

Digital Storytelling as a Means of Sharing Trauma

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Abstract

Digital storytelling has transformative influences on our worlds of meaning and social relations. The focus of the study is the individual and the social effects of digital storytelling as a means of sharing sexual violence traumas. In the preliminary research, the expert interview method were used and with the help of psychologists the content of the study was determined. There are positive effects of digital narratives, such as facilitating sharing and overcoming trauma, developing empathy and connectivity, consciousness-raising, being a part of digital activist movements and contributing to social change. On the other hand, because of its own authority conditions of new media, there are negative effects such as reproduction of male-dominated discourses, secondary trauma, and making the survivor the target of victim-blaming and hate speech. This study aims to discuss the positive and negative ways of digital trauma narratives of sexual violence survivors by considering the differences between collective workshop-based digital storytelling and personal social media stories.

Keywords: Digital storytelling; Digital Narratives; Social Media; Trauma; Sexual Violence.

1. Introduction

The narratives are the bearers of the images that we need to make sense the universe around us and explain our inner worlds. People present themselves by stories in everyday life, and they build affinity with other people through the interaction of these stories. According to Norrick “We tell stories to make a point, to catch up on each other’s lives, to report news, and to entertain each other. And one story opens the floor to other participants for stories of their own” (2007, 127).

Storytelling has always been effective in teaching ethics and transferring social values. Bell (2010) sets out the path of social change that anti-racist storytelling in teaching can create, and essentially provides clues about the effects of storytelling on all social inequalities. The interrelated topics such

as education and narrative, storytelling and social justice, storytelling-ethics-media have been re-discussed with digital storytelling. Because digital storytelling have required rethinking the ethical and instructional value of the storytelling due to its structural characteristics.

The interactive relationship between media, narratives, culture and images present to us many *ways of seeing*. Leppert states that “images show us a world but not the world itself” (1996, 3). Every medium has a formative influence on narratives and influences our mental images according to its structural characteristics. With the *digital turn*, all life practices have been transformed, and storytelling takes an interactive form. According to Robins (1996) digital communication technologies enable unbounded freedom and flexibility in the creation of images, and according to Burnett (2004) images are the products of interaction between digital devices and users. As a result of *convergence culture*, new media users have the opportunity to create their digital stories, construct identity on social media, share their everyday lives. Digital media simultaneously appeal to all senses with multimedia feature, and also gets closer to reality with synchronization and interactivity features. Thus, it could be argued that digital storytelling has an influential feature on perception, empathy, collectivity, connectivity and socialization.

While evaluating the effects of narrative on social change, digital narratives should not be ignored. In the days of digital activism, it is especially important to discuss about the transformative effect of digital narratives and contribute to its development. Digital narratives and organization of women in social networks contributes to a period of dissociation in the field of social gender. There are Twitter hashtags all over the world such as #MeToo in USA, #SenDeAnlat in Turkey and #Cuéntalo in Spain in response to sexual harassment and femicides. Thousands of abuse stories are shared on Youtube. However, the number of digital storytelling workshops that enable the creation of trauma narratives with the help of professional facilitators is increasing day by day. Therefore, women now have more tools to shout out to gender inequalities and make their voices heard. The aim of this study is to discuss the promising effects of these tools on social change and the points in which these narratives cannot avoid being extensions of the existing patriarchal system. However, it will be seen more clearly how to develop positive aspects by explaining these effects.

In this study, the relationship between digital narrative, social change and gender is discussed. In order to understand the subject in more depth, a concept map was taken by interviewing three psychologists who are experts in the field of trauma and a literature review was performed on it. First, digital narratives would be considered as the facilitator of the sharing process, which is the first step to overcome the trauma. Then, the contribution of empathy and connectivity, which is strengthened by the multimedia and interaction characteristic of shared digital trauma narratives on the consciousness-raising that is the first step of social change will be discussed.

From the critical point of view on digital narratives, it will be noted that victims can reproduce the sexist discourse in their own trauma narratives. In addition, victim-blaming which is a social tendency in traumatic cases and related with the belief in a just world, and the hate speech raised in social networks will be discussed. Finally, the possibility of secondary trauma in the abundance of all these traumatic images will be mentioned.

2. Digital Storytelling and Social Change: Influence on Gender Inequalities

With the digitalization era, everyday life has become fluid and the ability of identities to express themselves has increased. The users present themselves to the audience through performative storytelling. The process by which people produce their stories in digital form, store and exchange, has been called *digital storytelling*, as distinct from earlier modern forms of storytelling. "Digital storytelling brings a timeless form into the digital age, to give a voice to the myriad tales of everyday life as experienced by ordinary people in their own terms. Despite its use of the latest technologies, its purpose is simple and human" (Hartley and McWilliam 2009, 3). According to Couldry, the remediation capacity of digital media, have multiple possibilities for transmission, retransmission and transformation available to users, and digital storytelling means "the whole range of personal stories now being told in potentially public form using digital media resources" (2008a, 2-3).

The concept of private space that is retreated from public space, is replaced by a technologically enabled and mobile private space (Papacharissi 2010, 136). The user no longer has to give up the comfort of private space when experiencing the stories of others and the public space. Papacharissi has named this feature of new media as "networked self and the culture of remote connectivity" (138-144). In the context of the new presentation of self, connectivity and narrative experiences, there is an "explosion of digital means" in the words of Lundby (2008a). As Burnett affirms: "The pervasive presence of narratives of every sort told through the multiplicity of shapes and forms of modern media far exceeds the conventional boundaries of human conversation and interaction." (2004, 4).

The essential type of digital narratives is workshop-based digital storytelling which is collectively produced and aimed at transferring experience. Workshop-based digital storytelling facilitates the production of video clips by story circle that contains six significant stages such as the script-text writing, voiceover recording, sound editing, image production and editing, putting the digital story together using the available software (Hartley and McWilliam 2009). The influential feature of digital storytelling is telling one's story using one's voice (Simsek 2012) and powerful feature is producing stories collectively with the help of facilitators, in Hartley (2017) words *do-it-with-others*. Thus digital storytelling allows to people help each other and

contribute to the growth of knowledge with the help of digital technologies (Hartley and McWilliam 2009, 15). Founders of *Center of Digital Storytelling* point out that they helped over 20,000 individuals share their stories since 1993, and they believe in the power of story (Story Center).

Which is why Digital Storytelling work is so important with those who have been left out – poor people, people of color, women, LGBT and indigenous communities, immigrants and refugees – not only because of the enduring digital divide but because of the awareness that technology has evolved largely as the domain of privileged white males and has in fact been used specifically to categorize and scrutinize and “represent” marginalized groups in ways that are completely voyeuristic, disempowering, and exploitive (Hill 2012, 148-149)

Since the *Center of Digital Storytelling* was founded in 1993, a lot has changed and social media narratives have come into play. Not only is online video sharing, but many multimedia distributing channel arised such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. social media provides a new narrative experiences and online profiles reflect the life stories of users through *timelines*. Users share the moments with photos, videos, locational data, emoji and text from their everyday lives. While the corrosion of public space and the rise of private space has changed the socialization practices, narratives transform into performances. In 2013, the story word gained another meaning for the user on Snapchat. This type of story “involves a series of pictures and videos taken by a user throughout the day automatically collated into slideshow.” (Dayter and Mühleisen 2016, 572). Over time, this feature has been added to all social networks. In these circumstances, digital technologies provide the users new tools that give the chance to share each moment of everyday life. However, Hill emphasizes about the relationship between social media and digital storytelling, that “it has greatly complicated and magnified the ethical challenges inherent to bringing highly sensitive personal narratives and images into public spheres” (2012, 143).

The spread of personal narratives in the public sphere by digital storytelling can create a positive social impact through the sense of empathy and connectivity, but it also has a risk for the narrator to leave being under social pressure. First of all, let us consider the views of Couldry, who emphasizes the importance of digital storytelling in terms of recognition or consciousness-raising. Couldry (2008a, 13) draws attention to approaches of Dahl and Fraser while discussing the relationship between storytelling and democracy. Dahl states that “citizens should possess the political resources they would require to participate in political life pretty much as equals” (1989, 322). These resources not only economic resources but also knowledge, information and cognitive skills. Fraser emphasizes the interconnection between “the distribution of resources” and “the distribution of recognition”. Digital storytelling helps “to distribute more widely capacity to tell important stories about oneself – to represent oneself as a social, and therefore potentially political, agent” (Couldry 2008a, 13).

The aim of digital storytelling is not to produce media for broadcast, but to produce *conversational media*. It can be extraordinarily powerful. (...) The aim is to engage us in listening to each other's stories with respect and then perhaps we can sort out new solutions. Digital storytelling is offered as a technique for increasing understanding across generations, ethnicities and other divides, and as a tool in activist organizing, education, professional reflection and corporate communication (14)

From an optimistic point of view, with the help of the digital turn and facility of production of digital stories, people contribute to the public sphere. On the other hand, Papacharissi (2010) argues that it is not possible yet to realize social changes that cannot be realized in the public sphere, in a virtual space. She clarifies that public space is not synonymous with public sphere. Digital spaces have shown only public space feature now by promoting discussion and exchanging ideas (Papacharissi 2002, 10-11). Nevertheless, the digital space offers significant opportunities for connectivity, coordination and organization, although it is not a place where radical changes are built from scratch.

The digitalization of the narrative has created a transformation in the sense that it allows ordinary voices to reach a wide audience. The users, who have become content producers on social media, have found a new channel in which they have circulated their stories on a global scale, as they acquired new tools to tell their stories. This change in both production and distribution process is seen as facilitator for storytelling. The digital transformation has been influential on narrative. Although it did not create a social change from scratch, it strengthened and deepened the positive or negative effects. "The point, of course, is not that by itself digital storytelling could be the catalyst of such major change, but rather that it is only in the context of change on that scale that the potential of digital storytelling as a social form can be fully grasped" (Couldry 2008b, 58). The facilitating effect of digital storytelling on sharing creates positive effects when it is used to express inequalities, such as gender inequalities, in society. Simsek affirms:

Life narratives and the exchange of experience in order to create an alternative source of knowledge have been at the heart of feminism (2012, 5). (...) Once the digital stories are created and they exist out of the workshop, they can be screened and used as a discussion expander, as well as a facilitator for dialogue in other feminist/activist settings (278)

Women's self-expression and mutual empathy are important for their organization against the unequal power hierarchy. For this reason, the relationship between narrative and women's studies should be reviewed with digital storytelling.

In contemporary gender studies, gender is considered as a performance. Gender is performed in both everyday life practices and narratives such as

diaries, documentaries, autobiographies. With the digital turn, woman, who is associated with the private space, has become a *digitally equipped* person in Papacharissi's (2010) words, and blogs, websites, social media profiles and digital stories have been added to performative narratives. For example, cooking-blogs as a new performance space for women are becoming common. Women are telling their own life stories through recipes on their cooking blogs. Cooking, which is imposed on women by unequal social roles, turns into permanent with the help of blogs, and sharing the recipes on the internet gives women the feeling that their *invisible labor* does not get lost (Cantek 2010). In a male-dominated system, which connects women with private space and gives roles such as cooking, women need to share their life stories, seek ways of sharing and try to reach public space with digital technologies with others.

In a patriarchal system, which connects women with private space and gives unequal social roles, women need to share their life stories, seek ways of sharing and try to reach public space with digital technologies with others. To these regards, the second feminist wave has been successful because it listens to the needs of women, it has presented the comfortable environment to women for expressing themselves and has aimed consciousness-raising. At this point, according to Simsek there is a relationship between feminist activism and digital storytelling, and she states that "workshops may well operate as small-scale consciousness-raising meetings" (2012, 276).

As a result, although it is known that a radical social change about unequal gender roles cannot be realized completely in digital spaces, it is seen that positive changes such as empathy, connectivity and consciousness-raising can be achieved by the combination of digitalization and narrative. In the next part of the study, sexual violence digital narratives are discussed taking into account the positive and negative effects.

3. Digital Stories for Sharing Trauma, Establishing Empathy and Consciousness-raising

The rise of visual culture and the multimedia offered by digitalization is creating new perception and consumption experiences of images / messages. A new content is being added to the walls of social networks every second, and all of these flow like a non-stop film strip. Therefore, one needs to use its existing technologies effectively to draw attention to his / her story in these image abundance. Digital narratives provide a more intense emotion transfer due to their multimedia features. For example, the tone of the storyteller's voice or the visual that she / he uses gives a shorter and more direct path to express feelings and establish empathy. For a positive social change, society needs to understand and recognize the marginalized groups. In order to cope with discrimination, the beneficial uses of digital technologies should be diffused. In the face of discrimination and othering, digital

narratives present the chance for telling these people their own stories and delivering these stories to the audience.

To this respect, digital narratives have a psychological meaning for the narrator and have a social value in terms of empathy and connectivity. Elaborating on this idea, Lambert sustains that (2013, 12) digital storytelling supports the continued construction of a healthy, individual identity. For a traumatized person, telling the story is the main step in overcoming his / her trauma (Herman 2015). To these means, with the help of digital storytelling, the people have the chance to speak up and share their trauma. In addition, digital storytelling is also attracting the users, who, bored with traditional storytelling, are rapidly consuming media which in turn, helps to bring trauma narratives to a wider audience. Expanding on this point, Lambert explains how:

We realized that the lived experience of people or peoples who have faced systematic forms of discrimination and oppression must be honored as authoritative perspectives on their own lives. Individuals need to be supported in telling their own story; in their own way, to the audiences they choose (2013, 117). (...) This reanimation of the image artifact as part of the edit makes you feel as if you thinking about people, places, and objects in new ways. The plasticity of images, music, voice, the very playfulness of arranging and re-arranging meaning by visual sequence and juxtaposition, the entire process becomes regenerative for many people" (127)

There are digital storytelling workshops¹ in many parts of the world. Many of survivors create their trauma stories using photos, animation, stop-motion video or just talking across the camera and share via Youtube. There are many blogs and forums such as the *surviving in numbers* project, where survivors who draw attention to sexual abuse by emphasizing numerical data. In addition, Twitter hashtags like #MeToo has become a tool for sharing trauma stories. As stated by Lundby, "new media and new conditions of telling my or our story are open to more individuals and groups in society." (2008b, 363).

According to Herman (2015), recovering from traumas such as sexual harassment and abuse needs three psychological stages that are safety and stabilization, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection and integration. The process which turns victims into survivors could be takes years and sharing the trauma has an important role for recovery. Herman states that:

The ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness. Certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud: this is the meaning of the world unspeakable. Atrocities, however refuse to be buried. (...) Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for healing of individual victims. (...) The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim the

aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma. (...) But far too often secrecy prevails, and the story of the traumatic event surfaces not as a verbal narrative but as a symptom (2015, 1)

For surfacing as a verbal narrative, a survivor needs a safe environment, reconstructing the trauma story and connecting again community. Digital storytelling workshops help to establish empathy between participators and it makes them feel safe; they become facilitators in the process of reconstructing the narrative of the trauma. When participator starts to telling trauma story, the story functions as a “biological tool for recall the events” (Lambert 2013, 8). “The retelling of an incident of trauma is made to service the establishment of new equilibrium in the storyteller’s sense of self” (13). As it can be inferred, digital storytelling should be considered as a step of recalling trauma and recoding the event. Indeed, Hill affirms: “I believe strongly that there is no linear path from victim to survivor; that we move in and out of these kinds of identities in a much more fluid way and learn ultimately how to cope with periodically resurfacing pain” (2012, 145).

Simsek (2012, 293) who has researched on workshop-based digital storytelling, emphasizes that every workshop circle create wider circles. Hill states that: “Allowing survivors to speak and insisting that their stories be truly heard heals all of us. And this may seem wildly optimistic, but I believe that as we are healed, we can perhaps heal our increasingly ailing world” (2012, 149).

Taking into account influences of digital storytelling, it can be claimed that it functions as an empathy tool in traumatic situations that are not adequately spoken in the society. Hill (2012) also handles digital storytelling as a reflective practice and emphasizes the sincerity that comes through in digital stories of survivors and witnesses of trauma. She states that “the digital story is a different kind of representation than a dramatized approach – the fact that stories contain recordings and images of real people rather than actors enables them to really touch people” (2012, 141). Even if some women remain anonymous on social media, they will be able to build new connections and culture of connectivity through digital stories.

The initial method of feminist movement was called *consciousness-raising*. Consciousness-raising groups are collective practices where women from various backgrounds share their trauma stories, improve ability to understand the others, establish empathy and connectivity by a shared feeling that they are not alone. However, in psychotherapeutic studies, consciousness-raising has been used in the cases of sexual violence and war trauma. The protected environment of consciousness-raising groups helps women to tell their trauma stories to other women like themselves, and they can prefer telling stories in a group instead of telling to a male psychiatrists (Herman 2015, 28). This approach would empower the survivors to pierce the privacy barrier, help others, and collective action. For this reason, digital storytelling workshops are considered effective to achieve

empathy, and spark connectivity and consciousness-raising. As Simsek considers:

The digital stories are created and they exist out of the workshop, they can be screened and used as a discussion expander, as well as a facilitator for dialogue in other feminist/activist settings. (...) The workshops setting is also a consciousness-raising process in a more functional sense, as women are encouraged to experiment with digital technologies as well as using them for future action planning and content production. (...) Digital storytelling seems to have potential for providing a non-formal learning environment for women where they can build new networks and meet the goals of former versions of consciousness-raising in shorter periods of time, finalising the workshops with a unique self-expression form: their voices digitalised and connected to others through their own digital stories (2012, 278-280)

When trauma is brought into public awareness, feelings of denial, repression and dissociation are included the recovery process that works in society as well as in the individual. Herman affirms: "In the 1970s, the speakouts of the women's liberation movement brought to public awareness the widespread crimes of violence against women. Victims who had been silenced began to reveal their secrets" (2015, 2). Now, it can be discussed that this dissociation is experienced with the help of digital spaces.

Since digital storytelling have multimedia content, has the potential to use the power of images and provide a much more intense feeling transfer with the narrator's voice. Feelings of the storyteller transferred to the audience are important for empathy and support. Especially the digital stories that are the product of a collective action in digital storytelling workshops are created with the help of professional facilitators and more effective results are obtained. On the other hand, user-generated trauma narratives are shared on social networks, and survivors can try to express themselves in a sentence on Twitter, just like they take their videos by their own webcams and share on Youtube. Of course, it is not as effective as the narratives produced in the workshops, but the strength of the social media stories comes from a quick production and immediate circulation on the social networks and the consequent delivery to a much wider audience. Because of this feature, movements like #MeToo have reached many people in hours. The digital environment quickly reaches wide circles, is rapidly gaining participation, and facilitating coordination and organization. Social media user has the chance to protest something independently from physical space or organize for protests in urban space. Users or citizens are able to connect to each other, to share content, to coordinate collective action, and to support political movements (Joyce 2010). Therefore, Twitter hashtags are the most prominent examples of this *digital activism* and the feminist movements such as #MeToo campaign are named as *hashtag feminism*. The virality of hashtag feminism

enables the spread of an ideology quickly and creates public awareness when used correctly.

Wood (2018) has determined the performative functions of tweets as promotion of solidarity, narration, declaratives, meta-activism and plug, in her research on MeToo and digital activism. Here are the tweets that tell their story with the largest percentage. However, declaratives are the second and promotion for solidarity is the third. This is an indicator of the need to tell sexual harassment and abuse stories that are not discussed enough and seen as a taboo in the society, and the potential of the empathy and solidarity established through togetherness of digitalization and narrative. The consciousness-raising in this way strengthens the street protests and puts pressure on legal regulations. Nevertheless, hashtag feminism is still in an uncertain position and requires a critical evaluation (Baer 2016). Because, even though it contributes to positive developments such as awareness, solidarity, activism and empathy, it can cause reproduction of essentially oppressive structures. These rapid, short and unrehearsed narratives can bring a number of problems together. Sexist discourses, which is already rooted in everyday life, is more easily spread through these social media narratives than workshops-based stories, and they cause the negative ways of relationship between digitalization and narratives.

4. Reproduction of Sexist Discourses, Victim-blaming, Hate Speech, and Secondary Trauma

While digital storytelling gives the individual freedom of expression, it creates new forms of authority. Therefore, it offers threats as well as the opportunities such as establishing empathy and consciousness-raising (Lundby 2008b). These threats range from the manner of expression of trauma to the destructive reactions of the audience.

Another important aspect to take into account is that language has been created by males, and women therefore express themselves in male terms. In Spender's (1987, 12) words, "women remain outsiders, borrowers of the language" and they use a language which is not of their own making. According to Bourdieu, (1991) this power is *symbolic violence* that is the imposition the ideas of dominated power and it is more powerful than physical violence. It condemns women to the status of the symbolic object in a patriarchal system through male-centered discourses. These sexist discourses are internalized by women and reproduce through discourses, even when they resist gender inequalities such as trauma narratives. During this study, the tweets being read and videos being watched showed that many of survivors blame themselves for sexual violence and felt stained. They reproduce these sexist discourses that keep them responsible for sexual violence in their own digital stories. While workshop-based storytelling can keep the narrator out of this kind of sexist discourse production, personal

contents can cause the re-circulation of the male-dominant discourse on social media. For example, despite all its consciousness-raising aspects and activist practices, from a critical point of view, MeToo movement has turned into a space where women look for the fault in their dress / drink, use sexist swearing, and thus recirculate the male-dominated language. When “my abuse story” is written the search bar on Youtube, thousands of videos are coming. In most of these stories, sexist swearing was used for expressing the perpetrator. However, there are expressions such as “I feel stained”, “it was my fault”, “I hate myself” or “I feel disgusting”. In social media stories, women explain their dress or whether they drink alcohol or not. Each of these is an example of self-blaming, and thus the internalized male dominant discourse is reproduced by women. The roots of this self-blaming go back to the concept of *victim-blaming*.

In Psychology, there is the so-called concept of *the belief in a just world* where people believe that bad things can happen to bad a person who deserves it (Lerner 1980, 11). People feel safe with this belief. But, in some cases, this belief is shaken up and people can not cope with the unjust situations. Because these unjust situations remind people that this can happened to them and, all the cause and effect relationships collapse. According to Lerner and Simmons’s (1966) experiment, people seek to establish a new cause and effect relationship to relieve themselves, and they become inclined to victim-blaming. And also survivors tend to blame themselves in societies where power produces such sexist discourses. The tweets of survivors reflect these tendency, reproduce and recirculate them. Especially in societies where gender stereotypes are dominant, victims or survivors are held responsible for sexual violence because of their dresses or behaviours. Getting drunk, wearing mini skirts and go out in the late of night are the most known reasons for victim-blaming. This tendency is, of course, supported and naturalized by the political conjuncture. Herman explains:

Witnesses as well as victims are subject to the dialectic of trauma. (...) When the events are natural disasters or acts of God, those who bear witness sympathize readily with the victim. But when the traumatic events are of human design, those who bear witness are caught in the conflict between victim and perpetrator. It is morally impossible to remain neutral in this conflict. The bystander is forced to take side. It is very tempting to take the side of perpetrator. All the perpetrator asks is that the bystander do nothing. He appeals to the universal desire to see, hear, and spak no evil. The victim, on the contrary, asks the bystander to share the burden of pain. The victim demands action, engagement, and remembering (2015, 7-8)

Through new media, voices that blame victims have become more intensive, and *hate speech* has become an important issue in social media. The exposure of victims to discourses of othering through social media is as

possible as connectivity and solidarity. As stated in the previous section, quoted in Herman, in the society who has to choose between the victim and the perpetrator, there are people who always choose the side of the perpetrator and accuse the victim through the hate speech. Hate speech produced in cases of sexual assault, rape and murder is unfortunately produced also by women. On the other hand, hate speech often merges with other discrimination, and the race or religion of the victim is also become the subject of this discourse. In addition to charging the women with unchastity, these discourses link unchastity to ethnicity or religion. While hate speech is always produced in accordance with political conjuncture by the mainstream media, the risk of hate speech on social media is growing. Because everyone has the chance to create and distribute hate discourses, and these people see that there are many people like them, and so they easily exceed the boundaries of ethics and morality. This means the normalization of hate speech and the formation of social acceptability (Gelashvili 2018, 11-12). In the atmosphere created in this way, the victim is discredited, the most traumatic event of the victim's life is placed outside the realm of social reality, and the trauma becomes unspeakable for the victim (Herman 2015). This means that while the digital narratives keep the lightness of sharing with one side, it increases the social pressure on the victim, on the other. As seen in the comments under the videos of sexual violence stories on Youtube, there are also comments that blamed the storyteller as well as the supporting comments. Blaming comments charge storyteller with unchastity and use humiliating words. This means that while the digital narratives keep the lightness of sharing with one side, it increases the social pressure on the victim, on the other.

Finally, the abundance of content on social media exposes the ordinary user to a lot of ideas and images on the topic being discussed. When an individual is exposed to other people's traumas excessively, secondary trauma is incurred, and it causes post traumatic stress disorder. Secondary trauma can be seen in those who have not directly experienced an event that can lead to a trauma, but who are directly interested in traumatized people. Kahil and Palabýyykoglu states that:

It is argued that, reactions given to a traumatic event by being exposed to the incident either primarily or secondarily, resemble each other. (...) Secondary exposition to trauma may lead to re-experiencing, avoidance symptoms as well as impairment in daily functioning. Briefly, secondary exposition to a traumatic incident induces parallel reactions as in those who are primarily exposed (2018, 59)

In today's world that social networks turn into a part of everyday life, the frequency of encountering traumatic narratives has increased considerably. This frequency increases the likelihood of secondary trauma. While the secondary trauma was an issue for people who are in relationship with

traumatized people, such as experts, health professionals or journalists, social media has expanded this circle to include all users. Moreover, the intense emotion transfer provided by digital narratives is capable of triggering secondary trauma. It should be emphasized that the narrative created in a workshop environment is seen safer because of minimizing the traumatizing elements with the help of experts.

New media has created its own authority and forms of control as well as all the facilities it offers. In this digital ecology, where the audience becomes the user, everyone become able to produce content and a lot of discourse is circulating on social networks. When we consider all the discourses in the axis of the trauma narratives of the survivors of sexual violence, it is seen that both the narrators can reproduce male-dominated discourses and they are exposed to otherization and social pressure. In such traumatic events, togetherness of the interaction power of digitalization and the victim-blaming tendency of the society, cause that hate speech gains a new dimension. The empathy or hate relations between the survivors and society influence on the third person as secondary trauma. Thus, the power of narrative and digital technologies can lead to destructive as well as constructive effects. All of these show that digital narratives have negative effects as well as positive effects.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays, digitally equipped new media users tell their stories with the help of digital technologies which create a new worlds of image and perception. New media offer the chances of multimedia, interactivity and globally distribution. Storytellers can create their stories by the own features of social networks as an individualistic and do-it-yourself experience, or create collectively in workshops with the help of professional facilitators as a do-it-with-others experience. These performative narratives allow ordinary voices to reach a wide audience, help the distribution of recognition, and function as a conversational media. This mode of production and distribution of digital storytelling offers a new form of transferring the ethical and instructive values undertaken by the narratives. The exchanging of experiences leads consciousness-raising that is in the heart of feminism. The consciousness-raising here is related to the instructional aspect of the stories. It would not been expected to create a social change from scratch, but it could be catalyst of social change. By taking this effect of digitalization into consideration, the digital trauma stories of sexual violence survivors are discussed in this study.

Telling the story is significant to overcome trauma for traumatized victims. As Herman stated, if traumas are not spoken, they are revealed as a symptom (2015, 1). Digital narratives are seen as a facilitator in sharing trauma, and these help reanimated trauma image and rearranging meanings. Digital storytelling helps the survivors to touch people and build empathy.

Workshop-based digital storytelling functions as a consciousness-raising meetings of second wave feminism. It helps self-expression and builds networks, empathy and connectivity. Therefore there are many projects for using this power against to discrimination and marginalization.

Just as women are telling stories of trauma in social media today, individual dissociation triggers social dissociation. As seen in the studies, the majority of the tweets are trauma narratives and this situation shows that women needs to tell. Digital activism on Twitter becomes hashtag feminism and lead to public awareness and street protest. While user-generated trauma narratives are spreading rapidly in the network, discriminatory and sexist discourses can spread at the same rate and new media apply its own authority and social control.

The existence of man-made language, which is an extension of symbolic violence on women, manifests itself in women's trauma narratives. In trauma narratives, victims blame themselves about sexual violence and the roots of this self-blaming go back to the victim-blaming culture. When a traumatic event occurs, bystanders are forced to take side between victim and perpetrator. People who do not want to quit their comfortable zone and do not want to cope with the shake of the belief in a just world takes the side of the perpetrator, and this tendency has led the victim-blaming. New media intensifies the victim-blamer voices and sexist discourses, and hate speech raises. In this environment, offensive discourses against survivors of sexual abuse and violence is easily produced. People who think similar take courage by seeing each other's presence and can easily ignore the ethical-moral boundaries. Thus, hate speech is normalized and gains social acceptability. The issue of hate speech, which has been involved in media studies for a long time, has come up again with social media and has been an important component of social media ethics studies. It is important to define ethical boundaries for digital storytelling in order to differentiate freedom of expression and hate speech. In the cases of sexual harassment and violence, hate speech charges survivors with unchastity, includes sexist and humiliating words. The survivors are pushed out of society and forced to keep silence, through the perception created by hate speech collectively. In addition, increasing frequency of encountering trauma narratives and hate speech cause secondary trauma.

As we can see there are two sides of the same coin. While digitalization facilitates the sharing of sexual violence trauma narratives and contributes to social change in terms of gender, it also provides the same facilities for the spread of evils. The way the content is produced is significant. As workshop-based digital storytelling involves professional facilitator support and collectivity, the group meetings will create a more constructive impact on the survivor, and the language of narrative will be freed of risks of male-dominated discourse. On the other hand, the user-generated content may contain discursive problems, and the individuality that facilitates the

production and sharing process will turn into solitude when offensive reactions are encountered. For narrators who are already suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, this situation becomes very dangerous. Although it seems wise to use the distributive power of the social media with the creative power of the workshops, it is no longer possible for the social media user to give up the desire to be involved instantly in the content flowing in the social network. By the way of this speed, the user can be involved in discussions and social movements.

Consequently, there are two basic needs to increase the contribution of digital trauma narratives to social change. Firstly, one is extending the workshop-based digital storytelling environments, facilitating of their diffusion and promoting consciousness-raising. For example the extension could be done as a government policy by integrating it into social services and incorporating psychologists into the workshop, and the promotion could be done by institutions within the scope of social responsibility projects. Secondly, the development of social media literacy requires. Thus, people can have more control over their contents shared, and only then can the Internet really turn into a public sphere. The micro-steps to be taken in the digital narrative field include the hope to transform into big steps towards to save digital technologies from the monopoly of new control and surveillance practices and provide resource equality of knowledge to all groups that have been marginalized and discriminated.

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Notes

- ¹ <https://www.storycenter.org>, <https://www.digitalstorytellers.com.au/workshops/> #, <http://www.ccasa.org>, <https://genderjustice.org.za/digital-stories/digital-stories-andile/>, http://www.dijitalhikayeler.org/tr/#/ana_sayfa.

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