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**Representing the (Unknown) Self: Exploring the Limits and Possibilities of Self-Narration in the Digital Storytelling of Immigrant Women**

This paper discusses the dynamics of self-expression and self-knowledge at stake in a series of digital stories (Lambert 2002) created by immigrant women in downtown Toronto. Drawing on the work of Marion Milner (1971), I explore how the digital stories offer something unexpected and in excess of the original scripts they are based on – the meanings they offer seem to exceed the storyteller’s conscious intention. I argue that the nature of the digital story as a multimedia text that contains inherent contradictions suggests an important tension at the heart of all narration between self-expression and self-knowledge. It is precisely the undermining of narrative coherence, both intentional and accidental, through various ruptures, contradictions, and gaps that emerge through the juxtaposition of multiple sound, text, and visual images, that while troubling our desires for an authentic, true or whole story offers us a method for working through complex experiences of ambivalence, power, and loss. How does the multimedia aesthetic complicate our notions of narrative and autobiography, and our expressions of self? What are the limits and possibilities of storytelling? What do unexpected self-expressions mean? Is it possible to tell a story you don’t already know? What are the limits of self-narration? What possibilities for self-expression does digital storytelling afford? These questions are central for thinking through the ways in which the practice of storytelling may function as both a transnational space (Gough 2003) and transitional experience (Winnicott 1989).

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