed teenagers: “probably the nicest part of the whole documentary is that it made an impact on them, seeing their change is the best thing”. In our follow-up interview, I asked Natalie about the most important thing that she took away from the project:

> I’d say confidence myself (…) I’ve done some filming things before but I’ve never directed anything and I had no intention of directing it, (…), I’ve obviously gone on to direct other things since, just confidence and new knowledge about social isolation, new friends and it was a good insight for me because I only moved to Bristol last year so it was a good way of seeing a part of Bristol that you would not necessarily see (Natalie, follow-up interview).

Natalie appreciated the benefits of her participation in the project, highlighting the new knowledge and skills which she gained from it, as well as the new friendships. This experience also helped her to discover the city of Bristol, which was new to her, thus helping her to settle in the city and shaping her sense of space/place. The relational aspect that Natalie refers to here is acknowledged as one of the foundational elements of Pedagogy of Difference 2.0, as I will argue in the section

7.3. The next section focuses on the theoretical discourse of the educational potential of Interactive Documentary, which was also challenged by this research.

7.2 Interactive Documentary discourse

This research was originally designed to explore the results of combining Interactive Documentary with the empowering aims of Critical Media Literacy, so as to create "spaces in which individuals can speak for themselves" (Nash 2014a: 51). However, the combination of participatory approaches with the participatory tool of interactive documentary did not result in straightforwardly improved engagement, due to factors such as the anxiety that interactivity caused for the young people, the withdrawal of Mozilla's Popcorn Maker, which was the tool for interactive storytelling, and the impingement of daily life into young people's participation.

The benefits associated with the use of interactive documentaries in Higher Education settings (such as increased student motivation, collaborative learning, multi-directionality and freedom of dissemination) could not be delivered in the informal contexts of my fieldwork. Several participants mentioned that having to make an interactive documentary created more problems than opportunities and interactivity hindered their creativity (see Chapter 5). The tool which we used fsteor the creation of interactive stories as part of my fieldwork, Mozilla's Popcorn Maker, was free and open-source, underlying the democratising potential of this kind of technology. However, towards the end of my fieldwork, Mozilla announced the withdrawal of the Popcorn Maker. This development provided me with insights into the problems related to open-source software. I was informed that the Foundation has narrowed its focus to digital skills and education and the team decided "to put resources where they will result in more impact over time" [76]. The Popcorn Maker was open-source, and Mozilla provided the code to the public, but this negates its democratising promise, as it could only be useful to people with programming skills. These considerations illustrate some of the limitations of using interactive documentaries as part of a Critical Media Literacy intervention; and indicate some the factors which explain why using such technologies is not sufficient for increasing participants' motivation in itself, as Gifreu suggests.

[76] Personal email communication with Mozilla.

What is required is a more nuanced understanding of pedagogies for incorporating interactive media in participatory educational projects, as I will outline in the next section.

7.3 Towards Pedagogy of Difference 2.0

The foundations of Pedagogy of Difference 2.0

Before I move on to illustrate the foundations of Pedagogy of Difference 2.0, it is important to reiterate the methodological underpinnings of this research, as the findings of this research which pointed to the need for revisiting Pedagogies of Difference resulted from Discourse Analysis. Foregrounding reflexivity, this analysis is a construction, acknowledging that language is "constructed and constructive" (Gill 2000: 188). Based on the premise that "a discourse analysis is an interpretation, warranted by detailed argument and attention to the material being studied", this research highlighted the ramifications of introducing interactive documentaries in a Critical Media Literacy context. In the following, I will provide a more nuanced understanding of pedagogy pertaining to teaching and learning with interactive documentary in complex environments, which has certain technological, experiential, relational and discursive characteristics.

Technology

In terms of technology, the Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 emerging from this research acknowledges the limitations of interactivity on young people's media production, as glitches in interactive storytelling open-source software and limited resources, such as laptops and cameras, hindered its educational potential. Regarding the projects which resulted in interactive documentaries, there is a variety of approaches to interactive documentary technology, ranging from a "time-based" platform like Mozilla's Popcorn Maker, which enhanced videos with interactive elements, to a more sophisticated 3-D filmmaking toolkit. It is also worth noting that one of the cycles resulted in a traditional, instead of interactive documentary. The process of adding interactive elements to the documentary required a number of additional critical resources such as extra time, skills, confidence and contextual awareness. The levels of young people's

engagement with Interactive Documentary technology differed profoundly, depending on their backgrounds, previous experiences with media production and socio-economic factors such as education.

Educators interested in engaging young people in alternative media production need to be wary of approaches taking young people's familiarity with technology for granted. Different styles and approaches to using technology are required to enable young people to benefit from learning new tools, placing emphasis on group work, as learners can support each other in engaging with technology (Stephanie's and Michelle's collaboration at PYF serves as a good example of this). Educators also need to fully apprehend the affordances and limitations of the technologies prior to utilising them in students' projects, as this enables an in-depth understanding of the contextual pedagogic advantages and limitations of each tool. The pilot study which was conducted as part of this research pointed to some of the problems with Mozilla's Popcorn Maker, which otherwise I would not have been aware of.

Experience

With regards to the experiential aspects which emerged from this research, the reconfigured Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 foregrounds the notion of engagement and takes into account the challenges and difficulties that emerged from engaging a vulnerable group of young people in an informal Critical Media Literacy context. The workshops did not succeed in engaging some of the participants in the long-term, thus suggesting a different kind of contextual pedagogy which can be sensitive to the different lived experience of participants and which seeks to find numerous other ways to establish informal learning experiences which can be engaged with. This pedagogy is also based on young people's understanding of the benefits of interactivity as providing more information and keeping viewer's attention span and of the disadvantages of interactivity as creating confusion and anxiety compared with traditional viewing practices. Additionally, factors like familiarity with other media and interest in the documentary's content shaped young people's engagement with interactive documentaries, which are essential to the Pedagogy of Difference 2.0.

The young people who took part in this research demonstrated a contradiction between their perspectives of interactive audiences as being "active" and their actions as audiences of their interactive productions. This contradiction points to the confusion that young people might experience in their engagement with interactivity, which needs to be recognised by educators as a potential form of anxiety for the young people. The process of Video Elicitation interviews, finally, which encouraged participants to watch their documentaries and reflect on them, proved to be useful in terms of providing participants with an analytical awareness as media makers. Therefore, a Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 is based on incorporating similar reflective practices in teaching and learning, enabling educators to use such practices in order to enhance young people's analytical understanding of media production.

Relationships

A Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 as formulated by this research places particular emphasis on the relationships that developed between researcher and participants, among participants, and also between participants and their interactive documentaries. This pedagogy embraces the positive aspects of a research process, which resonates with Dascal's "mind colonisation", through building relationships of trust and respect between researcher and researched, which enabled a deeper connection with participants. It suggests that power imbalance is inevitable in any participatory research project, although throughout conducting this research, I made an effort to detach from my preconceptions of concepts such as "oppression" and "liberation", and to become more critical of Freire's emancipatory framework which influenced this research. In terms of my dual role as researcher and facilitator of the workshops, this turned out to be challenging. In some cases, responding to certain challenges which emerged from working with vulnerable participants surpassed my role, for example in terms of providing them with emotional support. Whilst I tried to be as supportive as possible, this research revealed a scope of challenges which I was not qualified to manage, as it aimed at engaging participants with concepts and practices which they found confusing in certain cases. Therefore, a reimagined Pedagogy of Difference needs to be contextually sensitive to the lived experience of young people. It is recommended that researchers who work with young people in need of additional psychological support are aware of resources that can support

young people, and that they signpost on them. It is also important for researchers to be clear about the boundaries of their role, acknowledging the challenges of achieving authentic participation.

This pedagogy also has the potential to transform young people's relationships, as friendships between participants were strengthened and the young people became more appreciative of each other. This potential is not discussed in Critical Pedagogy literature, however it was seen as an important aspect for the participants in this research, as it enabled them to grow and to become more self-aware. A Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 therefore nurtures the development of positive relationships between learners, which offers benefits not only in terms of peer-to-peer learning, but also in terms of empowering learners to feel more confident through forging new friendships.

This pedagogy provides insights into young people's understanding of aspects of their everyday lives, such their perceptions of dance, performance, music, social media and community. Participants used their interactive documentaries as vehicles to break down stereotypes and express their feelings and opinions about those issues, illuminating their daily lives, although some of their documentaries articulated stereotypical adolescent concerns. A Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 seeks to explore the ways in which learners make meaning from their daily lives, thus shedding light on their feelings and perceptions about key aspects of their societies. It also acknowledges that young people's authentic expression is hard to achieve, as they are likely to reproduce the stereotypical images that they are exposed to through mainstream media.

Discourse

Finally, the Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 which is shaped out of this research goes beyond Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary theoretical discourses, as it evaluates empirical evidence from classroom practices which point to the constraints that the researcher/educator might face in their pursuit of incorporating Interactive Documentary practices in an emancipatory educational project. Issues such as accessing and engaging groups of disadvantaged participants need to be foregrounded and concepts like "student voice" and "empowerment" should not be

used as unproblematic. Some of the results of this project could be seen as indications of student silence, as some of the participants did not manage to create their own interactive documentaries, some expressed anxiety and frustration and some participants were more empowered than others. For example, participants at KWMC highlighted the empowering outcomes of their project for both documentary makers and participants, whereas participants at Imagineer did not have the chance to make any films or to be interviewed about them, due to their early withdrawal from the research project. On the other hand, this pedagogy is also premised on the positive results that participatory educational interventions can have on young people. The workshops for this research clearly enriched young people's understanding of documentary and interactive documentary and in some cases improved their community participation.

A Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 encourages educators/researchers, alongside learners, to have a more critical engagement with the concepts and ideas that frame their approach. This critical engagement is missing from Giroux's understanding of difference, as he foregrounds the principles of equality, justice and freedom (1992: para 10), without acknowledging the complexities and specificities of the expression of these principles in contemporary settings. The notion of freedom in post-industrial societies needs to be negotiated in more complex ways, in line with Kincheloe and McLaren (2005: 308), who argue that in the 21st century "no one is ever completely emancipated from the socio-political context that has produced him or her", suggesting that there are no purely liberatory pedagogies or technologies. In addition, a Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 reflects notions of subjectivities and identities as being partial and contradictory; and of power as being diffuse, dispersed but differentially articulated. In doing so, this pedagogy undermines Giroux's argument on reading "history as a way of reclaiming identity and power" (1992: para 26). In these terms, this research was influenced by Post-structuralist notions of identity and power, as constantly changing, whereas theorists such as Giroux and Freire treat such notions as fixed. Looking back at the project as a whole and its impact on myself as researcher and educator, it has certainly been beneficial in terms of my increased awareness of and a more critical stance towards the theoretical discourses which pertain to the fields of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary. In this sense, this research raised my own "critical consciousness" about how discourses operate.

Summary

In this chapter, I have argued towards Pedagogy of Difference 2.0, based on reconfiguring a concept often found in feminist and Critical Pedagogy discourse, that of a Pedagogy of Difference. I foregrounded the importance of accessing marginalised groups of young people and engaging them in a series of Interactive Documentary workshops, which is often omitted from Critical Media Literacy discourses. Some of the results of this research could be perceived as indications of student silence instead of student voice, which is a key concept in Critical Pedagogy, as some participants did not complete their interactive documentaries or take part in the final interviews. On the other hand, this research aligned with certain aspects of Critical Media Literacy discourse, as it enhanced participants' critical understanding of documentary and pointed to improved civic engagement.

The discourse which accompanied the educational potential of Interactive Documentary also influenced this research. Interactive Documentary has been theorised as a new learning system, but its benefits could not be delivered in more complex educational settings. Based on these findings, I argued towards Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 to address the complexities which emerged from this research. This reconfigured Pedagogy of Difference places emphasis on the technological constraints which might occur in using open-source interactive tools and does not take young people's familiarity with the technology for granted. It also acknowledges the difficulties in accessing and maintaining the engagement of marginalised young people. Participants experienced a range of feelings with regards to interactivity, including confusion and anxiety, which need to be recognised by educators using interactive practices. This Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 also highlights the importance of the relationships which emerge between researcher and researched, among participants and between participants and their interactive documentaries.

Finally, the reconfiguring of a Pedagogy of Difference which has been shaped by this research evaluates empirical data from learning practices, thus supporting educators in their pursuit of utilising interactive media in participatory educational projects. Although the theoretical discourses surrounding such approaches emphasise the

democratising and transformative potential of such pedagogies – which I sympathise with, it is important to maintain a critical stance and to bring attention to the nuances and intricacies of such interventions in order to realise this potential.

Chapter 8. Conclusions

This chapter will draw conclusions on the insights which emerged from this research concerning the ways in which young people from disadvantaged backgrounds engage with Interactive Documentary practices and the implications of this engagement on pedagogy. I will provide answers to my original research questions and I will highlight the contribution of this study to the fields of Interactive Documentary and Critical Media Literacy.

In terms of the research questions, this study aimed at illuminating the relational, technological, experiential and discursive dimensions of a series of Interactive Documentary workshops. I also explored the extent to which these dimensions contribute to reconfiguring a Pedagogy of Difference, a concept often used in Critical Pedagogy discourse to denote "teaching *for* and *about* difference not only in terms of gender and sexual identity, but intersecting differences of class, ability and able-bodiedness, race, ethnic, religious and national identity" (Luke 1994: 38, italics in original). Therefore, the research questions of this study were shaped as following:

1. What are the relational, technological, experiential and discursive dimensions of a series of interventions introducing interactive documentary in the context of Critical Media Literacy?
2. To what extent do these interventions reconfigure a Pedagogy of Difference?

At the end of this chapter, I will also provide suggestions for further research on the educational uses of interactive documentary and the ramifications of teaching and learning with interactive media in complex environments. I will start with reiterating the background and methodolological underpinnings of this research, before illustrating the relational, technological, experiential and discursive aspects that the findings highlighted, thus responding to my research questions.

Background of the research

At the heart of this project lies Paulo Freire's model for a "problem-posing" education. I became interested in Freire's work, and particularly his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1996), while teaching film in Greece during the outbreak of the political and economic crisis. I found Freire's writings to be timely and relevant to the pedagogical challenges that I was facing as an educator living and working in a "society in transition" (2007), similar to the Latin American societies that Freire analysed. These challenges pertained to engaging students in systematic thinking about the causes of the crisis and how this influenced their lives. The forms of "oppression" that young people faced in that context ranged from high rates of unemployment to the imposition of several cuts and taxes.

In interacting with my students during that period, I saw their interest in exploring some of the themes and questions which emerged from the crisis through their media production. In the context of that unstable political situation in Greece, therefore, I became interested in the liberatory potential of education and how this could be achieved through teaching and learning with documentary film, which I have been focused on in terms of research and practice for the last seven years. Freire's concept of "critical consciousness" attracted my attention, as this concept refers to learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality (1996: 17), therefore I found it useful in exploring education as an act of resistance.

The rapidly evolving field of Interactive Documentary seemed to provide an ideal tool for the purposes of my research, in examining the potential of liberatory education, as the theoretical discourse which accompanied its emergence placed emphasis on its democratising potential. This discourse influenced my perceptions of Interactive Documentary, as, at the outset of this research, I was interested in further understanding the democratising potential of this new form in educational settings.

The educational potential of this tool is under-researched, as there is lack of empirical data concerning its suitability in various educational contexts, so I was keen to explore this potential through conducting empirical research. Findings associated with the use of interactive documentaries in Higher Education settings highlight the benefits of the tool in enabling collaboration and freedom of dissemination (Gifreu 2012: 4994). This

research suggested that such benefits could not be simply delivered in such contexts, aiming at providing evidence of the implications of interactivity on teaching and learning in more complex environments, engaging young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This outcome did not conform to my initial expectations of combining interactive documentaries with emancipatory pedagogies, and the insights which emerged from this research significantly shaped my learning journey.

The project was also heavily influenced by literature on community-based youth media production programmes and on the principles of Critical Media Literacy, which foreground the empowering potential of such initiatives. These discourses have been influenced by the educational legacy of Paulo Freire and particularly his emphasis on dialogue and student voice. My interest in shaping this inquiry was located within exploring Critical Pedagogy concepts such as “empowerment” and “student voice” in classroom settings, thus examining the impact of emancipatory pedagogies on politicising audiences. The findings of this research actually align with a wider critique of the theoretical discourse of Critical Pedagogy, which has been mainly conducted by feminist critics and which was introduced in Chapter 2. The Literature Review also re-framed the relevance of Freire’s pedagogy in the 21st century.

In addition, the Literature Review contextualised the field of Interactive Documentary and its contribution to education. The review of Interactive Documentary literature revealed lack of extensive political commentary about this field, and this research suggested expanding the critique of interactivity beyond the platforms and technologies of Interactive Documentary. The concept of Digital Natives was also discussed and critiqued, as the participants in this study are young people, whose affinity with and use of media platforms was challenged in the context of this research. Finally, I reviewed literature on political film, as political filmmaking practices are in line with the original aims of my fieldwork, due to their focus on politicising audiences.

Methodological underpinnings

In order to bring together the fields of Interactive Documentary and Critical Media Literacy, I designed a series of Interactive Documentary workshops for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, based on the theoretical discourse of Critical

Pedagogy. A qualitative multi-method approach was considered suitable for conducting this research. Qualitative research is grounded in the lived experiences of people and has an interpretive character (Marshall and Rossman 2011: 2). I found this focus on interpreting the lived experience of people to be useful for researching the experiences of the participants with regards to the workshops and the process of creating their interactive documentaries, and for understanding how they made meaning of these experiences. Data was collected in the form of my field notes from the workshops, the interactive documentaries that the young people made and the interviews which I recorded with them upon completion of their projects. The epistemology of my research promotes the contextual nature of knowledge, therefore the findings of this research are contingent on the circumstances under which fieldwork took place.

Due to my previous experience with documentary practice and teaching Film in a complex environment, alongside the emancipatory character of this research, the method of Participatory Action Research (PAR) was deemed useful for exploring related pedagogies. I conducted fieldwork through a series of workshops aiming at providing participants with the basic skills for creating their own interactive documentaries. The method of PAR is linked to the ideas of Paulo Freire about Critical Pedagogy, which had a profound impact in its development (Boog 2003: 430-431). This method also provided a useful approach for the interventions due to its emphasis on “praxis”, which refers to informed and committed action in response to a present and problematic action context (Kemmis 1988: 182). The action context for this research concerned teaching and learning with interactive media within complex environments and aimed at problematising claims about the liberatory potential of Critical Media Literacy and about the educational benefits of interactive documentaries. As a researcher, I chose to adopt participatory and collaborative approaches in collecting data, as I was hoping to involve participants in reflection on their practices. However, the implementation of PAR approaches in this research pointed to the challenging nature of engaging participants and of eradicating the power imbalance between the researcher and the researched.

Finally, a combination of Video Elicitation with semi-structured interviews was used to capture participants’ responses after the end of the projects. These interviews were

conducted in groups, as the young people did their filming and editing in groups. The use of Visual Research Methods, such as Video Elicitation interviews and Participatory Video, was in harmony with the focus of this research on media production and I adopted a reflexive stance towards visual data, which involved analysing them in conjunction with participants' interviews and my field notes.

The methodology of this research was influenced by Ethnography in terms of its foregrounding of reflexivity. Pole and Morrison (2003: 5) place Ethnography within a theoretical tradition which foregrounds "situated meaning and contextualised experience as the basis for explaining and understanding social behaviour". Through adopting an ethnographic mind set towards the data, I was able to support my observation role, which in Ethnography links to the process of interpreting the data. Throughout the workshops, I adopted the dual role of educator and researcher, therefore it was not always possible to focus on observing the responses of participants. Engaging in verbal reflexivity with my supervisory team and updating a research journal was helpful in better understanding my responses towards the participants and the data and challenging my own assumptions.

The evidence from my fieldwork was analysed using Discourse Analysis. The field notes from the workshops, the interactive documentaries that the young people made and the interviews which I conducted with them were treated as discourses. This research was influenced by an understanding of discourse as "systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes and courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak" (Lessa 2006: para 5), following Lessa's interpretation of Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). However, methodologically there is no strictly Foucauldian method of analysing discourse (Hook 2001: 521). The results of this research provided a critique of some of the assumptions which accompanied Critical Pedagogy discourses, such as foregrounding student voice and empowerment, suggesting that interactivity was seen as a source of anxiety and confusion by some of the participants, thus hindering their creativity.

This thesis was structured on three sections based on Nash's documentary interactivity framework (2014a), which comprises four dimensions: technology,

experience, relationships and discourse. Nash's definitions of each dimension were not always applicable to this research, therefore these dimensions were adapted to fit with the project's aims and scope, as these were relevant to the interactive documentaries that the young people created, and linked to the educational context which made the films possible.

In the following, I will respond to my research questions and outline the findings of this research project with regards to each of the above-mentioned dimensions, in the order that these were discussed in the chapters of the thesis.

8.1 Relational dimension

In order to approach the relationships between researcher and researched in this project, I used Dascal's alternative strategy for decolonising minds (2009), in which the "colonisation of the mind" is envisaged as a condition for thought. This research suggested that "mind colonisation" is an inevitable part of any participatory research process, but its positive role can be emphasised through cultivating respect and trust. Since this project has been inspired by Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, its initial aim was to emancipate participants, thus resonating with "mind colonisation". Coming from a particular political environment, I had fixed ideas about what could be considered as "liberation from oppression", which I was expecting to elicit from my research participants, thus running the risk of overshadowing their own understanding of "liberation" and "oppression". Despite making an effort to detach from these presumptions as the project was progressing, the power imbalance between researcher and researched could not be eradicated and indeed came to be something I saw as inscribed in the relations of difference within these contexts, as participants were conscious of the research context and our respective roles within it.

My aim was to place emphasis on the positive aspects of this research process and overall, the length and nature of my fieldwork contributed to creating a relationship of trust between the researcher and the researched. Although adhering to the principle of "sharing power" with participants, often found in Critical Pedagogy discourse, was challenging, the young people were keen to express themselves through their media productions and the interviews.

Regarding the relationships that developed among participants, the young people became more appreciative of their peers, through the process of making their documentaries and interviewing each other, and also strengthened bonds with each other. These new friendships empowered participants in terms of becoming more self-aware. Also, teamwork had a positive impact on the relationships among participants, as for some people the process of making collective decisions was new.

The analysis of participants' interactive documentaries provided insights into the feelings and opinions of young people about aspects of their daily lives, such as music, dance, performance, social media and community. The makers aimed at subverting negative stereotypes about young people through their documentaries, although some documentaries replicated stereotypical adolescent concerns. For example, young people saw music and performance as being positive practices for them, which still aligns with a rather stereotypical view of them.

8.2 Technological dimension

The technological dimension of this research was approached through empirical evidence of how young people from disadvantaged environments respond to interactive documentary technology. The interactive documentaries which resulted from this fieldwork incorporated interactivity using two different approaches to technology. The first technology, used in PYF films, was Mozilla's Popcorn Maker. Participants at KWMC used the RGBD toolkit for capturing video in 3-dimensions, in combination with normal cameras for filming. The finished version of the documentary *Social Media Evolution,* which was created in the context of the Imagineer cycle, is not interactive, as the participant was unable to attend the final session.

Participants engaged with interactive documentary technology in different ways, depending on their previous experiences with making media, thus challenging assumptions about young people's familiarity with technology. In the 14-16 group, some participants felt more confident with technology as they had done editing before. The young people associated media production with social media platforms (Vine,

Instagram etc.), but they expressed scepticism about open source licenses, highlighting their implications on authorship.

In the adults group, prior educational experience played a key role in how participants engaged with Interactive Documentary technology. Participants at KWMC had been trained in some form of media before completing their interactive documentary, thus enabling them to use more sophisticated technology. In the Imagineer cycle, the only participant who completed the project had worked with media in the context of her college degree in Dance. Despite that previous experience, she expressed her unease with using technology.

In general, the educational potential of interactivity was hindered when introduced in a Critical Media Literacy context, due to limited resources and glitches in relevant software. The interactive media and 3D filmmaking technology used in this project, namely the Popcorn Maker and RGBD toolkit, was in BETA versions so the software kept crashing, which frustrated some of the participants. Furthermore, as the workshops were conducted in an informal Critical Media Literacy context, resources such as laptops and cameras were limited, thus delaying the editing process and discouraging participants from finishing their documentaries. These instances pointed to the difficulties of realising a community-based project with interactive media, which are under-researched and need to be acknowledged in order to realise the democratising potential of Critical Media Literacy.

8.3 Experiential dimension

This dimension placed emphasis on the concept of engagement and explored participants' understanding of interactivity, looking also at the ways in which they responded as viewers of their own interactive documentaries.

In terms of the factors that shaped participants' engagement with interactive documentary, familiarity with other media came up as an important element, as participants often referred to other platforms, such as radio, television and YouTube when expressing their understanding of interactivity. Interest in the content of the interactive documentary also had an impact on users' choices while engaging with it. For example, some of the younger participants in my study expressed their lack of

interest in the topic of oil industries in Canada, which provides the setting for the game *Fort McMoney*. This lack of interest discouraged them from engaging with the game and evaluating the use of interactivity in it.

In terms of emotional engagement, the element of empathy also emerged in the responses of young people to interactive documentary. Participants in the Imagineer cycle were empathetic towards the teenagers portrayed in *The Glowing Divide*, and one of them could even identify with the teenagers as being socially isolated. Interestingly though, interactivity did not seem to have an effect in their engagement with the documentary, as participants' comments revolved around the subject matter of *The Glowing Divide* and the wider implications of the Internet on the lives of young people, without clearly attributing these reflections to the interactive part of the project.

The process of the Video Elicitation interviews contributed to raising participants' awareness as filmmakers, allowing them to "step back from immediate experience" (Buckingham 2010: 299). Through viewing their interactive films, participants were able to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of their productions and take up an analytical stance. Participants also expressed their understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of interactivity.

A final point on the experiential dimension relates to the challenging nature of working with vulnerable groups. This was exemplified in the Imagineer cycle, as participants experienced difficulties in keeping pace with the project. This was partly due to their involvement in a parallel theatre project and to other commitments. The participants had responded to a call to take part in a performance which targeted young people who were not in education, employment or training. This also had implications on the project, as some participants had to withdraw due to finding a new job.

The workshops failed to engage the two participants who had learning difficulties and another participant found the process of filming to be stressful, as she was struggling with expressing her ideas. All these difficulties resulted in five out of six participants withdrawing from the project and point to the intricacies of working with vulnerable groups of young people, which are often omitted from the theoretical discourse of

Critical Media Literacy. This indicates the need for contextually sensitive pedagogies, which make space for learning experiences which can be engaged with.

8.4 Discursive dimension

This dimension placed emphasis on the theoretical discourses of Critical Media Literacy and how these shaped the project, alongside the critique of such discourses which is conducted at the level of practice. As an educator interested in incorporating critical media education approaches in my teaching, I had to overcome several challenges and resistances in this pursuit. The process of gaining access to groups of disadvantaged groups of people was complex and it was hard to ensure that participants would engage with the project in the long-term, due to other work and family commitments.

Some of the results of this project could be perceived as indications of student silence instead of student voice, even though the workshops were designed with the aim to enable young learners to find their voice and "to become actively involved in their worlds" (Hoechsmann and Poyntz 2012: 112). The concept of "student voice" is often discussed in Critical Pedagogy literature, reflecting connections with Freire's vision of education as a dialogical process. This research offers a critique of this concept as some of the cycles were incomplete (in two of the cycles only one participant finished their documentary). In other cases, I did not manage to collect the data which I initially planned to collect, including the final Video Elicitation interviews. Some participants withdrew from the project and some others were possibly discouraged by the technical problems that came up at the editing stage. The challenge that critical pedagogues face, then, has to do with acknowledging what student silence means and finding ways to meaningfully engage young people in critical dialogue.

The notion of empowerment is also problematic, as it suggests that the educator is already empowered and the students are in need to be empowered by someone else. In this thesis, I emphasised the contextual nature of this research and the political and social situation in which it took place. This research was conducted during a transitional period for crisis-stricken Europe, and the workshops took place in economically-deprived areas of England, in line with the theoretical discourse of

Critical Pedagogy which concerns “marginalised or misrepresented” people (Kellner and Share 2007b: 9).

Added to this, interactivity was seen as a source of anxiety and confusion by some of the participants. As Natalie pointed out, “when you know it has to be interactive, it makes you not want it to be interactive, because it drives you insane”. This shows that participants felt restricted by the use of interactivity, which “created more barriers than opened doors” (Natalie, follow-up interview). In addition, the withdrawal of Mozilla’s Popcorn Maker was another unforeseen development, which hindered the democratising potential of interactive storytelling, as the platform allowed the creation of interactive stories without the need of programming skills. Consequently, the benefits of interactive documentary as a new learning system could not be delivered in a more complex environment, as opposed to its suggested suitability for teaching and learning in Higher Education settings (Gifreu 2012). A more nuanced understanding of the pedagogy underpinning literacy initiatives with interactive media has been illustrated to support educators in their pursuit of participation.

On the other hand, the workshops had a positive impact on participants’ understanding of documentary and interactive documentary. Stephanie from PYF commented after the watching the interactive documentary *Out My Window*: “it was not so fake, felt like you can connect to the people, (…), I understand it a lot more now”. Michelle also mentioned: “I learned that these documentaries are staged, all this time I thought it was all natural”. Jane from Imagineer echoed these sentiments: “I’m never going to believe a documentary again! Is that the point?”. These comments reveal a more critical engagement with documentary film.

In light of these findings, the following section will expand on the contribution that this research makes to theory, practice and methodology.

8.5 Contribution of the study to theory and practice

Regarding the contribution of this research to educative theory and practice, I argued towards Pedagogy of Difference 2.0, a more complex approach to teaching and learning with interactive documentaries, which is rooted in empirical evidence and

founded on aspects of discourse, technology, experience and relationships. This study illuminated a gap in literature, as there is scarcity of empirical data about the use of New Media in Critical Media Literacy contexts and there is no previous research on the use of Interactive Documentary in such contexts.

This research highlighted that interventions combining participatory interactive tools with participatory interactive approaches in education do not always result in improving participants' engagement, as some of the discourses surrounding such approaches would suggest, and that there is a need for a more nuanced understanding of pedagogies needed for such interventions. Therefore, this research called for rethinking a Pedagogy of Difference, which is seen by Giroux (1992: para 24) as providing:

> (…) the basis for students to cross over into diverse cultural zones that offer a critical resource for rethinking how the relations between subordinate and dominant groups are organized (…) and how such relations might be transformed in order to promote a democratic and just society.

A Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 highlights the following aspects:

1) This pedagogy acknowledges the limitations of interactivity on young people's media production and challenges claims about young people's digital fluency. Different groups of young people engage with technology in heterogeneous ways, therefore different teaching and learning techniques are required to address their needs.
2) Some of the findings question the effectiveness of interactive documentary as a new learning system promoting student motivation. This research illuminated the complexity of involving young people in interactive media production, which is not discussed in literature.
3) The positive and empowering aspects of the relationships that developed between the researcher and the researched, among participants and between participants and their interactive films emerged as important aspects of the interventions. Such aspects are also under-researched.

4) Whilst the interventions were designed with the aim to empower participants through articulating their concerns, some of the findings of this research are perceived as indications of student silence, as for example some participants did not complete their documentaries and did not participate in the interviews.

Consequently, a Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 stemming from this research brings attention to the limitations of Interactive Documentary technology and to how these influence the engagement of young people in media production, acknowledging that young people use technology in various ways. Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 embraces the challenges in working with young people and the range of feelings which young people might express in engaging with interactivity. In the context of this research, participants' feelings ranged from excitement to confusion and anxiety. The pedagogy that emerged from this research also promotes reflective practices in teaching and learning, which can help young people to enhance their analytical understanding of media production.

Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 places emphasis on the range of relationships connecting researchers, educators, participants and their artefacts. Whilst leveling hierarchies in participatory educational process might be challenging to achieve, such pedagogies are grounded on building trust and respect. Developing positive relationships among participants is beneficial in terms of peer-to-peer learning and of empowering learners to feel more confident. Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 also aims at exploring how young people make sense of their daily lives, thus shedding light on their feelings and perceptions about important aspects of their societies.

Overall, this reconfigured Pedagogy of Difference contributes to realising the transformative potential of combining participatory interactive tools with participatory interactive educational approaches, moving beyond theoretical discourses which lack empirical evidence. Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 encourages a critical stance towards ideas and concepts, which is often missing from the writings of critical pedagogues, such as Henry Giroux, whose perspectives of teaching and learning for difference were critiqued in the previous chapter. This lack of critical engagement is located within fixed understandings of complex concepts such as "identity" and "student voice". In adopting a Post-structuralist stance, this research foregrounds a perception

of subjectivity and identity as being partial and contradicting and of power as being diffuse, thus challenging the often abstract theoretical discourse of Critical Pedagogy.

In terms of the contribution of this research to Interactive Documentary practice, this research highlighted some of the challenges which might occur in engaging communities in participatory projects, thus raising awareness on the difficulties that interactive documentary makers might face in creating their projects. Interactive documentaries are often used in community engagement projects, so the findings of this research could contribute to the development of further community-based initiatives using interactive media. Also, some of the themes which emerged from this research, such as social isolation in young people and the relationship of teenagers with social media, lend themselves for further exploration through the form of interactive documentaries.

8.6 Methodological contribution

This research combined the theoretical discourses of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary, therefore a combination of research methods was deemed useful as I have already mentioned. Although Visual Research methods are often linked to Action Research, this research is innovative in terms of introducing interactive documentaries as data in youth research. Following the tradition of Participatory Action Research (PAR), this research was designed to promote the co-creation of meanings, a process which turned out to be challenging. The findings of this research point to the difficulties of engaging participants in emancipatory projects and call for the need for more nuanced pedagogies for teaching and learning with interactive media. Considering the different levels of engagement amongst participants, this research problematises the democratising potential of PAR and foregrounds the contingent character of empowerment, which places emphasis on the contexts in which the research takes place.

In order to promote reflexivity, this research adopted an ethnographic mind set towards the data, through recording sessions and keeping a research journal. Throughout doing fieldwork, I had the dual role of researcher and educator, which hindered the observational process. The ethnographic influences of this study enabled my reflective

engagement with the data, which was undermined in the actual sessions due to facilitating the workshops. The method of Discourse Analysis was in line with the Post-structuralist influences of this research and contributed to foregrounding the discursive construction of the series of the Interactive Documentary workshops. The final section will move on to suggest avenues for future research, as these are informed by the above mentioned findings of this research.

8.7 Future research

Interactive Documentary is a rapidly evolving field which opens up exciting opportunities for filmmakers and audiences to reconfigure storytelling and connect in new ways. There is an increasing number of studies on the possibilities and limitations of the field and its links to education open up further avenues for future research. Interactive Documentary has been theorised as a new learning system and its educational benefits for Higher Education have been summarised in collaborative learning, multi-modality and freedom of publication. However, as illuminated in this study, there is a need for further empirical research on the educational potential of this tool, not only in the more complex environments that Critical Media Literacy discourses point to, but also in other education settings, including secondary, further and higher education. In light of the findings of this research, I would be interested in designing a similar intervention with young people in Greece.

Interactive Documentary's promise for democratising interactive storytelling is worth further exploration too. Although Mozilla's Popcorn Maker was withdrawn while I was conducting fieldwork, there are similar interactive storytelling platforms, such as Storygami, which are free to use and do not require coding skills.

Future directions of research might include exploring, over a period of time within one or a series of contexts, how change might be engendered or what the effects of a participatory intervention might be. The potential for future research to explore interactive documentaries in more formal contexts could provide more insights into the educational uses of the tool. More formal settings could include schools and colleges in economically deprived areas, in line with the politicising purposes of Critical Pedagogy. If incorporated in the curriculum, the production of interactive

documentaries could be linked to other subjects, thus encouraging participants to approach their projects in new and creative ways.

Linking the creation of interactive documentaries to more formal settings could also improve learners' engagement, due to incentives such as achieving good grades. Some of the constraints and difficulties which emerged from my fieldwork, such as the limited technical resources and participant's lack of long-term commitment to the project, were related to these specific informal settings and the lack of further incentives for participants. In the case of the 14-16 group, the workshops were endorsed by Positive Youth Foundation as part of an after-school creative programme, aiming to engage young people in creative Media and Communications projects. Regarding the young adults' groups, workshops were held at Knowle West Media Centre as part of a 6-month internship for young media makers and at Imagineer, which is a creative production company involving young people in performance. Researching engagement with interactivity in more formal settings has the potential to provide valuable insights, as the low levels of some participants' engagement in this research related to the fact that the interventions occurred in an informal Critical Media Literacy context.

In terms of providing participants with higher levels of emotional support, researchers need to be aware of resources which are available for this purpose and sign post these to the young people. Also, interviews for this research were conducted in groups, as the young people worked in teams in order to make their documentaries. A suggestion for future research in terms of methodology would be to additionally conduct individual interviews with participants, as these could enable more insights regarding the perspectives and backgrounds of each participant.

Regarding practice-led research in Interactive Documentary, some of the issues which emerged from this research, such as social isolation in young people and young people's relation to social media and online communication, could be further developed in the form of interactive documentaries.

In addition, the need for Critical Pedagogy approaches that will develop learners' critical thinking skills becomes pressing, as we are entering a period of upheaval on

international level. For Critical Pedagogy to be relevant to educators, some of the assumptions which accompany its theoretical discourse need to be challenged at the level of practice, through empirical research. With regards to Critical Media Literacy, emphasis could be placed on the integration of interactive media, due to their ubiquity, and their potential to enhance the principles of Critical Pedagogy. This thesis provided an exploration of Pedagogy of Difference 2.0 which encompasses a series of workshops introducing Interactive Documentary in Critical Media Education. Due to its highly contextual nature, this pedagogy highlighted aspects of technology, experience, relationships and discourse which were produced under the specific circumstances of this research project. It is envisaged that more studies will contribute to defining and redefining a Pedagogy of Difference for teaching and learning with Interactive Documentary.

Finally, future research could focus on combining the field of Critical Media Literacy with the emerging field of Virtual Reality (VR), which is often associated with Interactive Documentary. Aston et al. (2017: 2) use the term 'i-docs' "to include projects that may be found elsewhere described as web-docs, transmedia documentaries, serious games, locative docs, interactive community media, docu-games and now, also, forms including virtual reality non-fiction". As VR headsets were introduced into the mass market in 2016, their potential for education opens up a new and exciting research area, expanding on their uses in formal and informal settings.

Postscript

My interest in the potential of "liberatory" education through interactive media and in cultivating dialogical processes between students and educators remains vivid, in light of the possibilities of future research which this doctoral research opens up, and which I presented in this chapter. As I am about to take up my new role as Lecturer in Media Production at Coventry University, I am keen to explore the combination of critical pedagogies with interactive media in Higher Education settings, and to practice participatory approaches throughout my teaching. The process of conducting fieldwork transformed my views of Critical Media Literacy and Interactive Documentary discourses and I am interested in further developing a critical understanding of how these operate. Also, having completed this research on the pedagogical potential of

Interactive Documentary, it is equally important for me to return to documentary practice, through making interactive documentaries informed by the themes that this research highlighted. As this research also enhanced my critical understanding of the affordances and limitations of interactive documentaries, and of the challenges of engaging groups of people in participatory projects, I would be interested in exploring themes such as young people's relation to social media and online communication, through the practice of creating interactive documentaries. Overall, completing this doctoral research signifies my act of resistance towards the oppressive factors which stemmed from my experience living in a "society in transition" and which determined my decision to embark on this study, attesting to the transformative potential of producing knowledge "through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other" (Freire 1996: 72).

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Digital Works

18 Days in Egypt [Interactive Documentary] available from <http://beta.18daysinegypt.com/>

Asylum Exit Australia (2011) [Interactive Documentary Simulation] available from <http://www.sbs.com.au/asylumexitaustralia/>

Bear 71 (2012) [Interactive Documentary] available from <https://bear71vr.nfb.ca/>

Fort McMoney (2013) [Documentary Game] available from <www.fortmcmoney.com/>

Highrise (2010) [Interactive Documentary] available from < http://highrise.nfb.ca/>

Music in our Generation (2015) [Interactive Documentary]

Out my Window (2010) [Interactive Documentary] available from <http://interactive.nfb.ca/#/outmywindow>

Passion and Inspiration (2015) [Interactive Documentary]

Social Media Evolution (2015) [Documentary]

The Glowing Divide (2015) [Online Interactive Documentary] available from <http://theglowingdivide.com/>

The Wilderness Downtown (2010) [Interactive Music Video] available from <http://www.thewildernessdowntown.com/>

What does the community mean to you? [Interactive Documentary]

What you sayin'? (2015) [Interactive Documentary]

Films

Chronicle of a Summer (1960) Directed by Jean Rouch [Documentary]

Exiting the Factory (1895) Directed by Auguste and Louis Lumière [Silent film]

Man with a Movie camera (1929) Directed by Dziga Vertov [Documentary]

Roger and Me (1989) Directed by Michael Moore [Documentary]

Titicut Follies (1967) Directed by Fred Wiseman [Documentary]

The Hour of the Furnaces (1968) Directed by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino [Documentary]

Television Series

Gogglebox (2013-present) [Television Series]

Made in Chelsea (2011-present) [Television Series]

Appendices

1. Pilot Study Ethical Approval

Ethical Approval – Focus Group with Danai Mikelli.

On the 2nd May 2014 Level 1 students from the Media Production programme at Coventry University participated in a focus group to discuss their experience of using the online interactive video programme Mozilla Popcorn Maker.

This focus group was in response to an assignment for the module 161MC – Creating Impact in Media Production. The focus group was undertaken with the approval and supervision of the module leader, Matthew Hawkins.

Kind Regards,

Matthew Hawkins
Lecturer in Media Production.
Coventry University.
matthew.hawkins@coventry.ac.uk

2. Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent

Title of the study
The use of interactive documentary in the context of Critical Media Education

Statement

This information is being collected as part of a research project concerned with the use of interactive documentary in the context of media education by the Department of Media and Communication in Coventry University. The information which you supply and that which may be collected as part of the research project will be stored on a password protected hard drive and will only be accessed by authorised personnel involved in the project. The information will be retained by Coventry University and will only be used for the purpose of research. By supplying this information you are consenting to the University storing your information for the purposes stated above. The information will be processed by Coventry University in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. No identifiable personal data will be published.

Statements of consent

Signing this, I confirm that:

- I have read and understood the participant information leaflet for this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- My participation is voluntary and I am aware of my right to withdraw at any time.
- I give my permission for all sessions to be recorded on video.
- Based upon the above, I agree to take part in this study.

Name of participant…….…….. Date…… Signature……..……..

Name of researcher…….. Date…… Signature……..…..

3. Participant Information Leaflets

Participant Information Leaflet

Title of the proposed study

Expanding Open Pedagogies: the use of interactive documentary in the context of Critical Media Education

Description of the proposed study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the use of interactive documentary media practices in the service of critical media pedagogy. One of my case studies is Knowle West Media Centre. Eight young adults will be recruited and trained by Knowle West Media Centre, with the purpose to make one interactive documentary raising the question “Where are the young people?”.

Invitation to participate and explanation of what participation entails

Eight young adults aged 18-24, are invited to participate in the above mentioned interactive documentary project. During the workshops, the young people will be introduced in the basic principles of interactive documentary and will undertake pastoral, technical skills and pedagogy training. For the purposes of this project, the participants will attend two sessions on documentary truth and interactive modes, which will be recorded on video. Then, the participants will work together as a crew in order to create their own interactive media production on the above mentioned topic. For the needs of filming, the young producers will need to interact with places and interview people outside Knowle West Media Centre. At the end of the process, the participants are expected to discuss their films with the researcher, during video elicitation interviews, aiming to investigate the ways through which the above mentioned process contributed towards raising their consciousness about the society they live in.

Participation in the study is voluntary and the participants are free to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality, anonymity and data security

The data will be used for the purposes of my PhD research and will be treated as anonymous and confidential. All data will be stored on a password protected hard disk and deleted after a period of six years.

Results of the study

The results of the study will be published in journals and presented at conferences. Online dissemination of the interactive media productions is also intended.

Contact details

Danai Mikelli
mikellid@uni.coventry.ac.uk

Participant Information Leaflet

Title of the proposed study

Expanding Open Pedagogies: the use of interactive documentary in the context of Critical Media Education (Coventry)

Description of the proposed study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the use of interactive documentary media practices in the service of critical media pedagogy. One of my case studies is Positive Youth Foundation in Hillfields, Coventry. Eighteen young people will take part in series of interactive documentary workshops, with the aim to create their own interactive documentaries.

Invitation to participate and explanation of what participation entails

Eighteen young adults aged 13-18, are invited to participate in the above mentioned interactive documentary workshops. During the workshops, the young people will be introduced in the basic principles of interactive documentary and will be trained in documentary practice, including tutorials with the editing tool (Popcorn Maker). The young people will select their own topics. For the needs of filming, students will need to interact with places and interview people outside Positive Youth Foundation. At the end of the process, students are expected to discuss their films with the researcher, during video elicitation interviews, aiming to investigate the ways through which the above mentioned process contributed towards raising their consciousness about the society they live in.

Participation in the study is voluntary and the participants are free to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality, anonymity and data security

The data will be used for the purposes of my PhD research and will be treated as anonymous and confidential. All data will be stored on a password protected hard disk and deleted after a period of six years.

Results of the study

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Contact details

Danai Mikelli
mikellid@uni.coventry.ac.uk

Participant Information Leaflet

Title of the proposed study

The use of interactive documentary in the context of Critical Media Education

Description of the proposed study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the use of interactive documentary media practices in the service of critical media pedagogy. A group of young adults will take part in a series of workshops, with the purpose to make interactive documentaries raising the topic of social isolation.

Invitation to participate and explanation of what participation entails

A group of young adults aged 18-24, are invited to participate in the above mentioned interactive documentary workshops. During the workshops, the young people will be introduced in the basic principles of interactive documentary and will learn the skills for documentary making. All sessions will be recorded on video. The participants will work together individually or in groups in order to film their own interactive media production on the above-mentioned topic. For the needs of filming, the young producers will need to interact with places and interview people in Coventry. At the end of the process, the participants are expected to discuss their films with the researcher, during video elicitation interviews, aiming to investigate the above mentioned process.

Participation in the study is voluntary and the participants are free to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality, anonymity and data security

The data will be used for the purposes of my PhD research and will be treated as anonymous and confidential. All data will be stored on a password protected hard disk and deleted after a period of six years.

Results of the study

The results of the study will be published in journals and presented at conferences. Online dissemination of the interactive media productions is also intended.

Contact details

Danai Mikelli
mikellid@uni.coventry.ac.uk

4. Research Journal section

The fourth session at PYF took place on the 5th of December 2014. The purpose of this session was to develop ideas for the topics of the interactive documentaries the young people will create and cover technical issues related to filming and editing. The whole lesson plan can be found here:
http://idocworkshops.wordpress.com/2014/12/04/session-4/

The session started with a conversation about police violence, an issue that was brought up by one of the participants. All the young people got involved in lively discussions with the youth worker, who was also attending, regarding this topic. I considered this to be a good start for the session, as the participants felt comfortable to express their opinions about issues that concern their society, in a way that I would like them to express themselves in their interactive documentaries too. The youth worker mentioned the riots of 2012 and condemned the behavior of some groups of people, who used more violence to retaliate for the police killing of a black person. The young people raised their concerns about some other cases of police violence, arguing against the fact that there were no charges for the police officers involved. The young people also commented on some experiences from their school life, which they considered as indications of racism.

Before moving to the discussion of the topics of the interactive documentaries, I asked the young people to sum up what we covered in the previous session (story). One of the participants gave me a piece of paper divided in two, summarising the differences between traditional and interactive documentaries which was their task for the previous week. I also asked the participants about their previous filming and editing experience and they agreed to use their mobile phones for filming.

Then, we allocated participants into groups. The two groups that were present spent ten minutes thinking about the topics of their documentaries. The first group decided to make a film about the life of teenager, how people see teenagers and how PYF helps them. Regarding the interactive elements, they will add links to the PYF website, alongside its Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.

The second group decided to talk about what it means to be a part of something, by focusing on performance. They chose this topic, as dancing and singing is a big part of their culture and they can also comment on peoples' perceptions and how they can break barriers. The interactive elements will add links to different dance schools, as well as PYF related events.

5. Interview Guides

KWMC Video Elicitation Questions 30.03.2015 (THEMES)

Congratulations on your documentary!

1. INTRODUCTION

- Can you tell me your name, your age and your role in the team?
- Can you give me an introduction to the interactive documentary you made?
- Can you tell me a bit more about the reasons why you made a documentary about this topic? Why is this topic important?

2. PROCESS

- What are the most important decisions that you had to make while filming the documentary?
- Your documentary is interactive, as you encourage the viewer to navigate through the stories and challenges of the three teenagers involved. Did you consider using interactivity in the process of pre-production and production as well? If yes, in what ways?
- So interactivity is something that you had in mind from Day 1, or is it something that mainly concerned you in post-production?
- For Charlie's second challenge video, you decided to show two of the JDPs talking about it. This is a technique commonly used in self-reflexive films, so can you talk a bit more about this choice?

3. INTERACTIVE DOCUMENTARY

- In general, how do you understand interactive documentaries?
- What did you know about i-docs before you started working on this project? Has your perception changed since then?
- What are the advantages of the interactive mode?
- Can you see any disadvantages?

- Why did you decide to create an interactive instead of a traditional documentary about this topic?
- When you first met the three teenagers and asked them to take part in an interactive documentary, did you have to explain to them what this means? How did they understand the term?
- Do you think that young people will be more interested in watching an interactive (instead of a traditional) documentary about social isolation?
- Your documentary shows that young people today spend an incredible amount of time being online, and that this is one of the causes of social isolation. Taking under consideration the fact that your project aims to fight against social isolation and can only be found online, what are your thoughts about this?

4. INTERFACE

- Can you describe the structure of the website and the reasons why you decided to build it like this?

- What are the most important decisions that you had to make about the design of the website and the interactive mode of your documentary?
- You included a clip about what you called “Your Challenge”, can you talk a bit more about this?
- What were the limitations that you met while designing the website?
- Looking back, what would you do differently with regards to the interface?

5. CONSUMERS

- I will now ask you to try to step out of your role as makers and position yourselves as viewers of The Glowing Divide. What choices would you make as viewers? What are you reactions, thoughts and feelings?
- In general, how do you act as consumers of interactive media?

6. CONSCIOUSNESS

- Do you think that documentaries are effective means for raising awareness?
- What about interactive documentaries? Are there any differences between the two modes regarding raising awareness?
- Your documentary revolves around teenagers and social isolation and you talked about the reasons why you chose this topic in the beginning of the interview. What are the aspects of this issue that you were not aware of before your involvement in this project?
- Did the process of making this documentary help you to better understand these aspects? How?
- All three teenagers talked about their experience participating in your documentary and they all mentioned that it has been transformative. Ella for example said that it “opened her eyes”. In what ways has this project been transformative for you?

7. WRAPPING UP

- What is the most important thing that you learned during your training these last six months?
- How will you take this knowledge forward?
- What’s next for you?

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

PYF Video Elicitation Questions 27.02.2015 (THEMES)

8. INTRODUCTION

- Can you tell me your name, your age and the name of your school?
- What is the title of your interactive documentary?
- Can you give me an introduction about the interactive documentary film that you made?
- Can you tell me more about the reasons why you made it?

9. PROCESS

- What are the decisions that you had to take while making your film (filming phase)?
- What are the decisions that you had to take while editing your film (including Wondershare and the Popcorn Maker)?

10. INTERACTIVE DOCUMENTARY

- How do you understand this term?
- What are the advantages of interactive documentaries?
- Are there any disadvantages?

11. CONSUMERS

- How do you interact as consumers of interactive media?
- Watch your film again and try to step out of your role as maker, positioning yourself as a viewer. What are your feelings?

12. POPCORN MAKER

- What are the advantages of the Popcorn Maker?
- Did you find any limitations?
- Overall, how would you describe your experience engaging with the Popcorn Maker?

13. CONSCIOUSNESS

- Why did you choose this particular topic for your interactive documentary?
- What did you think about your topic before the workshops? What did you think about this now?
  - Are there any aspects of this topic that you were not aware of before making your film?
  - Do you think that the process of creating your interactive documentary helped you to understand the above mentioned aspects? How?

7. WRAPPING UP

- Which is the most important thing that you learned during the workshops?

- How will you take this knowledge forward and how will it affect your life inside and outside school?
- After all the sessions and this interview, do you think that you have a better understanding of interactive documentary?

6. Lesson Plans on KWMC blog (sample)

Documentary Truth (04 November 2014)

This session aims to explore issues of fictionality and truth related to documentary. We will be looking at specific documentary films, ranging from the birth of cinema to contemporary examples.

Activity 1

Before we start, discuss what you already know about documentary in your group. (5 minutes)

The term documentary was first used in 1879 in

the Littré dictionary, as an adjective meaning

“that which has the character of a document”.

According to Jean Girault, the term acquired

cinematic meaning in 1906 and became a noun

after 1914.

Georges Sadoul, The Documentary

John Grierson, who is considered to be the father of documentary, coined the filmic term "documentary" in a review of Robert Flaherty's *Moana* in 1926. Grierson provided the most famous definition of documentary, as the “creative treatment of actuality”.

A documentary is a film based on real events

and does not use traditional elements of fiction,

like script, actors, costumes, lightings etc.

Eva Stefani, 10 Readings on Documentary

These definitions emphasise the connection of documentary with reality. However, a reality recorded on camera is mediated, so to what extent can it be objective?

This is the first film ever made, *Exiting the Factory*, by Auguste and Louis Lumière in 1895.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwRAUniWJPY

Activity 2

According to Sadoul, the Lumière brothers are excluded from the definition of the term as “creative treatment of actuality”. Do you agree with this statement? Why? (5 minutes)

As you pointed out, even the very first film is constructed, in the sense that the Lumières had to make decisions about to what to include and what to exclude from their frame. Also, this film implies a sense of manipulation, as the Lumières instructed the workers not to look at the camera.

Nanook of the North is considered to be one of the first documentaries. Robert Flaherty completed this travelogue about Inuit life in 1922. The film moved beyond the conventions of travelogues at the time to offer a more poetic interpretation of human life against the natural elements.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFswUeom96A

Flaherty first visited Hudson Bay area in Canada in 1914, with the purpose of making a documentary film about the Eskimos. Upon returning to America, his rushes were completely burned, so Flaherty had to go back to Canada in 1919, in order to remake Nanook of the North.

Flaherty created a story which has a dramatic character and a narrative structure, with a beginning, a middle and an end, even though it is based on reality. Often, he used to ask the Eskimos to represent ways of life, which have eclipsed. In this respect, he used fiction film techniques in order to make a documentary.

The next film we will be looking at is *Man with a Movie Camera*, created by Dziga Vertov in 1929. Vertov used innovative cinematic techniques (dissolve, fast motion, freeze frames) thus creating a reflexive documentary which portrays life in Soviet cities Kiev, Moscow and Odessa in the beginning of the 20th century. In the opening credits, the film is presented as an experiment. Vertov manipulates time and exposes the constructedness of documentaries.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZkvjWIEcoU

As the documentary continued to evolve, matters of ethics and authorial intent came up. Leni Riefenstahl directed *Triumph of the Will* in 1935, a film that chronicles the Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHs2coAzLJ8

Can we (and should we) interpret a documentary film on the basis of authorial intent? In the case of Riefenstahl, she would firmly declare that her intentions were purely artistic; however *Triumph of the Will* is considered by many people to be a tribute to the Nazi party.

Jean Rouch co-created *Chronicle of a Summer* with Edgar Morin in 1960, asking young Parisians to meet and talk. The participants interview people in the street, posing the question: "Are you happy?". They discuss their own lives as students,

workers, immigrants, and they argue about race, class and the current wars in Algeria and the Congo.

Rouch said:

“We have tried Morin and I, to find a new form of humanism.

It was necessary to make a film with total authenticity, true

as a documentary, but having the content of a fiction film,

the inner life of the people.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpxVtFQgS4o

Rouch is associated with Cinema-vérité style: the documentary filmmaker has to intervene in what is happening in front of the camera in order to reveal reality.

The opposite approach is Direct cinema, according to which the documentary filmmaker has to remain unobtrusive. Fred Wiseman created most of his documentaries in this style.

Activity 3

This is an extract from *Titicut Follies*. Wiseman filmed this in the hospital for the criminally insane at the Massachusetts Correctional Institution in Bridgewater in 1967. Titicut Follies is considered to be an observational film. What are the differences and similarities between the following extract from *Titicut Follies* and the one from *Chronicle of a Summer*? Discuss in your group.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLCySjLIjeE

10 MINUTES BREAK

Michael Moore made *Roger and Me*, his first film, in 1989. The documentary focuses on Moore’s hometown, which is Flint, Michigan.

The viewer follows the constant, although unsuccessful, attempts of Moore to meet with Roger Smith, chairman of General Motors, in order to investigate the reasons for closing down the factory.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPNmHPjkxdk

Moore is often considered to be manipulative, for the way he treats his material. In particular, in *Roger and Me*, he presents certain events out of chronological order, implying that these happened after the closing down of the factory, although they actually happened before that.

Activity 4

After the 25th anniversary screening of the film at Toronto International Film Festival, Moore said:

“GM was dealt a serious blow by the film. There was a good five-year period where they stopped closing factories in Flint because they didn’t want the attention. They still closed them elsewhere, but they left Flint alone. And it gave enough of a window for people in Flint to either make a plan B or to get the hell out. And then they just went back to doing what they were doing. So it had a temporary good effect in that sense.”

In your group, discuss your opinions about this statement.

A mockumentary is a film used to give a sense of authenticity to the narrated story and to persuade viewers that what they see is a true story. *Man Bites Dog* (1992) is a good example.

A film crew follows a serial killer as he goes about his daily routines. The situation changes dramatically, when he begins involving the members of the crew in his activities.

Remy Belvaux and Benoit Poelvoorde created a low-budget film which subverts the documentary format and provides a strong criticism of mainstream media.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcmFY9V4qoc

Zelig is a mockumentary created by Woody Allen in 1983. Allen plays Zelig, a character who changes his appearance depending on the people who are near him. The film reveals its constructedness from the very beginning, as all viewers can recognize Allen in the role of Zelig.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUW8JsLDsNo

Exit Through the Gift Shop is a film by street artist Banksy that tells the story of Thierry Guetta, a French immigrant in Los Angeles, and his obsession with street art. There has been debate over whether the documentary is genuine or a mockumentary, although Banksy answered "Yes" when asked if the film is real.

Activity 5

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xtua7w_exit-through-the-gift-shop_lifestyle

Towards the end of the film, Banksy is heard to say: ‘Maybe art is a bit of a joke’. In light of this statement, which elements in the film do you consider as contributing to its interpretation as a mockumentary?

Conclusion

Through exploring specific documentaries, we talked about how documentary blurs boundaries between fiction and truth. The aim of this session was to provide you with a better understanding of these issues and prepare you for the next workshop on interactive documentary. According to Galloway, Mcalpine and Harris (2007), the notion of interactive documentary logically extends that of the documentary, but as we will see on Wednesday, one could argue that the notion of interactivity is not easily combined with that of traditional documentary.

7. Poster

The Glowing Divide: Reconfiguring Interactive Documentary as a tool for Critical Pedagogy

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Supervisory Team: Dr Shaun Hides, Matthew Hawkins

Some materials have been removed from this thesis due to Third Party Copyright. The unabridged version of the thesis can be viewed at the Lanchester Library, Coventry University.

Aims and Background

This research project investigated the use of interactive documentary as a tool in the context of Critical Media Education. A series of workshops, conducted in Coventry, introduced 6 young adults in the process of documentary making, with the aim to produce their own interactive films on the topic of social isolation.
The Glowing Divide (2015) was used as the basic resource for the workshops. This interactive documentary was created by a group of young media makers employed by Knowle West Media Centre in Bristol and aimed to explore the links between technology and social isolation in young people.

Critical Pedagogy Discourse

- Emphasises the importance of valuing student's voice for deconstructing and making media
- Provides tools for marginalised/misrepresented people to express their concerns
- Promotes empowerment as a major aspect of transformative education
- Highlights a democratic pedagogy which involves teachers sharing power with students (Kellner & Share, 2005)

i-Docs and Educational Research

Interactive documentary is a rapidly evolving field. In the context of education, it has been theorised as a new learning system with the potential to:

- Increase student motivation and offer experiences that combine entertainment with education
- Encourage collaborative learning, multi-directionality and freedom of dissemination (Gifreu, 2012)
- Provide new ways of gaining and connecting knowledge (Gifreu & Moreno, 2014)

Interactive documentary is seen as "creating spaces in which individuals can speak for themselves" (Nash, 2014), and as such it could be aligned with the principles of Critical Media Education. However, the implications of this confluence have not been yet discussed.

Methods

Educational Ethnography: aims to provide rich data about the contexts, activities and beliefs of participants in educational settings (Goetz & Lecompte, 1984).
Action research: form of participatory research carried out by practitioners into their own practices, based on a self-reflective spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Kemmis, 1988).

First cycle of data collection (Bristol):

- 2 workshops involving 7 participants
- Video elicitation interviews
- 1 interactive documentary entitled "The Glowing Divide"

Second cycle of data collection (Coventry):

- 7 workshops involving 6 participants (only 1 made it to the editing stage)
- Field notes
- 1 traditional documentary entitled "Social Media Evolution"

Some materials have been removed from this thesis due to Third Party Copyright. The unabridged version of the thesis can be viewed at the Lanchester Library, Coventry University.

Discussion

The workshops in Coventry took place in an informal Critical Media Literacy context, in which the advantages posed by interactive documentary as a new learning system were undermined. The results of this intervention could be perceived as indications of student silence, instead of student voice, aligning with a wider critique of the discourse of Critical Pedagogy, as ignoring "the profoundly contextual nature of all classroom interaction" (Orner, 1992).

Conclusions

Although participants gained a better understanding of documentary, the element of interactivity proved to be problematic, as it required a time-consuming engagement that the participants could not afford. The outcomes of this research project call for nuanced understandings of pedagogies underpinning the use of interactive documentary as a tool for teaching and learning in complex environments.

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