

Building bridges through entertainment-education: How can a film be designed to challenge racial prejudice?

A qualitative analysis of Heartlines' film, Beyond the River

Student name: Bernát Bacsek

Student number: 649966

Supervisor: Prof. dr. Martine Bouman

Master Media Studies - Media & Creative Industries
Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication
Erasmus University Rotterdam

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Abstract

This present thesis examines the use of entertainment-education strategy in order to communicate social messages and bring about positive social change, specifically, to address and challenge racial prejudice. This thesis uses a specific case to demonstrate the use of the strategy and exhibit the different collaboration processes that take place during the design of an entertainment-education film. Namely, *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) is put under the scope, which is a South African film that showcases the relationship of two people, coming from different economic and social backgrounds, who team up in order to achieve their goals together. The film is inspired by true events, which deeply affected the development of the film, and the collaborative processes taking place during.

The theoretical framework is described within the boundaries of the field of entertainment-education, which refers to “the process of purposively designing and implementing a mediating communication form with the potential of entertaining and educating people, in order to enhance and facilitate different stages of prosocial (behavior) change” (Bouman, 1999, p. 25). It touches upon theoretic approaches already present in the field, inter alia, Bandura and Walters’ social learning theory (1963), Kelman’s classical identification (1961), Horton and Wohl’s parasocial interaction theory (1956), Bentley’s dramatic theory (1967), Gerbner’s view on cultivation (1998) and Petty and Cacioppo’s elaboration likelihood model (1986) are described and used for the analysis of the film. Furthermore, contemporary media studies further broaden the theoretical framework, with the study of Lutkenhaus et al. on spreadable media (2020), Jenkins’s view on participative media (2006), and Bouman’s (1999, 2020, 2021) and Singhal et al.’s (2013) view on the collaborative processes that take place in designing entertainment-education content.

The analysis of the film is divided but interconnected by the thematic content analysis of the audiovisualized script of the film and the transcribed in-depth expert interviews obtained from six stakeholders who all played a decisive role in the process of designing the film. The analysis revealed the challenges and benefits of using the entertainment-education strategy in a film’s design, the intricacies of the collaboration processes between the social organization and the production company, and how the film is designed to initiate social change in not only South Africa but around the globe.

Keywords: Entertainment-education; Social change; Social learning; Film design; Collaboration process

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1. Introduction

Social issues such as racism continue to pose a serious threat to social cohesion and harmony in today's more diverse and interconnected global society. As a result, the prevalence of racial discrimination has escalated in current times. A recent incident at the Mestalla Stadium in Spain serves as an example of this, where Valencia football club fans subjected Real Madrid soccer player Vinícius Jr. to racial abuse (Hedgecoe, 2023). This particular case has again triggered a broader discussion on the presence of racism and its potential societal implications. Consequently, a relevant question arises: What communication strategies can be developed and implemented to effectively mitigate social issues like racism? This inquiry calls for the identification and introduction of strategic initiatives aimed at commencing transformative social change.

Recognizing the power of entertainment and storytelling as a catalyst for change, this thesis explores the potential of a communication strategy called entertainment-education in bridging divides and challenging social issues like racial prejudice. The objective is to explore the potential use of this method as a strategic instrument in analyzing the specific case of a South-African film, *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017), which revolves around the inspiring true story of two individuals, a black man and a white man, who unite to participate in the Dusi Canoe Marathon, with the result of breaking the stigma of racism and eliminating stereotypes (Heartlines, n.d.b.). The story showcases the personal challenges faced by both men and how they overcome them through perseverance and teamwork (Spling, n.d.). The film is initiated and developed by Heartlines, a South African social and behavior change organization that promotes social values by educating and informing the audience (Heartlines, n.d.a). The goal of the organization is to inspire individuals to embody positive values and bring positive change to South African society by creating captivating films like *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017), and television mini-series that address relevant societal issues in an entertaining way (Heartlines, n.d.a). The film is part of Heartline's initiative, the "What's Your Story" campaign, which encourages conversations and discussions about social values with friends, family, and colleagues (Heartlines, n.d.c).

1.1 Societal relevance

Singhal and Rogers (1999) highlight that the educational potential of entertainment media should be duly recognized by national policy-makers, media professionals, along with international donor agencies. Accordingly, the importance of this thesis lies in researching the

potential of entertainment media to educate the public on important social matters. Despite its potential, this capacity is not fully realized, underscoring the societal significance of the entertainment-education strategy and consequently, the overarching societal significance of this thesis.

While national governments in predominantly developing countries often face the obligation to create educational broadcasts, - which can be costly and fail to captivate audiences, - entertainment programs garner high ratings and appeal to commercial sponsors (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). Therefore, when properly implemented, the entertainment-education strategy presents an opportunity for educational messages to be financially sustainable and effective, and provides significant benefits to governments, broadcasters, educators, sponsors, and audiences (Singhal & Rogers, 1999).

Furthermore, in today's media landscape where user-generated content is actively shared on multiple platforms, entertainment-education can hold an even bigger significance (Lutkenhaus et al., 2020). The evolving nature of audience engagement, where the audience exerts control over content production and distribution, underscores the need to consider audience networks and social connections in conversations surrounding popular media, where entertainment-education can serve as a valuable tool (Jenkins et al., 2013; Lutkenhaus et al., 2020). Recognizing these dynamics can be crucial for utilizing the role of contemporary entertainment-education in engaging audiences and harnessing the potential of user-generated content within the realm of popular media.

1.2 Academic relevance

Entertainment-education and collaborative efforts within this field have been subjects of interest for researchers. Scholars have explored the effectiveness of entertainment-education in various contexts, such as health campaigns (Bouman, 1999; Literat & Chen, 2014; Piotrow & De Fossard, E., 2003), the role of film and television (Igartua & Casanova, 2016; Slater, 2002; Papa & Singhal, 2009), and other social change initiatives (Singhal et al., 2006; Obregon & Tufte, 2014). Collaboration has been recognized as a crucial aspect of entertainment-education by - inter alia - Bouman (1999; 2002; 2021) and Singhal et al. (2013). A review of previous studies highlights the academic relevance of this thesis and its contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

The significance of entertainment-education in effectively communicating health information has been underscored by Piotrow and De Fossard (2003), who when writing

about public health interventions, observed that serial dramas have exhibited particular success in influencing attitudes and behaviors. This success is attributed to their ability to evoke emotions, provide relatable role models, and stimulate meaningful discussions among audiences. However, in light of entertainment-education's contemporary potential for health communication, Bouman (1999) suggests that health organizations should reconsider their current communication policies and adopt a more consumer-centric approach. Supporting this notion, Literat and Chen (2014) propose the activation of communication channels to enhance the reach and effectiveness of health campaigns within the EE framework. These approaches highlight the potential of entertainment-education in behavior change, while also recognizing its need to adapt to emerging trends.

Igartua and Casanova (2016) when writing about the role of entertainment-education in audiovisual fiction, concluded that encouraging a strong connection with the main character who shared a preventive message led to deeper cognitive processes within the audience, which as a result made people have more positive attitudes towards the discussed subjects throughout the film. Similarly, Slater (2002) noted that entertainment can serve as a means of persuasion, as he focused on narrative-based instances of behavior change. Papa and Singhal (2009) highlighted the importance of fostering connections between audience members and media characters and the potential of engaging viewers with contemplation regarding the educational messages. These examples within the entertainment-education field emphasize the importance of establishing a strong emotional connection between the audience and characters, and of narratives in positive attitude change.

Previous research has also examined how people work together when designing entertainment-education projects. This thesis will delve deeper into studies within the theoretical framework of entertainment-education, as they provide a strong basis for the theory by encompassing valuable ideas and findings from the aforementioned experts in this field. Recognizing collaboration as an essential component of entertainment-education initiatives, the thesis aims to build on the growing body of knowledge on the effective use of the entertainment-education strategy to address social issues, providing insights for practitioners and researchers interested in utilizing media for social change.

1.3 Research question

The primary goal of this research is to delve into the complexity of the process of designing a film utilizing the entertainment-education strategy. The film *Beyond the River*

(Freimond, 2017) is chosen for analysis for three main reasons (further justification beyond these three reasons is provided in Section 3.2). Firstly, the film is exclusively designed to convey prosocial messages through the entertainment-education strategy. Secondly, the film involved a time-consuming collaborative process between Heartlines and the creative team responsible for its development. Thirdly, in addition to applying dramatic elements and social messages, it incorporates the exceptional aspect of being based on a true story, as it is based on the experience of Piers Cruickshanks, a white canoeist, who partnered up with Siseko Ntondini, a younger, black canoeist for his last chance to win gold at the Dusi marathon.

Deriving from these unique characteristics of the film in the field of entertainment-education, a main research question and a pair of sub-questions are formulated:

How is the film *Beyond the River* designed to challenge racial prejudice through the utilization of the entertainment-education strategy?

- What hindering and facilitating factors influence the collaboration process of the film?
- How do these factors shape the incorporation of the true story, incorporation of dramatic elements, and effective delivery of social messages in the film?

2. Theoretical Framework

The objective of this study is to investigate how films can effectively combine entertainment and education to address societal issues. To achieve this, it is crucial to describe a theoretical framework that incorporates existing literature on entertainment-education. Consequently, this chapter will explore theories and concepts that are relevant to the topic.

The chapter is structured into six sections. The first section (2.1) introduces the concept of entertainment-education from a theoretical perspective, exploring its definition, as well as the origins of the strategy, and its development. Subsequently, three sections (2.2; 2.3; 2.4) delve into theories and models that are essential for analyzing a film that uses the entertainment-education approach. The final two sections (2.5; 2.6) place the study in the contemporary environment by drawing upon recent developments in the field of entertainment-education.

2.1 The concept and origins of entertainment-education

The theoretical framework for this analysis is based on the strategy of entertainment-education (EE) to serve as a starting point for the analysis of how a film can be designed to challenge social issues such as racial prejudice. Entertainment-education refers to “purposively designing and implementing a mediating communication form with the potential of entertaining and educating people, in order to enhance and facilitate different stages of prosocial (behavior) change” (Bouman, 1999, p. 25). EE is a strategy for *social and behavior change communication* (SBCC), which is a systematic approach to addressing societal issues related to behavior through the use of research-based, interactive communication strategies, and processes (Iyorza, 2016). Iyorza highlights that the goal of SBCC is to achieve specific objectives for target audiences, modify attitudes among youth and adults, and promote a balanced and positive society by discouraging negative and illegal actions.

EE is a strategy that uses popular entertainment media, such as film, theater, music, and serious game to educate and inform audiences about important social issues. Singhal and Rogers (1999), and Bouman (1999) highlight the *process* of incorporating educational material into messages conveyed through entertainment, as the application of the entertainment-education strategy necessitates a mindset that recognizes the importance of time, effort, and a thoughtful approach to the process. The aim of the strategy is to leverage the widespread popularity of entertainment media to demonstrate a safer, healthier, and more fulfilling lifestyle (Singhal & Brown, 1995; Singhal & Rogers, 1999). EE programming,

being a strategy for SBCC, is designed to play a role in facilitating intentional societal messages and bringing forth social change, which is characterized as the “process by which an alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system” (Singhal & Rogers, 1999, p. 10).

The phenomenon of merging entertainment and education to foster social change has historical roots in both the oral tradition of ancient times and the enduring art of storytelling (Bouman, 1999; Singhal & Brown, 1995). Several art forms such as folk theater, dance drama, and morality plays embrace entertainment-education, and folktales with moral messages still remain vital in some countries’ nonformal education (Valbuena, 1989). Bouman (1999) observes that from troubadours to Shakespeare and Woody Allen, entertainment has always been a vital part of human life, satisfying the desire for both amusement and knowledge. Over the centuries, both formal and informal education have benefited from entertainment’s ability to captivate and educate. Today, the EE strategy has evolved from the “oral tradition of older times to the audiovisual mass-media” (Bouman, 1999, p. 23). Heartlines, the social and behavior change organization under analysis that uses this strategy to promote values by producing films and multimedia resources, walks in the footsteps of influential pioneers such as Miguel Sabido, a communication theoretician producer-director from Mexico, who was one of the firsts who successfully developed a research-based formula to utilize television drama as a medium for promoting positive change (Bouman, 1999).

Motivated by the profound realization of how energy and *tone* could be utilized in acting, he came to the realization that within every instance of human communication, a distinct tone was generated. Sabido (2003) posits that tone is the product of tension and vibration arising from the *flow*, which consists of consciously arranged vibrations with the purpose of influencing and affecting one or more individuals. Sabido’s (2003) exploration of tone continued in 1971, when he strategically employed his theoretical framework to create television soap operas, thus pioneering one of the initial examples of the deliberate application of the concept EE (Sabido, 2003). He observed that by incorporating characters that audiences could identify with, the format facilitated social behavior change without compromising ratings. MacLean’s triune brain theory (1973) further deepened the theorized connection between flow and tone, as he suggested that the brain is composed of three parts, which react differently when exposed to energy. When energy is directed towards the *reptilian brain*, we become passive subjects to our instincts; when it reaches the circuits of the

mammalian brain, we empathize with relatable figures and respond emotionally; and when energy reaches the *neo-cortex*, we analyze and interpret reality in a rational manner (Sabido, 2003).

By combining his own tone theory with borrowed theoretical elements from Bandura and Walters's social learning theory (1963), Bentley's dramatic theory (1967), and Jung's archetypes theory (1958; 1970), Sabido formulated the fundamental concept of EE. Initially referred to as "entertainment with proven social benefit" by him, this concept was later translated and widely adopted as entertainment-education globally (Sabido, 2003, p. 61).

2.2 Social learning theory and parasocial interaction

The EE strategy approach has been directly shaped by the contributions of Albert Bandura, who is recognized as a theorist of social cognitive theory (SCT), which started as social learning theory (SLT) in the 1960s (Bandura, 2003). In 1963, Bandura and Walters expanded theories related to social learning by emphasizing the significance of learning through *social modeling*, *observation*, and *vicarious reinforcement* (Bandura & Walters, 1963). Bandura later advanced a model emphasizing cognitive processes and renamed it social cognitive theory to highlight cognition's role in constructing reality, self-regulation, information encoding, and action (Bandura, 1986). This theory, rather than viewing people as reactive beings shaped by the environment or inner impulses, looks at individuals as self-organizing, proactive, and self-regulating beings. SCT is based on the concept of *human agency*, proposing that individuals actively shape their growth, exercising control over their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Nabi & Prestin, 2017). Furthermore, Bandura (1986) observes that humans have the power to symbolize and engage in *self-reflection*, enabling them to derive meaning from their surroundings, comprehend experiences, self-assess, and evaluate their ability to achieve tasks. This is linked to vicarious learning, through which individuals can develop guidelines for their own behavior by observing the actions of others (Bandura, 1986).

The effectiveness of social learning/cognitive theory is validated by empirical evidence, exemplified by the research conducted by Sabido in the late 1970s (Sabido, 2003). Sabido applied this theory in developing a television soap opera grounded in EE principles, incorporating elements from his tone theory. His family planning telenovela in 1977-1978 reduced Mexico's population growth rate from 3.7 to 2.4 over five years. The entertainment-education soap opera – often referred to as the Mexican demographic miracle - was believed

to have played a crucial role in the demographic change. The series used positive, negative, and transitional role models while promoting self-efficacy and human agency, which was solely inspired by the social learning theory of Bandura and Walters (1963). Characters rewarded for positive behavior encouraged audience members to believe in their capacity to have an influence on the future. This case demonstrates how a film/series can inspire positive social behavior to address significant issues like population growth (Sabido, 2003).

SLT and SCT can be closely aligned with the concepts of *classical identification* and *parasocial interaction* due to their shared focus on the influence of observation and modeling on behavior and cognitive processes (Bandura, 2003; Brown & Fraser, 2003). Identification takes different forms, including classical identification, where individuals adopt the role of an influential agent. They imitate the other person's behavior, beliefs, and words to maintain the relationship and derive a satisfying self-definition (Kelman, 1961). The self-defining relationship an individual seeks through identification can also be a *reciprocal role relationship*, where the roles of both parties are defined in relation to each other (Kelman, 1961).

Brown & Fraser (2003) observe that parasocial interaction – first introduced by Horton and Wohl (1956) - is a process deeply intertwined with the concept of identification, where individuals form pseudo-relationships with real or fictional characters encountered through the media. It focuses on viewer/character relationships and suggests that in films, just like in reality, our perceptions of individuals shape our interactions with them (Sheldon et al., 2021). According to Brown & Fraser (2003, p. 103), television viewers often establish personal bonds with these “media persona”, including “news anchors”, stars of series, and “talk-show hosts”, which highlights the role of television in fostering “psychological and emotional attachments between media stars and their audience members”.

With EE's core concept involving utilizing television characters as exemplary figures for promoting prosocial behavior, the effectiveness of social learning/cognitive theory is validated by empirical evidence, such as Sabido's family planning telenovela in Mexico (Bouman, 1999; Sabido, 2003). Moreover, the concepts of classical identification and parasocial interaction align closely with SLT and SCT, emphasizing the influence of observation, modeling, and the formation of pseudo-relationships with media characters. The role of television in fostering attachments between media personalities and their audience further underscores the potential of EE in inspiring positive social behavior and addressing significant societal issues (Brown & Fraser, 2003; Sabido, 2003).

2.3 Dramatic theory, cultivation theory, and archetypes theory

Bouman (1999) observes that entertainment-education aims to engage individuals on an emotional level while allowing them to connect with the content and internalize the educational messages conveyed. This specific characteristic of EE, focusing on emotional engagement and internalization, can be attributed to the *dramatic theory* of Bentley (1967), who desired a dramatic composition of stage direction that encompassed truthful accounts of human experience, conveyed human values, and affected the emotions and intellect of the audience, which reflects the potential of EE. Cunningham (1981) highlights that through well-formed representations of human values, Bentley's idea of a play was to offer meaningful messages and lessons, expanding the viewers' understanding and knowledge.

According to Cunningham (1981), the combination of captivating storytelling, thought-provoking content, and the power of performance contributes to the educational potential of entertainment in the context of Bentley's vision of drama. Bentley's interest extended to the essence of aesthetic experience as he sought to explore what the spectator derives from art and the manner in which one perceives a play (Cunningham, 1981). Cunningham (1981) highlights that Bentley realized that the audience reacts to a character in a drama with a sense of empathy and identification, which closely aligns with the concepts of classical identification and parasocial interaction.

Furthermore, Cunningham (1981) draws attention to the fact that Bentley believed drama should be a fusion of both imitation and expression, with an intention to uphold the notion that art imitates reality. Bentley linked drama's imitative nature to the inherent dramatic elements of life, and the nature of people to infuse life with drama. By portraying relatable and impactful narratives, drama reflects the dramatic qualities of life and fulfills the human desire for dramatic experiences (Cunningham, 1981). This suggests that immersion in dramatic storytelling influences the audience's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, making drama a powerful tool in shaping their understanding of social issues and personal experiences.

A more contemporary view on the interrelationship of a medium, reality, and most importantly, how audiences perceive reality through a medium is Gerbner's view on cultivation (1998). While Bentley (1967) prioritizes drama and plays, Gerbner (1998) focuses on the effects of television and notes that it differs from other media in that it is a centralized mass-production of a set of pictures and messages for whole populations, as well as in that most viewers utilize it in a non-selective manner. Gerbner (1998, p. 178) notes that television

develops “the cultivation of shared conceptions of reality among otherwise diverse publics”. Comparable assertions can be made regarding films, as they serve as vehicles for communicating concepts, presenting ideas, and conveying them to diverse audiences. Gerbner’s cultivation theory is compatible with EE, as it harnesses the power of media to influence audience perceptions and facilitate meaningful learning experiences through strategic storytelling and captivating entertainment.

A more character-centric and individual-based theory of the conceptualization of reality in one’s mind is the *archetype theory* of Jung (1958; 1970). Reflecting on this theory, Shelburne (1976) posits that an archetypal image is a tangible expression of an abstract archetypal disposition that cannot be directly observed. When archetypal contents become conscious, they take on a form that reflects the individual’s own consciousness. The presence of personalized archetypes arises from our inclination to shape our understanding of unfamiliar phenomena by drawing upon familiar experiences. The archetypal form, originating from the unconscious, is inherently empty and indescribable however, our consciousness fills this form with related or similar representations, making it perceivable (Shelburne, 1976).

This understanding of archetypes can shed light on how audiences construct characters from a film. Just as archetypal images represent concrete manifestations of underlying archetypal dispositions, characters in films can embody archetypal qualities (such as the hero, the villain, gods, demons, the wise old man, etc.) that resonate with viewers (Braga, 2016). These archetypal characters serve as familiar forms within the audience’s own consciousness, allowing them to engage and relate to the narrative. In the realm of EE, leveraging archetypal characters can enhance the educational impact by tapping into the audience’s familiarity and resonance with these symbolic representations (Bouman, 1999; Sabido, 2003; Shelburne, 1976).

In the light of archetypal representation in movies, it is also important to mention the Hero’s Journey, introduced by Campbell (1993), which refers to a timeless narrative pattern wherein the protagonist embarks on an adventure, following a consistent structural template (Williams, 2019). Williams (2019) highlights, that usually because of a pivotal change in circumstances, heroes need to confront a significant problem that compels them to embark on a journey into the unfamiliar, where they encounter trials demanding the acquisition of new skills, ultimately resulting in profound personal development. Consequently, perspectives of inter alia Bentley (1967), Bouman (1999), and Shelburne (1976) contribute to the notion that

in designing an entertainment-education film, this journey can serve as an opportunity for communicating positive values and facilitate the effect that the narrative has on the audience.

2.4 Elaboration likelihood model

Bouman (1999) observes that another significant model within the context of EE is the *elaboration likelihood model* (ELM) developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), which addresses both cognitive and affective aspects of information processing, providing a framework for understanding persuasive communication. Furthermore, it helps to explain why people respond differently to the same message based on their personal motivation and ability to process the message (Kitchen et al., 2014).

According to Kitchen et al. (2014), ELM indicates the presence of two routes to persuasion: the central route (leading to more persistent attitude formation, change or endurance) and the peripheral route (relying on peripheral cues such as source credibility, liking heuristic and other heuristics). Bouman (1999) points out that the central route of persuasion relies on the receiver's careful analysis of issue-related thoughts, while the peripheral route is the process of persuasion that occurs when there is low elaboration likelihood.

The likelihood of an individual using either route is determined by their motivation and ability to process the message. Bouman (1999) writes that if an issue becomes more personally relevant to a receiver, their motivation to carefully consider that issue is likely to increase. On the other hand, when elaboration is low, persuasive effects are mainly influenced by the receiver's use of simple decision rules or heuristic principles, which are straightforward decision-making processes that require minimal information processing.

Bouman (1999) emphasizes that the central and peripheral routes to persuasion represent opposite ends on a continuum of elaboration likelihood, rather than distinct categories. With higher elaboration likelihood, peripheral cues have less influence, while the impact of issue-relevant thinking becomes more significant. Bouman (1999) further observes that attitudes formed through the central route are more persistent, predictive of future behavior, and resist counter-persuasion. EE strategy captures attention around a prosocial matter through the peripheral route, then encourages issue-relevant thinking via the central route (Bouman, 1999).

2.5 Evolutionary shifts in entertainment-education paradigms during the 21st century

Contemporary EE draws upon all the aforementioned theoretic approaches, starting with Sabido's tone theory from the 1970s, and continuing with Bandura and Walter's social learning theory (1963), MacLean's triune brain theory (1973), Kelman's classical identification (1961), Brown & Fraser's parasocial interaction theory (2003), Bentley's dramatic theory (1967), Gerbner's view on cultivation (1998), Jung's archetype theory (1958; 1970); and Petty and Cacioppo's elaboration likelihood model (1986). However, the current dynamic evolution of the media landscape and the emergence of alternative theories and approaches necessitate the refinement of the initial conceptualization of EE.

Lutkenhaus et al. (2020) argue that today the success of EE depends on its ability to spread through social networks to engage contemporary audiences in the current media milieu. The authors highlight that people are actively creating and sharing their own content on several platforms and suggest a spreadable EE strategy, which acknowledges the role of audience members in shaping online media flows. This innovative approach leverages transmedia storytelling, collaboration with online platforms, and influencers to engage target audiences for extended periods, foster meaningful conversations, and enrich EE's traditional approaches with insights on audience engagement (Lutkenhaus et al, 2020).

Jenkins et al. (2013) point out that audience engagement has evolved significantly, with the majority of content production and distribution now being controlled by the audience. The authors emphasize the fact that spreadable media has resulted in a blending of the concepts of *audience* and *fans*, as their approach to media content is active and critical. These individuals often form networks or fan-bases, where they can connect socially with each other based on their shared preferences to engage in conversations about subjects that captivate their interest, including popular media that could potentially involve EE serials (Jenkins et al., 2013; Lutkenhaus et al, 2020).

Jenkins (2006) underlines the migratory patterns observed among media audiences, referring to them as spectators who actively seek out and follow media streams that offer entertainment. Today the flow of content can be detected across multiple media platforms and it requires the consumer's active participation to keep up with the mass of information and data. Emerging tools and technologies empower consumers to store, adapt, and reshare media content, which necessitates more engaged forms of spectatorship (Jenkins, 2006).

As the field of EE has long recognized the power of persuasive communication as a means to effectively convey its messages, the active participation exhibited by diverse

audiences has consequently positioned *social marketing* in an influential position of prominence (Bouman, 1999; Jenkins, 2006). Bouman (1999) highlights that the task of capturing and maintaining the audience's attention has traditionally posed a substantial obstacle, however, the advent of a participatory culture among audiences has facilitated the conveyance and dissemination of prosocial messages, thereby mitigating this challenge. In order for EE initiatives to achieve their intended impact, it is imperative for the target audience to actively engage and immerse themselves in the content, a task which is comparatively more feasible in contemporary times.

Bouman (1999) points out that social marketing focuses on intangible elements such as ideas, attitudes, and lifestyle transformations. Within this framework, organizations employing EE must prioritize an awareness of and responsiveness to consumer needs. The EE strategy aims to maintain a *low price* in terms of time, effort, and monetary investment by delivering informative and educational content through entertaining television programs, thereby ensuring accessibility and enjoyment (Bouman, 1999).

Moreover, Singhal et al. (2013, p. 325) identified several noteworthy trends in the domain of contemporary EE, which signify its “consolidation, growth, expansion, and integration with other approaches”. Notably, a prominent trend identified by the authors is referred to as *consultative social merchandising*, whereby an entertainment-education institution assumes the role of a consultant and valuable resource for writers, producers, and entertainment experts in the creative industry. Others have referred to this trend as an *EE service*, wherein prosocial communication specialists solely provide advisory support to media entertainment professionals without active participation (Lubjuhn & Bouman, 2019; Reinermann et al., 2014). Singhal et al. (2013) note that the primary objective of this collaborative endeavor is to ensure the accurate incorporation and portrayal of social themes within media, which entails strategically embedding social and health topics within the fabric of compelling storylines. The South African non-governmental organization, Heartlines, has gained significant recognition for its skillful execution of this strategic EE approach, however, they typically assume a leadership role throughout the collaboration and actively engage in the production process (Heartlines, n.d.a). The effectiveness of EE is highly dependent on the collaborative processes among stakeholders (Bouman, 2021), a topic that will be further elaborated upon in the subsequent section.

2.6 Entertainment-education as a collaborative effort

“When there is no genuine interest and respect for each other’s professional domain, the EE collaboration is doomed to fail” (Bouman, 2021, p. 63).

The wide range of digital media formats, including the emergence of transmedia in the present-day media landscape has significant implications for collaboration partnerships within the domain of EE. In Bouman’s (2021) contemporary view on EE collaboration, the attention is directed toward the factors involved in fostering collaboration between social communication professionals and various stakeholders during the development of an EE media program. Bouman also emphasizes the crucial role played by theoretical and creative elements in designing narratives that have a profound impact on driving social change (Bouman, 2021).

According to Bouman (2002; 2021), EE is based on a collaborative effort, which can result in various challenges such as differences in work culture, professional standards, and personal preferences. An EE collaboration requires a delicate balance between content and form to be successful. In order to depict the dynamics between social communication professionals and media professionals, Bouman (2002; 2021) employs the metaphorical comparison of a turtle and a peacock. This analogy emphasizes that social communication professionals are content-driven, and adhere to meticulous scientific procedures, while media professionals prioritize artistic expression and tend to avoid scholarly scrutiny in their work (Bouman, 2021).

To exemplify the effective integration of entertainment and education, Bouman (2021) conducted an analysis of the co-production arrangement employed in the renowned prime-time drama series, *Villa Borghese*. Spanning from the initial script reading to the final editing, this collaborative endeavor encompassed a collective decision-making process throughout all stages of production. Bouman (2021) writes that a significant challenge encountered in this collaborative process centered on effectively integrating the topic of cardiovascular diseases within a captivating narrative. Using the series as a case study, Bouman (2021, p. 66) highlights the importance of acknowledging the need to “build bridges” between distinct ways of thinking. In order to achieve this, as a communication professional, she underscores the necessity of delving into the creative domain of media professionals and embracing their unique approach.

Drawing upon her experiences, particularly in relation to Villa Borghese, Bouman formulated the Media Mapping Model (2021) as a framework for the design and production of an EE program, aimed at facilitating the collaboration between different stakeholders in the production process. The model (Figure 1) consists of five stages, including orientation, crystallization, production, implementation, and dissemination, with each stage highlighting the collaboration and interaction between different stakeholders, as well as the importance of transparency and logic in the process. The model is designed to balance the interests and inputs of all collaboration partners, with the social change organization taking the lead in the early stages, the media organization taking over in the production stage, and the social change organization coming back to the forefront in the dissemination stage (Bouman, 2021).

Based on the theoretical framework as described, this thesis - inter alia - aims to explore the intricate dynamics of collaboration processes and their potential to foster social change. Specifically, this thesis examines the design elements of *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017), a 2017 film that endeavors to promote a more inclusive society by breaking down racial barriers. Stimulating conversations about prosocial topics is a delicate matter, and films have emerged as pivotal agents in the realm of EE providing a powerful tool for spreading social messages and influencing people’s attitudes and behaviors. *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) by showcasing the inspiring true story of two individuals teaming up to participate in a marathon, seeks to challenge and overcome the stigma of racism, highlighting the unifying power of sports in bridging societal divides (Spring, n.d.).

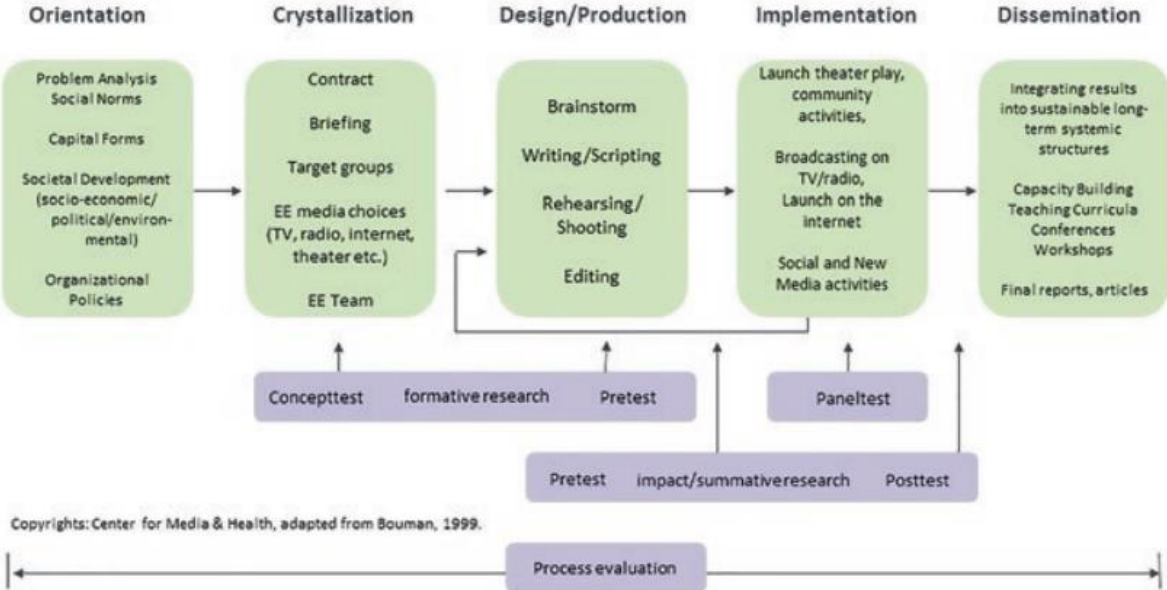


Figure 1: EE Media Mapping Model (Bouman, 2021, p. 69).

3. Methodology

The following chapter presents a methodological outline of the study of the subject of EE and the collaborative procedures specifically in connection with the film *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017). The subsequent research question and its sub-questions are as follows:

How is the film Beyond the River designed to challenge racial prejudice through the utilization of the entertainment-education strategy? What hindering and facilitating factors influence the collaboration process of the film? How do these factors shape the incorporation of the true story, incorporation of dramatic elements, and effective delivery of social messages in the film?

The chapter is structured into six sections. The first section introduces a discussion and justification of the qualitative research design (3.1). Subsequently, the case study of the film is introduced, highlighting the reasons for choosing this particular film to explore the thesis topic (3.2). The sampling strategy is then presented, along with a detailed explanation of the sample (3.3). This is followed by a section on how the theoretical concepts were operationalized (3.4). Afterward, the data analysis process is described, including the steps leading to the development of the coding (3.5). Finally, the last section of this chapter delves into the study's reliability and validity, offering critical reflections (3.6).

3.1 Research design: a qualitative study

In order to address the research question at hand, the chosen methodology for this is qualitative research. The decision to use qualitative research is deemed suitable due to its intrinsic goal of uncovering and thoroughly explaining the underlying meaning in qualitative data, rather than only providing limited interpretations (Brennen, 2012; Schreier, 2012). It should be also noted that qualitative methods are widely recognized and acclaimed for their remarkable capacity to gain a deep understanding of social phenomena that extend well beyond surface-level observations. Brennen (2012) highlights that these methods allow researchers to dive into the intricate and complex aspects of human experiences, revealing a diverse range of insights that greatly improve the understanding of the topic. Furthermore, this approach enables extensive analysis of the film under examination and its associated messages, resulting in a nuanced understanding of how the EE strategy is employed to challenge racial prejudice.

Brennen (2012) argues that qualitative methods for media studies emphasize the communication process as a mode of production embedded in the discourse of individuals and

groups, shaped by particular cultural, historical, and political circumstances. The author (2012) highlights that our utilization of language is integral in the process of meaning-making and forming our personal social realities. Accordingly, this analysis recognizes the communication processes as a means of production of *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017), taking into account the discourse of several individuals within the specific context. The examination of language within the film's context will aim to investigate its role as a tool for constructing meaning and influencing social realities.

Having described the methodological standpoint, the next step is to provide a justification for the selected approach in this study, which is textual analysis. This approach was chosen due to its versatility and ability to extract qualitative data and the diverse range of meanings (Brennen, 2012; Schreier, 2012). Schreier (2012) emphasizes that the idea that meaning is not inherent in a text and that the construction of meaning requires the active participation of the recipients has been introduced since the 1930s. Since then, it has become a fundamental element in theories and research-related text comprehension (Schreier, 2012). This approach also aligns with the theoretical framework employed in this study, which specifically emphasizes the construction of meaning encompassing both the production and reception sides. This specific case study of the film *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) involved texts from the film itself, alongside transcribed in-depth interview texts obtained from stakeholders who played a crucial role in the process of designing *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017).

Besides the necessity of a thorough analysis of the film to discover the main themes and messages, the addition of the approach of conducting interviews is justified by Boeije (2009), who states that in-depth interviews align with the relevant field and have the potential to produce results that accurately represent the perspective of the participants. Kvale (1996) writes that qualitative research interviews aim to gather descriptions that provide interpretations of the meaning behind the information being described. Similarly, according to Schreier (2012), interviews are an effective means of comprehending an individual's process of constructing meaning, which is necessary in order to uncover the facilitating and hindering factors of the collaborative processes that took place during the creation of the film. The interviews are conducted using sensitizing concepts along with semi-structured, open-ended questions, enabling the facilitation of a deeper-level conversation (Boeije, 2009). Structured interviews would involve predefined question-answer pairs, which would result in interviewees being subjected to the researcher's view, and unable to provide their individual

perspectives (Krippendorff, 2004). On the other hand, open-ended interviews enable participants to express themselves freely (Krippendorff, 2004). The semi-structured nature allows for a flexibility to incorporate additional questions in response to emerging aspects of the studied phenomenon and also to adjust the questions to each specific interviewee (Schreier, 2012).

This combination of these two data sources (the film and the in-depth interviews) allows for a comprehensive exploration of the film's content, providing insights from the narrative as well as the perspectives and experiences of key individuals involved in its creation. By examining the film and the interviews in conjunction, a more nuanced understanding of how the EE strategy is employed to challenge racial prejudice can be achieved.

3.2 The case study: Why Beyond the River?

To explore the complex process of creating a film using the EE strategy, this study takes a hands-on approach by analyzing a case study in detail. According to Schreier (2012), the primary benefit of employing a case-oriented research approach lies in the profound comprehension achieved regarding the chosen case(s). The application of a case study allows for an in-depth exploration of the various nuances and challenges encountered throughout a film's creation, providing insights into the interplay between entertainment and education in the filmmaking domain.

By focusing on the selected case of Heartline's film, *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017), the research aims to thoroughly examine and understand the multifaceted nature of the film design process within the context of EE strategy. The selection of the film *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) as a case study in this research is justified based on three key reasons (beyond the ones already established in Section 1.3), which will be expounded upon in the remaining part of this section.

Firstly, the film's suitability derives from its extensive design process, which placed significant emphasis on the promotion of positive social values through the utilization of the EE strategy. This characteristic design approach aligns closely with the research objectives, making the film an interesting subject for in-depth analysis. The film was part of Heartline's What's Your Story campaign, deliberately designed as a catalyst for social change and for creating a genuine impact on individuals, specifically in the country of South Africa. The campaign's primary objective resides in fostering meaningful connections and cultivating a

stronger sense of community by encouraging story-sharing (Heartlines, n.d.b; Heartlines (n.d.c).

Secondly, the inclusion of *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) as a case study is further explained by Heartlines' vast array of experiences and expertise (Heartlines, n.d.a). As an organization responsible for developing educational content through entertainment platforms, their profound experiences and lessons learned throughout the process serve to enhance the richness and relevance of the study.

Finally, the audience's response to the film enables its selection as a fitting subject for a case study. By considering the reactions and feedback from viewers, valuable insights can be gained regarding the effectiveness of the EE strategy applied in the film's design. Several positive responses gathered by Heartlines indicate the potential success of the EE approach (Heartlines, n.d.b), which will be further expounded upon during the analysis.

3.3 Sampling of the interviewees

According to Krippendorff (2004), the use of sampling enables researchers to optimize their research by focusing on a feasible subset of units that effectively captures the complete population of relevance. Drawing upon Krippendorff's perspective, by interviewing key stakeholders, who are strategically chosen as a representative sample, valuable insights can be gained regarding the decision-making processes, creative choices, and underlying motivations that influenced the film's development. Consequently, the interviews with these stakeholders serve as empirical evidence for comprehensively understanding the multifaceted aspects of the collaborative efforts involved.

Based on the definition of Krippendorff (2004), sampling units refer to specific entities that are purposefully chosen to be included in an analysis. In the context of this qualitative study, these sampling units are the individuals who are selected to be interviewed as part of the research. The selection of interviewees for this study involved using a sampling method called non-probability purposive sampling, specifically criterion sampling (Boeije, 2009). This approach guarantees that the chosen participants accurately represent the identified target group in this research, which, in this case, refers to individuals who were involved in the production of the film (Boeije, 2009). By choosing six key persons involved in the film's development, namely the CEO of Heartlines, a communication expert, a program manager, a reconciliation expert, the director of the film, and one of the protagonists whose story inspired the film, a representative sample of stakeholders is ensured. The factor of

availability was a hindering factor in selecting the interviewees, however, the participants ultimately chosen encompassed all necessary aspects of film design, thus enabling the exploration of the research question(s).

Out of the six participants, all provided explicit consent for the utilization of their names in the context of this research study. The final sample consisted of the following participants:

1. Garth Japhet, the CEO, and founder of Heartlines;
2. Jennifer Charlton communication specialist, chief operations officer at Heartlines, producer of the film;
3. Olefile Masangane programmes manager and facilitator at Heartlines, who assumed the responsibility of taking the conversations surrounding the film to the public;
4. Seth Naicker reconciliation specialist, a consultant and advisor for Heartlines, who was central in the prework process of constructing the key messages of the film;
5. Craig Freimond, the director and writer of the film, who has been hired by Heartlines to write a film that explored the themes of racism and reconciliation in South Africa;
6. Piers Cruickshanks, one of the protagonists whose story inspired the film, teacher, and canoeist, deeply involved in the creation of the film.

3.4 Operationalization

The process of operationalization in this research plays a crucial role in establishing a connection between the underlying theories and the subsequent data analysis. It achieves this by effectively identifying and delving into the concepts of EE in relation to the film *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017). The outlined theoretical framework serves as a foundation for data analysis, as it presents a set of concepts that are significant for the operationalization process, thus acknowledging their relevance and importance in the overall study.

Definition	Core concepts	Sub-concepts	Potential data to be examined
Entertainment-education: “the process of purposively designing and implementing a mediating communication form with the potential of entertaining and educating people, in order to enhance and facilitate different stages of prosocial (behavior) change” (Bouman, 1999, p. 25).	- Social learning (Bandura and Walters, 1963; Bandura, 1986) - Classical identification (Kelman, 1961) Parasocial interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956)	- Social modeling - Observation - Vicarious reinforcement - Human agency - Self-reflection - Behavior - Cognitive processes	- Showcasing characters to represent role models - Opportunities for the audience to form parasocial relationships with the characters - Thought-provoking dialogue or symbolic representation to encourage viewers to evaluate their own behaviors related to the addressed social issues
	- Dramatic theory (Bentley, 1967) - Cultivation (Gerbner, 1998) - Archetypes (Jung, 1958; 1970); - Elaboration likelihood (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986)	- Emotional engagement - Storytelling - Aesthetic experience - Archetypal characters	- Employing storytelling techniques to emotionally engage the audience in the social message conveyed - Narrative arcs or emotional beats used to elicit empathy - Visual elements such as cinematography to convey social messages - EE approach potentially influencing the audience’s perception of reality
	- Spreadability (Lutkenhaus et al., 2020) - Active participation (Jenkins, 2006) - Social marketing	- Audience - Fans - Fan-bases - Persuasive communication	- Facilitating spreadability: allowing the social messages to be easily shared and discussed among the audience - Audience’s active participation - Engaging with the audience

	(Bouman, 1999) - Consultative social merchandizing (Singhal et al., 2013)		through events, premieres, communities - Sense of community among fans, connecting and sharing experiences - Balancing entertainment value with persuasive elements
	Collaboration (Bouman, 2021)	- Media mapping - Facilitating factors - Hindering factors	- Collaboration contributing to the overall effectiveness to addressing social change - Adhering or deviating from the Media Mapping Model - Shared goals and values, mutual trust and respect, well- defined roles among stakeholders - Conflicting interests, power dynamics, resource limitations, differences in perspectives among stakeholders

Table 1: Operationalization.

3.5 Data analysis

After the research design, case study justification, interviewee sampling, and operationalization have been outlined, it becomes essential to clarify the chosen method for analyzing the texts from the film and the transcribed in-depth expert interview texts obtained from stakeholders. After considering various suitable options for textual analysis, the decision was made to apply *thematic content analysis* for both the film and the interviews.

Schreier (2012) highlights that qualitative content analysis is a powerful method, especially when it comes to summarising and describing key aspects of the material. According to Krippendorff (2004), qualitative content analysis, rooted in literary theory, social sciences, and critical scholarship, involves creating new narratives and making

interpretations conditioned by social/cultural understanding. Furthermore, Schreier (2012) points out that this type of analysis is a technique for methodically explaining the meaning of qualitative content by allocating consecutive segments of material to the categories of the coding frame. Drawing from the interpretive and meaning-making characteristics of this approach, analyzing the narrative elements, visual cues, and audio components present in the film as well as the underlying meanings, intentions, and perspectives in the interviews is justified.

Thematic analysis, as a specific form of qualitative content analysis, involves exploring the themes discussed in the material (Schreier, 2012). A theme/topic consists of statements or utterances that are interconnected as they share a collective reference point (Schreier, 2012). According to Boeije (2009), employing this systematic approach allows one to analyze extensive data and gain insights along with uncovering the themes. In the case of *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017), thematic content analysis allows for identifying recurring themes, character dynamics, and symbolic representation in the film as well as shedding light on the complex interplay between the film's design, specifically its collaboration process.

The data analysis followed a gradual and structured approach by utilizing Boeije's (2009) coding framework of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, allowing for the implementation of thematic content analysis. In the initial stage, the open coding, a thorough examination of both the audiovisualized script of the film and the interview transcripts is conducted. Noteworthy information found within the transcripts is identified and organized into meaningful units, labeling key parts of the text (Boeije, 2009). Second, during the axial coding phase, interrelationships among the codes are established, making the open codes more structured and manageable, leading to the organization of the open codes. This process yielded 21 categories for the film (Appendix 1) and 19 categories for the interviews (Appendix 3), which serve as code groups in which the open codes are clustered (Boeije, 2009).

Schreier (2012) points out that rather than assuming that themes inherently exist within the dataset, one is ought to conceptualize themes in accordance with the research question as well as the coding frame in a manner that each theme corresponds precisely to a subcategory of the frame. Accordingly, in the final phase of selective coding (Appendix 2; Appendix 4), the identified categories are linked together to unveil the main themes and patterns addressing the research question, resulting in the description of the most significant concepts and the emergence of clear relationships between them (Boeije, 2009). The film was

coded by hand, without the utilization of any software, but Atlas.ti software was used to analyze the interviews. Uploading the interview transcripts to Atlas.ti made data analysis easier and helped the researcher keep track of all the data. The software facilitated creating of codes, their categorizations, and identifying main themes, contributing to the overall data analysis process as per Boeije's (2009) coding structure.

To adequately prepare for the analysis and coding process, specific steps were undertaken. The researcher was initially provided with a script of the film however, it was not found sufficient enough to thoroughly examine the film's themes and patterns related to addressing social issues like racism. Therefore, the film *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017), with a duration of 1 hour and 53 minutes, was carefully watched five times. This additional viewing aimed to supplement the original script by incorporating audiovisual elements, and features such as recurring elements, character actions and reactions, and acting nuances, which could be only spotted by thoroughly viewing the film. This approach facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the film's narrative, characters, and themes, specifically in relation to its treatment of racism.

For conducting in-depth interviews with stakeholders, the researcher first prepared an interview guide that drew upon sensitizing concepts. These concepts were specifically centered around potentially identifying the intricacies of the film's design process and recognizing the hindering and facilitating factors of collaboration among stakeholders when employing an EE strategy to drive social change. The Media Mapping Model (Bouman, 2021), which has been introduced in the theoretical framework as an outline for the design of an EE program, was used to structure the process of establishing the interview guide. Subsequently, the guide was adjusted to the expertise of each participant to enable the possibility of gaining the most valuable information from each individual for the purposes of the study. The interviewing process took place between April and May 2023.

3.6 Ethics, reliability, and validity

The final section of Chapter 3 entails a discussion of essential aspects contributing to the overall credibility of the study, namely ethical implications, reliability, and validity. From an ethical perspective, this study does not entail any potential harm. All interviewees willingly consented to the use of their data for research purposes, driven by their personal connection and enthusiasm for the project. Heartlines, the organization providing access to the film,

displayed a genuine interest in the research and provided valuable support throughout the researcher's investigation.

Krippendorff (2004, p. 211) observes that the reliability of a research procedure is demonstrated when it consistently “responds to the same phenomena”, irrespective of the conditions under which it is employed. This implies that future researchers can have confidence in the consistency and predictability of their chosen methods when investigating similar phenomena. To ensure the fulfillment of this notion, transparency was maintained throughout the entire thesis, including research design, sampling, data collection, operationalization, and data analysis. The researcher tried to ensure reliability through clear documentation of each step, support from academic literature, and the foundation upon which data interpretations were based.

Krippendorff (2004) notes that while reliability ensures the replicability of research results and minimizes the impact of extraneous factors on the quality of data, validity ensures that the claims derived from the research align with reality. It entails that the method employed for analysis genuinely investigates the intended subject matter and that the coding frame accurately represents the studied concepts (Krippendorff, 2004; Schreier, 2012). The researcher aimed to ensure the validity of the thesis by employing the open, axial, and selective coding methodology based on Boeije's (2009) approach, analyzing interviews with key stakeholders of the film and the film itself, and ensuring a systematic and comprehensive exploration of the data. The theoretical framework of the thesis solely relies on academic papers and building upon existing scholarly work. Moreover, the supervision of the master's thesis supervisor provided guidance and credibility to the analysis to ensure that the thesis aligns with reality and contributes to the field of EE.

4. Results

This study delves into the topic of how EE strategy can be used in a film's design process to initiate positive social change and accomplish a social mission. This can only be achieved with a successful collaboration between all the stakeholders who were working together on the film. Focusing on the case study of the design process of *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017), the results section presents the findings of the thematic content analysis of the film and the interviews. By describing the results, the purpose of this section is to identify how the main themes and messages of the film in relation to challenging racial prejudice were designed and communicated with the involvement of several parties, and what were the underlying factors that helped or hindered this extensive collaboration process. First, the overarching themes shedding light on how the film confronts racial prejudice will be addressed. This will be followed by and touched upon by the results of the interviews made with key figures of the collaboration process.

4.1 The film: Four overarching themes

In short, based on the inspiring true story of Siseko Ntondini and Piers Cruickshanks, who together won gold in the 2014 Dusi Canoe Marathon, the film takes place in South Africa, and revolves around two central characters, Duma (the cinematic representation of Siseko) and Steve (the cinematic representation of Piers), who team up with the aim of securing gold in the Dusi. Duma and Steve originate from very different backgrounds. Duma is an underprivileged black male, who tries to get money by committing petty crimes with his "acquaintance" Zama but hates his current situation and aspires to become *somebody*. Conversely, Steve is a more privileged white male teacher and hobby canoeist who already has won nine golds in the Dusi competitions.

While Duma grapples with challenges such as having no money, living in a shed, and trying to break out from poverty and become a professional canoeist, Steve has to deal with challenges such as the grief caused by his son's death and his marriage with Annie being on the verge of collapse. These two people come together and train together with the support of their mentors: Oupa, serving as Duma's trainer and guide, and Dan, fulfilling a similar role for Steve. Throughout their journey, they have to face the constant racist mocking of Geoff, who is an old "friend" of Steve. Furthermore, difficulties arise from the cultural differences between Steve and Duma, and after overcoming these challenges, they end up victorious.

By examining the 21 code groups identified during the coding process of the film, four overarching themes emerged, that in specific ways promote racial equality, understanding, empathy, and unity. The following subsections explore each theme in detail, highlighting the relevant code groups and providing a comprehensive understanding of communicating the film's core messages. In order to also examine the involvement of the creators of the film, some results of the interviews are put beside the thematic content analysis of the film.

4.1.1 Specific instances of overcoming prejudice and racism

At first glance, it may seem like a poor approach to addressing how the film tackles themes and messages related to challenging racial prejudice by answering “with specific instances of overcoming prejudice and racism”. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the film directly confronts racism by showcasing specific instances of overcoming prejudice and incorporating noticeable dialogues and elements that emphasize racial differences. Several code groups and codes, including Prejudice, Race Symbols, Race Relations, Discrimination, Stereotyping, Racism, and Cinematography contributed to this theme. The narrative depicted the challenges faced by the characters due to racial prejudice and discrimination, emphasizing the need to break down racial barriers and foster equality and understanding among individuals from different racial backgrounds.

Instances, where characters held biased attitudes and preconceived notions towards others based on their race are highlighted by this theme. The characterization of Geoff provides one notable example. Him being a racist “friend” of Steve, exhibited discriminatory behavior and negative bias towards Duma and Steve during training, time trials, and the Dusi marathon. According to the interviewees, the character of Geoff was specifically designed to be a racist character to highlight these issues. Jennifer Charlton, who worked on a day-to-day basis on the film and its messages, said “We used the character who was kind of the racist guy (...); (...) it's a bit of a kind of disguised way of getting across your message so that it doesn't feel too kind of preachy.” Geoff can be seen making fun of *the township* by constant mocking, exaggerating the accent, and other racist manifestations. His prejudiced mindset contributed to the tension and conflicts portrayed in the film.

It is also important to note, that at the beginning of the story and the collaboration between the two main characters (Duma and Steve), Steve doubted the success of the cooperation and was discriminating against Duma. Eventually, they learned how to work

together which resulted in Steve regretting his initial attitude and even defending Duma from Geoff (Image 1).



Image 1: Geoff to Steve: “Jeez Steve just because you getting multiracial in your boat” (Freimond, 2017, 1:15:47).

The code group Race Symbols combined with Cinematography - which was established based on the viewings of the film - focused on visual cues and symbols representing racial equality and inclusivity. The K2 canoe that the characters used highlighted the idea of teamwork and collaboration between the white and black main characters in the time trials and races, reinforcing the film’s message of racial unity. “The simplicity of the story and the simplicity of the metaphor of the story, (...) if we want the boat to go in the right direction, we have to learn to become one” - highlights Craig Freimond, the director of the film. There were several instances in the film, where the two canoeists are depicted as two black shadows rowing in the sunset, which further represents equality between the two individuals. Metaphors, symbols, and analogies are further elaborated upon during the discussion of the interviews (Section 4.2.4).

The code group Race Relations examined the dynamics between characters from different racial backgrounds. The film emphasized the importance of helping each other and working together as it showcased the cooperation of a privileged and an underprivileged individual, highlighting the potential for achieving a common goal *together*. As Piers Cruickshanks, the real person behind the film character Steve points out: “I had the most unbelievable experience; (...) not just in the race, which was amazing what we achieved in the race, but through the partnership (...) developed with him”, which implies that the

connection between two persons coming from completely different backgrounds experienced by the viewers was also experienced by the original character.

The aforementioned code groups exemplified overcoming prejudice and racism in the film. By highlighting the negative consequences of racial prejudice and discrimination, and the positive effects of working together, *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) aimed to challenge such attitudes and promote inclusivity.

4.1.2 Personal growth and transformation

The film delved into the theme of personal growth and transformation emphasizing the role of three distinct code groups. Alongside Personal Development, Encouragement/Affirmation/Support and Friendship not only contributed to the theme but also reflected the film's core message that it intended to convey. The individual journeys of Duma and Steve are represented by this theme, as they navigated their personal challenges and grew as individuals, which could have never happened without the help of one another.

The film portrayed their transformation and development through various stages, emphasizing messages such as resilience, self-discovery, and determination. There were certain dramatic elements added that contributed to this development, as highlighted by Craig Freimond:

we obviously (...) had to deepen the characters and give the different characters more of a dramatic journey and made Siseko's character (Duma) a bit more of a guy (who) was on the edge of the law and struggling with his life and gave the white guy this backstory of his lost this kid and his marriage was....

Duma's personal growth was highlighted through his journey from a place of fear, insecurity, and poverty to a position of self-confidence, ambition, and achievement. This representation is embodied through the juxtaposition of two distinct yet identical visual compositions, strategically positioned at the onset and at the very end of the film (Image 2).



Image 2: The journey of Duma (Freimond, 2017, 0:07:20, 0:07:26; 1:42:19, 1:42:14).

Steve’s personal growth was depicted through his progression from a state of grief, prejudice, and resistance, to change to a more open-minded, supportive, and compassionate individual. As Craig mentions, “all of that stuff we (...) added on (...), the death of the (...) child, (...) complexifying his character as a guy who (...) was unable to deal with the grief (...) and (...) that these two stories kind of come together.” Both characters had different backgrounds and issues, but they were able to find solutions and success *together*.

The code group Encouragement / Affirmation / Support highlights the crucial role played by mentors, support, and encouragement in the characters’ personal development. Characters such as Oupa, Dan, and Annie provided a support system of guidance, motivation, and affirmation to Duma and Steve, that empowered them to overcome obstacles and pursue their goals. Correspondingly, Seth Naicker, who was essential in constructing the messages of the film emphasized “the plausibility and potential of the need for coaching and mentoring, and where people start to invest in young people (...).” This also highlights the coaching role assumed by Steve, who invested in Duma, a younger black male in order to move forward together. Piers when talking about his original experience with Siseko said: “the more you back him, the better he does; And the better he does, the more you feel you can back him again, it becomes self-fulfilling,” which further underlines the importance of mentoring.

Ultimately, self-belief and trust between the mentors and the mentored lead to the characters' individual transformation.

On the other hand, there were characters like Zama, who dragged Duma down into a life of crime and held him back from personal development. As Jennifer points out, the “Zama character was... that was a fictional character because we just needed someone to be the kind of opposite, (...) the forces dragging him (Duma) down as against forces that were dragging him kind of towards a more positive future.” This relates back to Jung's archetype theory (1958; 1970) and to the fact that film characters can embody archetypal qualities that viewers can react and relate to, and engage with through familiarity (Bouman, 1999; Sabido, 2003; Shelburne, 1976). “Well, we actually (...) did show it (the film) to a number of (...) schools (...); (...) a lot of kids coming from a poorer background, like they said that (...) they could definitely identify the Zamas in their (...) kind of context” – says Jennifer. This phenomenon also touches upon Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986), as the students engage in self-reflection as they process experiences and derive meaning from them.

Duma and Steve's friendship showcased elements of camaraderie in self-improvement. Their bond evolved from initial skepticism and distrust to a genuine connection built on understanding and mutual support. Through their friendship, they were able to learn from one another, and to grow personally. By showcasing the characters' journeys, *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) emphasized the potential for individuals to overcome their limitations, confront their prejudices, and evolve into more compassionate and empathetic beings. This development resembles the timeless Hero's Journey (Campbell, 1993), wherein the protagonists encounter challenges, acquire new knowledge, and experience personal growth through their journey and the bonds they form.

4.1.3 Overcoming challenges and adversity

Related to the previous theme, the film depicted the ability to overcome challenges and adversity in pursuit of their goals. It emphasized the importance of confronting challenges to achieve personal and collective success. The theme of overcoming challenges and adversity explored the various obstacles faced by the characters, both internally and externally. The code groups Duma Behavior and Emotions, Steve Behavior and Emotions, Obstacles, Conflict, and Family were central to this theme.

Duma and Steve confronted a myriad of challenges throughout their journey. The code groups of Duma and Steves' Behaviors captured their responses and actions in the face of

adversity. From escaping crime and risky situations with his “friend” Zama to displaying bravery and determination, Duma exhibited a willingness to confront obstacles head-on. His behavior demonstrated the importance of perseverance and a strong sense of personal agency in overcoming challenges. Similarly, Steve’s behavior showcased his determination and compromise. His character arc exemplifies that giving up is never an option, even when life throws you seemingly unbeatable internal and external obstacles. One of these obstacles was in the first half of the film, where Steve’s boat got destroyed in a treacherous rapid. Despite this setback, Steve exhibited remarkable endurance, as he persevered towards the finish line, shouldering the weight of his damaged boat (Image 3). This actually was an authentic representation involving Piers, who provided his perspective by stating the following important message concerning the event:

the event is not about the winners... it’s about that, but it’s about (...) the other 1000 guys who... their challenge is just to get to the end; So if I give up because I’m not going to get the gold, what am I saying to the most of the field, I’m saying their medal’s not worth it?



Image 3: The motivation of Steve (Freimond, 2017, 0:30:35).

The code group Duma Emotions delved into the emotional landscape of the protagonist, by capturing the range of emotions he experienced throughout his journey, including fear, doubt, determination, and joy. Duma’s emotional journey symbolized the internal struggles faced by individuals when pursuing their dreams. Moreover, the code group Steve Emotions explored the emotional journey of Steve, revealing his inner battles, which depicted his initial skepticism and frustrations.

The broader code group Emotions encompassed the emotional experiences of the characters as a whole. It emphasized the raw and authentic portrayal of their emotions, allowing viewers to connect with their struggles and victories on a deeper level. The film

effectively conveyed the rollercoaster of emotions associated with overcoming challenges and triumphing against the odds. Two scenes that stand out from the rest in this perspective are the scene where Duma confronts Steve after Steve opens up about his child's death; and the one where the mentor character Oupa asks Duma to point a gun at him to question his core purpose (Image 4). According to Craig, these scenes were incredibly challenging to shoot and included unscripted elements as well: "And Lemo, who is the black actor, is watching the scene and just feels so bad for the guy that he (...) goes to him and he sort of kneels and holds him in the seat, which was never planned"; "I was talking to Lemo and just sort of saying to him, 'you gotta (...) sort of release it a bit more'; And then (...) he just started (...) giving over (...); (...) And again, (...) that wasn't anything that was written".



Image 4: Duma comforting Steve (Freimond, 2017, 1:12:39); Duma "releasing it" (1:14:05).

The code group Obstacles presented further specific challenges that tested the characters' resolve. Whether it was Duma's injury or the constant struggle of Duma and Steve's relationship, these factors posed significant barriers to their progress. As described in section 4.1.2, mentorship figures like Oupa and Dan contributed to addressing these obstacles and helping their resolution through encouragement, affirmation, and support. Correspondingly, the code group Conflict and Family shed light on the various conflicts that emerged in the film, be it familial, racial, or mentor conflicts. These conflicts added layers of complexity to the characters and highlighted the necessity of navigating and resolving them to move forward.

4.1.4 Building bridges and fostering relationships

The film communicated the message that friendships, inclusive social dynamics, and effective communication can bridge divides and lead to collective achievement by

highlighting the significance of positive connections and understanding across racial, social, and cultural boundaries. The transformative impact of building bridges and promoting inclusivity led to the creation of the code groups of Friendship, Social Dynamics, and Communication problems/Language, which were instrumental in depicting the various aspects of relationship-building and the positive outcomes that result from it.

The bonds formed between Duma, and Steve, and also between them and their mentors, exemplified the power of genuine connections and mutual support through friendship. The two protagonists' friendship rose above social barriers, uniting them in their shared goals and providing a foundation for their accomplishments. Through their friendship, *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) conveyed the message that relationships built on trust and respect can overcome prejudice.

The code group Social Dynamics was concerned with the broader social interactions within the film. The exploration of the dynamics of cooperation, competition, and sportsmanship highlighted the potential for unity across characters. By showcasing moments of teamwork, the film emphasized the importance of collective effort in breaking down barriers and promoting harmony.

Communication problems/Language also contributed to fostering relationships, as the characters had to work on the way they spoke in order to come closer to each other. The following dialogue from the film (Freimond, 2017) exemplifies this phenomenon:

- Duma: If Zulu was your second language and I spoke slowly; Like “Hello Bra Steve, How are you Bra Steve” it be easier. (...)
- Steve: So I should speak slower?
- Duma: Yes.

Craig Freimond director touched upon this example while stating that they created scenes where the language barriers are highlighted: “there’s this automatic assumption (...) in South Africa that people must speak English, (...) like sort of an old colonial idea that English is the language that must be spoken; And so we were playing with some of those ideas (...)” Language barriers often led to conflicts and misunderstandings, however, the film also showcased the power of effective communication in bridging divides. Through efforts to foster open dialogue, the characters were able to build empathy, resolve conflicts, and strengthen their relationships.

Moreover, the codes Teamwork and Cooperation highlighted the power of working together in order to build bridges between one another. The characters, particularly Duma and Steve, demonstrated the strength of their partnership through hard work, preparing for, and participating in the Dusi marathon. Through their relationship, they achieved a level of success that would have been impossible individually.

4.2 The interviews: Four overarching themes

While the thematic content analysis of the film revealed the underlying themes that were characterized by addressing racial prejudice in the film, the interviews rather shed light on the collaboration and design processes that took place in order to address the intended messages. Again, as the film and the interviews are interrelated, some elements of the analysis of the film will be paired with interview answers.

4.2.1 Design roles and processes

In order to discover the fundamental components involved in the conceptualization of a film utilizing the EE strategy, an initial step entails the analysis of the Design roles and Design processes code groups. These groups serve the purpose of comprehensively identifying the individuals and entities associated with the collaborative endeavor of crafting the film, and of providing a foundational introduction to the intricate processes involved in the film's design.



Garth Japhet



Jennifer Charlton



Olefile Masangane

Image 5: Heartlines interviewees (Heartlines, n.d.d).

First of all, the team of the social and behavior change organization Heartlines consisted of around 10 people, including Garth, the CEO who among overseeing the whole process, dealt with the cash flow, established partnerships with broadcasters raising the money, and contracted the production company; Jennifer, who among heading up financial processes, has “been involved in the whole (...) spectrum of both making the film(s) and then (...) producing the resources that go with the film(s)”; and Olefile, who besides script-writing saw through the post-processes, including “taking the conversations to the people around the film”, and “facilitate dialogue,” based on his words (Image 5). Heartlines also maintained a

close relationship with experts and consultants from the social sector, such as Seth, who also took part in script analysis and was essential in the construction of the main messages in the film (Image 6).



Image 6: Seth Naicker (Heartlines Consulting, n.d.).

The production company, the “creatives”, based on the interviews consisted of around 20 people, including the director, Craig Freimond (Image 7/1), who based on his words, is “a writer and a director in South Africa and (...) had been hired by (...) Heartlines (...); To write a film that explored the themes of racism and reconciliation (...) in South Africa”; a producer, a line producer, a director of photography (DOP), editors, and freelancers. Working closely with the creatives, were all of the actors and the two “real people”, Piers Cruickshanks and Siseko Ntondini, whose story inspired the film. Out of the two of them, Piers Cruickshanks, the sixth interviewee was deeply involved with the filming process, as he also served as a body double for Steve: “So myself and actually another guy who wasn’t Siseko (...) were the kind of stunt- or body doubles for (...) ‘ourselves’” – says Piers (Image 7/2).

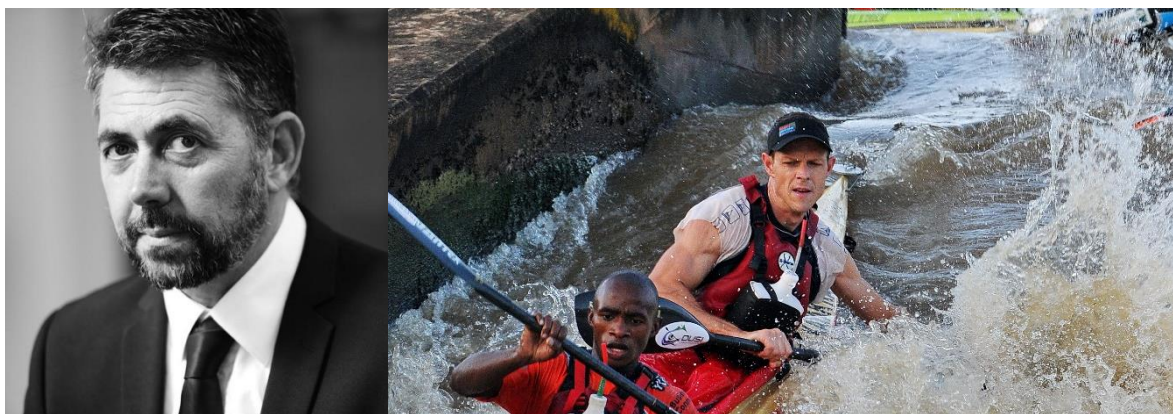


Image 7: Craig Freimond and Piers Cruickshanks (behind Siseko)

It is also important to highlight that Heartlines already had partnerships that facilitated the development of the messages and the storyline of the cinematic production. “Heartlines has had a long-standing relationship with the Department of Education; (...) some of our story

work has partnered with organizations like Columbia Leadership Trust” – mentions Seth. The Columbia Leadership program’s primary objective is to cultivate a sense of self-awareness and harness the leadership potential within young individuals, empowering them to drive personal transformation and effect positive change in their lives, which resonates with the main messages of the film (Columbia, n.d.). The remaining entities included the funders (commercial sponsors, advertising agencies, funding companies), the broadcasters (cable company, national broadcaster), and other post-process entities (churches, schools).

The process of making the film spanned four years and involved various stages. As is customary for all of the EE films and series produced by Heartlines, it began with an extensive research process. This phase included workshops and focus groups to identify relevant problems and develop solutions for effective communication. Once the What’s Your Story story-sharing campaign was established, the process continued with involving the production company, specifically the writer/director to make a film based on the results of the research. This can be related to the orientation and crystallization stage of the Media Mapping Model (Bouman, 2021), which includes problem analysis, organizational policies, putting together the EE team, and deciding on a full-feature film. Concerning the prework, Seth points out the following:

So you’ve got the academic world, the business world, the church world, the youth world in these focus groups and that helps us build content; (...) and (...) from that (...) you see well if these are the themes, how can you take these themes and (...) have them enter into (...) a story.

Heartlines was the catalyst of this process, they took on a leading role by controlling the message of the film, while the production company handled the creative aspects such as casting actors, incorporating dramatic storylines, and enhancing the entertainment value of the messages. In the production stage (Bouman, 2021), the script-writing was a joint process, which also involved pretesting to test out the effectiveness of the script. Due to the significant cost involved in the design process, Heartlines needed to secure funding and establish partnerships to bring the film to life.

Initially, the plan was to create a comedy film featuring Trevor Noah famous South African comedian, however, Trevor eventually withdrew from the project, prompting Heartlines to develop a new concept. Fortunately, Craig, the director, had a backup plan in mind, as he and his producer have already been contacted by the two canoeists, Piers and

Siseko, who shared the inspiring story of theirs. This stroke of luck led Piers and Siseko to become involved in the project, and Heartlines embraced the idea of incorporating their story, creating a reality-inspired storyline and dialogues.

To ensure authenticity, the director immersed himself in learning about canoeing, and the actors underwent training to acquire canoeing skills. Most of the film was filmed around the actual location of the Dusi Canoe Marathon. After the completion of editing, subtitling, and preview screenings, the film was finally ready for its official screening, which takes the process to the implementation stage (Bouman, 2021). However, the “design process” did not end there; during the dissemination stage (Bouman, 2021), Heartlines continued to play a crucial role in how the film’s messages reached the audience. This involved packaging discussion booklets, organizing focus groups, and conducting workshops in various settings such as schools, universities, churches, workplaces, bank associations, leadership retreats, and even prisons. This ongoing process ensured that the film continued to impact people’s lives through sessions and discussions (further elaborated upon in section 4.2.2).

The design process encountered various challenges, which were summarized under the code group titled Challenges (Beyond The River). This included inter alia not being overly prescriptive with the messaging, the potential limited appeal of sports-themed films to certain audiences, and the sensitivity surrounding racial issues, where white people might appear to be less attracted to go to attend viewings and participate in related discussions. Shedding light on this phenomenon, Seth articulated noteworthy insights:

when we did start testing the material, (...); Some middle-class people and white people wouldn’t want to watch a film that’s still documenting (...) black South African people’s stories; (...) How do you keep the (...) majority of people that are majority economically who need to have the goodwill to bring change in the country in the game by (...) making them feel like this is something I can watch?

The design team had to encounter the inherent difficulty posed by this question, and the following sections will potentially provide some solutions for the aforementioned challenges.

4.2.2 Utilizing entertainment-education strategy to challenge racial prejudice: Designing and delivering effective social messages

The second theme delves into how the film Beyond the River (Freimond, 2017) effectively utilizes the EE strategy in its design process to challenge racial prejudice through

the film and its post-processes. The code group Design factors (Beyond The River) highlighted the factors that influenced the initial design process of the film. These factors encompassed a wide range of considerations, such as allowing conversations to emerge, ensuring quality, and attention to detail, while making sure that the messages the film conveys are not being offensive and are not doing any harm to the audience. The filmmakers also had to contend with limitations such as financial restrictions and time constraints for the project. The popularity of films, the power of media, and the desire for a commercial release decided for a full-feature film, where the filmmakers aimed to stay true to the initial story, incorporating authentic locations, and embedding real prejudices to create a thought-provoking narrative that challenges racial prejudice effectively. According to Seth, “in this case it was a real story that we then shaped up into (...) cinematic production; So the live characters are there, the real story is there, and there’s a crossover between people from different race, class and distinction.”

However, there is also a downside in using films for EE purposes, because as Garth highlighted:

from an edutainment point of view, (...) a feature film is not the ideal vehicle because it’s too long; the reason that (...) we actually then (later) came back to that shorter format is because the feature film is if you wanting to use it in a community setting (...) to get an hour and a half of a film and then have time for discussion, you’re asking people for two to three hours; Whereas with 24 minutes you can have an hour.

The code group Entertainment-education (BTR) revealed the core values of the EE strategy that were specifically relevant to the film. These core values included addressing storylines to the messages that had to deal with difficult topics. Social messages (BTR) shed light on these specific topics, including inter alia inspiring change, motivating to do better, fighting prejudices, promoting interracial understanding, advocating for racial equality, exploring religious coexistence, moving past differences, sharing, being supportive, building trust, highlighting commitment and teamwork. By depicting racial conflicts and emphasizing racial differences, the film sought to address historical issues in South Africa, addressing arrogance towards minorities and linguistic prejudices in order to provoke discussions and challenge preconceived notions.

Cultural aspects had to be considered too when designing the film. The story had to relate somehow to the problems of South African society and try to ease these conflicts with

the EE strategy. According to Olefile: “In this country we are very good at telling, but (...) we don’t know how to ask; And we (...) actually are very bad at listening; So we (...) want to achieve those three things through the (...) campaign by using *Beyond the River*.” However, despite the fact that the problems addressed by the film are rooted in South Africa, Seth highlighted that “these are global issues; It’s not just South African issues” – which also served as a reason for international screening.

Concerning how these messages are being incorporated in the film itself, Garth said that the notion that “‘you can’t do good entertainment if you want to do good education’ is not true;” highlighting the importance of the interconnectedness of education and entertainment. However, the strategy calls for hiding the messages within the story, which can be extremely complicated and reasons for other films to be unsuccessful. As Jennifer emphasized, “you’ve got to create the dialogue in such a way that it’s (...) not *too*... that a person feels as though they’re sitting in a lesson.” Similarly, Craig pointed out that “It’s just so easy for it to go wrong” and “I think that we pulled it off, you know; Like... and that’s a miracle, right?” The filmmakers understood the power of the story in conveying social messages and hid the messages within the story to engage audiences on a deeper level and create a genuine emotional connection with the characters, touching upon *inter alia* classical identification (Kelman, 1961), and parasocial interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956). As highlighted by Garth, “a small group of creative people (can have an) impact on a society because of the emotional value of the stories.”

The code groups Post processes (BTR) and Audiences (BTR) highlight that authentic engagement within workshops done with children at schools, churchgoing people, advertising agencies, banking agencies, and also ex-offenders, aimed at establishing relationships through these messages with people. Seth when talking about the post-processes, said: “in training workshops, classical workshops... people will insert little sound bites, little video material to capture imagination.” This relates to Garth’s viewpoint on how a full-feature film can be considered too long for these purposes. Through cinematography, screenings, and international platforms, *Heartlines* aimed to use the power of film to spread awareness of the issues previously identified, but also took this process one step further: checking and monitoring the way how the film affects and engages the audience. “So in the unique way we have the movie, yes; And that’s very unique; We’ve created that; But more than that, we take the materials and then walk it into engagement with people (...)” – as pointed out by Seth. This is an ongoing, long-term process, as the film continues to be being used in sessions to

achieve social change. Underscoring the longevity of this process, Olefile at the time when the interview was taken, said:

next week I'm going to be engaging with another group of ex-offenders; (...) outside of prison, they want to do something more positive with their lives; So there's gonna be a (...) story sharing experience... There's going to be watching *Beyond the River*... and there's (...) going to be an incredible time of just connecting.

The code group Results and Impacts (BTR) provided insights into the visible results and impacts that the film and the strategy had on individuals and society. The film through the EE strategy achieved its objectives by becoming an advocate for racial understanding, inspiring discussions, and promoting social change. It received positive feedback and recognition, impacting the lives of viewers and raising awareness of social inequalities. Piers, who took part in several screenings of the film highlighted: “we just had standing ovation after standing ovation; It was (...) incredible; The response was just unbelievably positive.” Similarly, Seth when talking about a leadership retreat where they showed *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) and “work(ed) hard at bringing together (...) 30 leaders from different race, class, gender distinctions” in South Africa, highlighted that “It’s amazing just to experience it; I mean, I wouldn’t be overstating, but I think it’s life transforming.”

Finally, the code group Goals (BTR) encompasses the objectives that the film did not achieve with EE but can serve as ideas for future projects to enhance the implementation of the strategy and attain even greater success. Seth proposes committing audiences by building a so-called “alumni system”, which would be beneficial in order to ensure the film’s enduring positive impact on audiences. Furthermore, Jennifer argues that expanding international reach and implementing mandatory school viewings could further spread the messages of this film, and potentially benefit future projects as well.

This chapter serves as an example of the strategic nature of EE and also relates back to the thoughts of Bouman (1999), and Singhal and Rogers (1999), who underlined the time-consuming and effortful nature of the *process* of working with EE content. As the interviewees highlighted, the design of the film started in 2013, and after ten years, it still continues to be used in sessions and workshops with the aim of creating a more inclusive and understanding society. As Seth points out: “one must be sober about the fact to affect systemic change and (...) macro change in our country that won’t just happen overnight; And that’s why it’s the long haul.”

4.2.3 Collaboration challenges and facilitating factors

“So it’s a very (...) crisscross kind of dynamic complex way of (...) pulling things together” (Seth).

To lead up this section, the code group Collaboration processes (BTR) incorporated the different dynamics involved in the collaboration process. The main collaboration took place between Heartlines and the creatives, but the importance of the collaboration with the actors and the real people turned out to be crucial as well, concerning the film’s success.

The social and behavior change organization and the creatives worked together on an employer-employee basis. The production company and the director were hired by Heartlines, which resulted in Heartlines having veto power over any unsuitable suggestions that the creative team had, which is reflected by what Garth said: “with the director, what (...) we call ‘golden lines’, you know the lines that can’t be changed.” Jennifer also referred to this *checks and balances* situation, stating that “they would put it together and they would show us and then we would give them feedback.” However, Piers and Siseko had similar power too, as they were the ones who sold their story for the purpose of making a film about it. As Piers mentions:

The arrangement was that (...) they bought our (...) story from us, and then we had the (...) veto right, (...) to say that they (...) can’t say it’s based on a true story, if we felt it didn’t (...) represent what our story was about.

Interplays like these set the scene for the overall collaboration process, in which both sides recognized that success cannot be achieved alone.

In order to achieve a fruitful collaboration, everyone that took part had to counter difficulties and challenges, which were encompassed by the Collaboration challenges (BTR) code group. Some conflicts arose from the fact that Heartlines sought to prioritize the message, while the creatives were more focused on highlighting the dramatic elements. Relating to this phenomenon, Craig highlighted:

Those situations can be very difficult because (...) the organization you know is always pushing for the message and we are always pushing for the drama (...); And (...) there is that fine line between message and (...) it can kill the drama. And if you kill the drama, you kill the message.

The interviewees emphasized that the balance between these elements is extremely hard to find, but in the end, all entities were satisfied with how the film turned out.

Another issue that arose was concerning the depiction of the real-life story of Piers and Siseko. The canoeists had to come to the realization that the film will deviate from real-life events. However, the canoeists came to an agreement at the very beginning, which is pointed out by Piers: “we agreed that the most important thing was the spirit of our story.” Consequently, in addition to the fundamental challenge of striking a balance between entertainment and education, another significant issue surfaced in the form of balancing the educational and the authentic aspects of the film too.

Navigating various goals, values, and considerations further hindered the collaboration and the design process of the film. Heartlines had to deal with difficulties arising from the incorporation of the objectives of some commercial sponsors, who desired to see their brand and logos displayed on the screen. Jennifer touched upon this phenomenon:

The whole issue of product placement; And the creators are saying, (...) I won't have any logos on our boat because that's not true to the story itself; And so, yeah, (...) there is a lot of interplay that goes on between all the various parties (...), because you need all of them to be working together, so (...) you can't just go out and make the movie you want to make; You've (...) got to (...) take into account all these various considerations.

Further challenges mentioned cover difficult relationships, disagreements, discomfort, expectations based on industry standards, navigating religious issues, and tension among team members.

Conversely, the code group Collaboration positives (BTR) shed light on the facilitating factors that contributed to a successful collaboration. The first factor that grounded a successful collaboration was the openness of both parties towards the two canoeists. “It would have been very easy for them to say ‘alright you guys are the canoeists, great story, now we make the movie,’ but they (...) kind of clipped” - says Piers. The creatives and Heartlines made sure that the canoeists felt involved in the project. Piers shared one of his memorable experiences during filming (Image 8):

There's one wonderful moment in the film where they're filming the two characters, Duma and (...) Steve, and it's at sunset (...) and the (...) director placed myself and

Siseko, the real guys behind (...), so they were filming us and then he sort of said to us as ‘This is a tribute to you guys’; So (...) it’s a beautiful shot there, paddling on the water, their combination is coming together and then behind that in the background there’s me and Siseko.

The openness and curiosity of the actors towards the canoeists and the dedication and passion displayed by Piers and Siseko towards the project further helped the process.



Image 8: Duma and Steve (in the background), and Siseko and Piers (in the front) (Freimond, 2017, 1:16:48).

The establishment of trust within the team also emerged as a facilitating factor. Heartlines’ and the canoeists’ trust in the creatives, the director’s trust in the actors, and the production team’s trust in Heartlines all helped the collaboration and created a positive work environment. Both parties prioritized communication and consistently sought feedback from each other, worked tirelessly, and dedicated time to create something remarkable. Their mutual interest in the project and in one another made collaboration easy and productive. As an example, Seth highlights that during the research process, Craig surprised everyone by joining one of the workshops that he held:

Craig was actually at one of the workshops that I ran for Heartlines (...); And he (...) journeyed with us where we had community leaders, pastors, business leaders at (...) a church facility (...); Nobody knew who he was, he was just there; (...) and if you see him, you know, race wise, you’ll see a white, tall male in there (...) he played a part in the activities during the day.

A film director voluntarily attending one of the workshops showcases the aforementioned mutual interest and ensures the accurate communication of the intended issues. Ultimately, a strong sense of teamwork between the stakeholders led to the effective delivery of the messages in the film.

Metaphorically, the collaboration-facilitating factors resonated with the social messages that the film was designed to communicate. When talking about the lessons learned throughout the collaboration process, Olefile said:

the lesson I've (...) learned working with Heartlines is that collaboration is you can't go ahead it alone; You need to (...) work with the best in the industry, (...) I assume you know; (...) expecting that you will be able to succeed on your own will be disingenuous.

This viewpoint can be paralleled with Steve and Duma's story of accomplishing success together and facing difficulties when alone. Similarly, Piers stated, "If we all have a similar goal, it really can... it can bring us together," which can also be used as an analogy for the race relations in South Africa.

Finally, besides Olefile, the other interviewees reflected upon the lessons they had learned through the collaboration process. The code group Lessons learned (BTR) encompassed the importance of listening, the need for preparation, patience, and taking the necessary time to achieve the desired outcome. The importance of multi-stakeholder work between people in the field of media and people in social sectors, as well as the inclusion of additional professional consultants emerged as additional paramount learnings. These insights provide valuable guidance for future endeavors and contribute to the continuous improvement of the collaboration process in EE projects.

4.2.4 Incorporation of true story and dramatic elements: The importance of authenticity

The third theme led to a surprising revelation of the significance of authenticity in the design process of an EE film, as all interviewees consistently emphasized the importance of the authentic representation particularly in relation to the incorporation of the true story and dramatic elements in *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017). This section explores how authenticity was achieved in the film through the development of characters and storylines, based on reality, the real story, and the skillful use of dramatic elements.

The code group Characters (BTR) encompassed the formation of the two main characters of the film. By drawing inspiration from the experiences of the white and black canoeists, the film humanizes the characters and presents their struggles and triumphs in a relatable manner. Piers, when talking about the first steps in the collaboration process stated: “Craig Freimond, before they even started writing, (...) he must have done interviews with me for (...) five or six hours, he spent a lot of time talking to us, listening to the stories we had to tell.” The authentic portrayal of the real characters served to challenge original preconceived notions and stereotypes, fostering a deeper understanding of their shared humanity, which underscores the importance of archetype theory (Jung, 1958; 1970), dramatic theory (Bentley, 1967), parasocial interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956), and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) in designing EE content.

The code group Dramatic elements (BTR) delves into how the film effectively utilized various dramatic elements to engage the audience and deliver its social messages. The incorporation of backstories, emotional scenes, and engaging storytelling techniques created a compelling narrative. This touches upon the two emotional scenes already highlighted in section 4.1.3., where unscripted elements contributed to the overwhelmingly emotional effect that those specific scenes had (Image 4). Similarly, the code group Acting (BTR) highlights the directorial instructions and unscripted moments that added to the authenticity of the performances, which added an element of spontaneity and realism to the film, further enhancing its authenticity. Craig, when talking about those emotional scenes, and the improvisation of the actor who played Duma, mentions that “those are the moments (...) that you sort of live for, (...) is these things where the collaboration of film, you know (...) the actors, (...) the editors, the... where these moments of magic happen.”

Furthermore, the presence of Metaphors (BTR) in the film contributed to the authentic representation of South African society and the complexities of race-related issues. These metaphors also were inspired by true elements of the real story. One of the main symbolization of racial dynamics in the film was depicted by the desire of Duma to sit in the front of the boat in order for them to be more successful in the Dusi marathon. Piers highlighted the following about his initial experience with Siseko:

What was very accurate was the (...) fact that as we experienced paddle, I wanted to sit in front and drive the boat, (...) you must choose the channels, you must make the decisions, (...) I did not want to sit in the back; (...) And then one day we (...) tried it

out and it was obvious that that's how the boat went better (...); leading from behind, you know, giving (...) the (...) younger black guy (...) the lead and you back him (...).

Likewise, in the film, Steve was obsessed with being the one in charge of steering the boat. But after multiple failed attempts, he had to admit that it was better for both of them to let the other person take the front seat (Image 9).



Image 9: “Keep the rhythm, follow me” (Freimond, 2017, 0:45:17) vs Winning gold (1:40:34).

Another instance of employing similar representations can be seen in the use of identical images depicting Duma's journey, as previously discussed in Section 4.1.2 (Image 2). Jennifer touched upon these scenes by arguing that despite the fact that the inclusion of these shots were on purpose, the underlying intention was to convey their connection to reality:

we didn't want to end the film (...) on (...) winning (...) the race because (...) reality was that Duma was gonna have to go back (...); and so we wanted to get that kind of balance right (...) just leaving (...) the film on a (...) feeling good moment, but (...) try and get just some kind of glimmer of hope coming through; (...) it's a more hopeful than previously; (...) there has been a journey; (...) but it's not to say that everything is now like all 100%.

Further metaphors such as canoeing, crashing the boat, and races working together served as analogies that resonated with the audience. Garth mentions that “when two very different people come together, the obstacles are like a river (...); And if they (...) want to win, they're going to have to find each other and work together;” which he believes is a good analogy for the different races in South Africa working together. This is continued by Olefile, who says that “Bra Steve and Duma begin to do that in the last stretch of this movie; And I think the (...) challenge for us South Africans is to actually emulate that.”

Relating to the authentic representation of the situation that underprivileged people face in South Africa, it is important to highlight a heart-wrenching scene that portrayed the economic disadvantages that sportsmen must contend with in the region. “It’s about the economic reality (...); There’s a part where I think the coach to the main character; He (...) says, you know, ‘is it my fault that I didn’t have good dietary (...)?’” – points out Seth. Here, Seth refers to the scene where Duma encountered an injury and close to giving up on his dreams, turned to his mentor Oupa for some guidance (Freimond, 2017; Image 10):



Image 10: Duma turning to Oupa (Freimond, 2017, 1:22:08)

- Duma: Is that my fault? That I have weak bones? Here we eat to survive, not to be athletes.
- Oupa: “Duma, don’t do this. You’re breaking my heart.
- Duma: Zama was right, We were born into this. We are going to die here.
- Oupa: Don’t give up. If you give up on this, you would have given up on your life. (...) Don’t give up.

The authentic portrayal of this matter again relates to the notable fact that Craig actively engaged in the workshop(s), affording him the opportunity to first-handedly experience the challenges faced by the individuals involved in the session(s).

Moreover, the code group Personal importance (BTR) revealed the profound impact that the making of the film had on the interviewees. The process of creating *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) resulted in meaningful experiences, the cultivation of friendships, and real-life partnerships. The emotional connections forged during the filmmaking process translated

into authentic performances that were attractive not only to the audience but for the people working on the project.

To conclude this section, although the film deviates from certain aspects of reality, it manages to balance between true and dramatic elements, ensuring an impactful and entertaining viewing experience. The *importance of the story* was overwhelmingly mentioned as a determining factor throughout the interviews, codes such as “Story coming first”, “Story generating metaphors”, “Story is the message”, and “Story tells” reflects also on the EE strategy as a whole. The film with Trevor Noah did not happen, but it probably would have felt like an artificial story as opposed to the authentic representation of two individuals who symbolize a whole nation traveling in a boat together, fighting against racial prejudice. This is reflected by Craig’s words: “we had these two different versions (...); Like we had this one that we were forcing, it didn’t work and then this other one came and it was like ‘uh, that was... that was the story.’”

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore how the film *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) was designed to challenge racial prejudice through the utilization of the entertainment-education strategy, and to identify the hindering and facilitating factors that influenced the collaboration process of the film. By conducting a qualitative analysis of the film and interviewing key stakeholders involved in its production, the researcher was able to gain valuable insights into the design elements, collaborative processes, and the incorporation of true stories and dramatic elements that can contribute to a film's ability to challenge racial prejudice.

5.1 Theoretical and practical implications

The thematic content analysis of the film revealed four themes that emerged from the story, which included specific instances of overcoming prejudice and racism, personal growth and transformation, overcoming challenges and adversity, and building bridges and fostering relationships. These themes served as an illustration of how the film aimed to challenge racial prejudice by highlighting the transformative power of relationships formed across racial boundaries and through the portrayal of the journey of two canoeists.

Drawing upon Bandura and Walters' (1963) social learning theory and Nabi and Prestin's aspect on human agency (2017), it can be recognized that *Beyond the River* (2017) utilized social modeling as a means to challenge racial prejudice. Through the portrayal of specific instances of overcoming prejudice and racism, the film provided the audience with observational opportunities to witness characters transforming their beliefs and behaviors. This process of vicarious reinforcement, combined with self-reflection and cognitive processes, allowed viewers to engage with the film's messages and potentially modify their own attitudes and behaviors.

The concept of parasocial interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956) further illuminates the film's impact. By creating archetypal characters that resonated with the audience, *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) fostered a sense of emotional engagement and identification to adopt a role of an influential agent (Kelman, 1961; Jung, 1958; 1970). This connection facilitated the cultivation of new perspectives and a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by individuals from different racial backgrounds. The aesthetic experience and storytelling employed in the film enhanced its spreadability, as audiences were (and still are) drawn to

share their experiences with others and actively participate in discussions related to the film (Jenkins, 2006).

Considering the concept of persuasive communication, it is evident that *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) leveraged storytelling, dramatic theory (Bentley, 1967), and social marketing (Bouman, 1999; Jenkins 2006; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). By incorporating the true story of the canoeists with dramatic elements, the film created a compelling narrative that captured the audience's attention and provoked emotional responses.

The interviews encompassed four themes to provide an overview of how the film *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017) utilizes the entertainment-education strategy, navigates collaboration challenges, incorporates true story and dramatic elements, and designs and delivers effective social messages. The interviews also revealed the basic design roles and processes that took place during the design process to communicate these messages and highlighted that collaboration played a crucial role in the successful production of the film.

The Media Mapping framework of Bouman (2021) is compatible with the collaboration process that took place between Heartlines and the creatives. First, Heartlines took the lead by researching contemporary issues in South Africa, designing a campaign called "What's Your Story" to address these issues, and coming up with the idea of a full-feature film. Then, the production company took over by adding dramatic elements, emotional storylines, and the authentic elements of the true story to create a film that can effectively communicate the values introduced by Heartlines. Finally, the social change organization came back to the forefront for the dissemination process, facilitating conversations and distributing the messages to schools, churches, and prisons.

Conflicts arose as Heartlines sought to emphasize the message, while the creatives were focused on highlighting the dramatic elements. This tension between education and entertainment is a common challenge in entertainment-education projects, however, the collaboration process allowed both sides to negotiate and find a balance that satisfied everyone involved. The collaboration also faced difficulties regarding the depiction of the real-life story and the incorporation of commercial sponsors' objectives. These challenges required careful navigation of various goals, values, and considerations. The openness of both parties towards the two "real people" played a fundamental role, as the creatives and Heartlines made sure that the canoeists felt involved in the project, fostering a sense of authenticity toward their true story. Trust was established within the team, with Heartlines and the canoeists trusting the creatives, the director trusting the actors, and the production team

trusting Heartlines, which created a positive work environment and allowed for effective communication and feedback. The facilitating factors align metaphorically with the social messages conveyed in the film, as the story highlighted accomplishing success together and facing difficulties when alone. The importance of teamwork and shared goals reflects the broader context of race relations in South Africa.

In conclusion, to answer the research questions, Craig highlighted that “I love this idea that the story tells you, rather than you tell the story”; “Find the right story and you don’t have to push the message; But (...) easier said than done, you know.” By finding the right story and allowing it to naturally unfold, the film was able to effectively communicate its social messages without the need for spoon-feeding messaging. Cultural sensitivity and understanding played a significant role in fostering the messages, while the entertainment-education strategy allowed for the effective delivery of social messages by entertaining the audience. Emotional impact was harnessed to engage viewers and provoke introspection.

However, also the complicated collaboration in balancing the educational, dramatic, and authentic elements along with satisfying all parties and individuals that took part in the process, required to be addressed and resolved. The phenomena of openness, trust, participation, and investment of time in the project were able to eliminate these challenges and ultimately facilitated personal growth, transformation, and the building of bridges not only within the film but among the members of the filmmaking team. By integrating the theories of social learning, classical identification, dramatic theory, and elaboration likelihood, among others, this study provides valuable insights into the design and delivery of films that challenge racial prejudice. Through the power of storytelling, authentic dialogues and characters, collaborative efforts, and effective communication, films can serve as transformative tools in fostering understanding and social change.

5.2 Limitations and future research

This closing section highlights that while this study provides insights into the collaborative efforts of making a film with the strategy of EE, further research can be made concerning other case studies and instances where the strategy is used. In the case of most qualitative studies, the findings rely heavily on the interpretation of a single researcher, which inherently introduces subjectivity. To ensure the research minimizes any adverse effects on validity and reliability, the study employed theoretical principles and the systematic implementation of the thematic content analysis introduced by Boeije (2009).

As the study focused on a single film, *Beyond the River* (Freimond, 2017), future research could focus on a broader range of films to explore the variations and difficulties in collaborative processes and their effectiveness in addressing and challenging social issues beyond racial prejudice. In addition, this study relied on interviews with key stakeholders involved in the film, which may include biased opinions and notions of subjectivity.

Moreover, concerning the collaboration process, this study focused on the perspective of the film's creators and producers. Further studies could incorporate the perspectives of the audience, examining how their engagement with the film and its messages is influenced by the collaborative process. This study primarily addressed the collaboration process itself, but future observations and research could explore the long-term effects of such films on promoting social change and reducing racial prejudice. Creating impactful entertainment-education films, their potential for promoting positive social outcomes, and a deeper understanding of the collaborative efforts involved can be gained by addressing the aforementioned limitations and expanding the volume of research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Axial coding of the film

(Duma)

Duma Emotions (in order of the appearance in the film):

Emotions: Anxiety; Fear; Being cautious; Fear; Smiling (about canoeing); Distrust (to Zama); Fear; Amazed; Happiness; Ambitions; Hope; Happiness; Hope; Inertness; Powerlessness; Fear (dog); Frustration; Frustration; Anxiety; Regret (Zama); Furiousness (Zama); Fear; Terrified; Crying; Regret; Disappointment; Frustration; Happiness

Duma Behavior (in order of the appearance in the film):

Escape and risky situation (with Zama); Keeping his word; Helpfulness; Helpfulness; Helpfulness; Bravery; Honesty; Shouting; Getting enough (Zama); Ambition

Duma Personal Development (in order of the appearance in the film):

Dreaming; Dark → Light; Zama encouraging to steal; Zama is an obstacle for Duma's canoeing; Achievement (Oupa); Self-discovery; Determination; Discovery; Future Goals; Determination; Punctuality; Determinism and Motivation, Failure; Expectations (Oupa); Overcoming fear: Duma looks in Steve's (dog's) eye; Equality; Making demands; Self-motivation; Desire to prove himself; Success (with Steve); Trust and Belief (Oupa → Duma); Failure; Overcoming obstacles; Perseverance; Final challenge (with Steve); Determination, Determination, Achievement, Positive reinforcement (with Steve); Contentment; Recognition (by Father); Accomplished dream

(Steve)

Steve Emotions (in order of the appearance in the film):

Anxiety; Nightmares; Surprise; Anger; Frustration; Grief; Sadness; Sadness; Emotion expression; Happiness

Steve Behavior (in order of the appearance in the film):

Determination; Concern (Duma); Prejudice; Stereotyping; Compromise; Derision (Steve → Duma); Commanding; Resistance to Change; Uncertainty (Steve → Duma); Role model (to

Duma); Not trying hard enough; “You okes” – puts Duma in a group and degrades them – Racism; Alienated (in Soweto); Openness; Compromise; Taking a chance on Duma; Trying; Argument (with Annie); Perfectionism; Politeness; Openness; Standing up for Duma; Helpfulness

Social Behavior:

Law enforcement; Attract to crime (Zama to Duma); Community engagement; Challenging authority; Offering help

Emotions:

Poverty; Calmness; Punishment (Oupa to Duma); Aggression (Duma to Zama); Peace (canoeing); Enjoyment (canoeing); Tension (Zama – Duma); Happiness (Dusi); Excitement (Dusi); Disappointment (Father → Duma); Anger (Father → Duma); Frustration and Sadness (Family → Duma); Disapproval; Emotional burden (Steve); Grief, Loss and Poverty (Duma’s family); Tension (Steve → Duma); Apology; Laughter (Steve and Duma); Dedication and Confidence (Steve, Duma); Happiness; Anger (Zama); Insecurity; Loss; Sadness and Grief; Tension; Survival; Frustration (Steve, Duma); Challenging situation (Steve, Duma)

Family:

Family Dynamics; Family conflict; Relationship conflicts (Steve and Annie); Poverty; Family relationships (Duma and Mother); Support (Mother → Duma); Loss; Trauma; Support; Wedding ring (Steve); Support (Oupa, Dan, Annie); Belonging; Home

Cinematography:

Transition - Crime → Peace; City → poor village; Slow-mo (Steve and Duma); Slow-mo (canoeing in the light); Cheerful music; Struggling → enjoyment; Rowing in the sun; Beautiful shots of rowing; Music; Beautiful shots; Slow-mo (canoeing); Repeating Themes (Dan and Oupa; looking at city; dog)

Personal Development:

Guidance (Oupa); Motivation (Oupa); Observation (Dan and Oupa); Achievement; Admiration; Observation; Compliment; Chance (Dan and Oupa about Duma and Steve);

Social Dynamics:

Transition; Deception (Duma & Zama); Minimization (Zama to Duma); Gift giving (Duma to Sister); Materialism; Equality; Coercion (Zama → Duma); Competition; Competition; Winner; Mocking (Geoff); Competition and Winning; Failure; Reconciliation; Competition; Betrayal and Deception (Zama → Duma); Competition; Cooperation; Sportsmanship; Winning gold

Friendship:

Friendship (Duma, Dan, and Oupa); High-five; Sharing (Duma → Steve); Cutting ties (Duma → Zama); Partners → Friends (Duma and Steve); Sharing (Steve → Duma); Holding hands (Steve and Duma); Comforting (Duma → Steve); Protection (Steve → Duma); Teamwork; Teamwork; Apology; Encouragement; Handshake; Hug

Conflict:

Conflict (Duma and Zama); Family conflict (Duma and Father); Relationship conflict (Steve and Annie); Racial conflict (Steve and Geoff); Mentor conflict (Oupa and Duma)

Communication problems / Language:

Verbal abuse (Duma to Zama); Language barrier and Communication issues (Steve and Duma); Communication barriers (Steve and Duma); Language barrier; Communication breakdown; Coursing (Steve to Duma); Coursing (Duma)

Symbols / Race Symbols:

Duma taking black kid's place in canoe; Equality in canoe in sun; K2 (two people one person); Struggling without compromise (Duma and Steve); Rowing = fighting; Duma looks in Steve's (dog's) eye; Fighting together; Teamwork; Desire to lead; Looking dog in the eye

Race Relations:

Equality; Lack of Cohesion; Equality (boat); Working together is good (Dan about Steve and Duma); Equality; Teamwork; Hug

Prejudice:

Group mentality (Geoff); Prejudice (Geoff); Discrimination (Duma → Steve); Discrimination (Geoff); Stereotyping (Geoff and Steve); Race and ethnicity-based discrimination; Ethnicity-based discrimination ("You okes" Steve to Duma); Discrimination (Steve → Duma); Racism

(Geoff); Lack of reaction (Duma and Steve); Discrimination (Zama: “white man”); Negative bias, Cultural insensitivity, and Racism (Geoff); Racism (Geoff); Identity

Cultural Differences:

Time; Time management

Obstacles:

Injury (Duma); Fighting (Duma and Steve)

Encouragement / Affirmation / Support:

Encouraging to steal (Zama); Encouragement (Dan and Oupa); Encouragement (Dan → Steve); Encouragement; Encouragement (Oupa); Support (Oupa); Encouragement (Dan → Steve); Encouragement (Dan and Oupa); Encouragement (Oupa → Duma); Giving up = Death; Affirmation and Encouragement (Dan and Oupa); Helpfulness (Oupa); Empathy (Oupa to Duma); Affirmation (Dan and Oupa); Cheering; Advice (Oupa); Cheering (Oupa and Dan); Comforting (Oupa → Duma); Affirmation

Additional codes:

Sadness (Duma); Nostalgia (Duma, Dan, and Oupa); Respect (Dan to Steve); Openness (Dan → Duma); Agreement (Duma to Annie); Excitement; Teamwork; Agreement (Steve); Anger (Annie); Satisfaction (Father to Duma); Frustration (Duma and Steve); Burden of the past (Steve and Annie); Staying sane (Steve and Annie); Peer pressure (Zama); Responsibility (Duma → Zama); Challenges; Lack of Understanding (Steve – Duma); Mortality; Identification (Oupa → Duma); Death (Zama); Mental Health

Appendix 2: Selective coding of the film

Themes:

1. Specific Instances of Overcoming Prejudice and Racism
 - Main code groups, codes: Prejudice, Race Symbols, Race Relations, Discrimination, Stereotyping, Racism, Cinematography
2. Personal Growth and Transformation
 - Main code groups: Personal Development, Encouragement/Affirmation/Support, Friendship

3. Overcoming Challenges and Adversity

- Main code groups: Duma Behavior, Steve Behavior, Duma Emotions, Steve Emotions, Emotions, Obstacles, Conflict, Family

4. Building Bridges and Fostering Relationships

- Main code groups: Friendship, Social Dynamics, Communication problems / Language

Appendix 3: Axial coding of the interviews

Acting (Beyond The River):

Directorial instructions, Unscripted

Audiences (BTR):

Above 10 year olds, Cable TV, Children, Cinema, Do gooders, Not paying for message, Preferring characters to messages, Privileged children, Society as a whole, Sophisticated, Thinking entities, Underprivileged children, Young black audiences

Challenges (BTR):

Acting challenges, Being overly prescriptive, Draught rivers, Edgy white people, Editing External factors, Finding the music, Hollywood stealing the fame, Learning to canoe, Limited audience, Race being a sensitive issue, Raising money, Rapid not flowing, Shooting difficulties, Structuring the multi stakeholder relationship of broadcasting, Swimming difficulties, Too messagy, White people won't watch

Characters (BTR):

Character development, Dragging down, Fictional character, Inspiration from reality, Racist stereotype, Real people participating, Reflecting reality

Collaboration challenges (BTR):

Actors being busy, Careful approach, Conflict, Demanding, Depiction of brand, Detail-orientedness, Deviation from real life, Different objectives, Difficult relationship, Difficulty of true story, Disagreements, Dramatic elements, Education-Authenticity, Feeling comfortable, Finding balance, Industry standards, Life put on screen, Message-Creativity,

National broadcaster, Non-natural dialogues, Not participating in meetings, Pressuring, Product placement, Pushing for drama, Pushing for message, Rejection, Religious issues, Selfish interests, Signing release forms, Staying true to the story, Tension, Various considerations, Various goals and values, Veto power

Collaboration positives (BTR):

Actors trying to be authentic, Arrangements, Balancing story and message, Being generous, Being involved, Being passionate, Beneficial interactions, Bonding experience, Commitment, Creative involvement in workshops, Dedication, Drama working for the story, Extensive involvement of real people, Feeling part of the project, Financial benefit, Getting to know each other, Giving input, Giving time, Good relationship, Hardworking cast, Helpfulness, Inclusion of the real people, Incredible experience, Informing the real people, Initial agreements, Initiating party, Interest, Interviews with real people, Involving real people, Joint goal, Keeping the spirit of the true story, Making an effort, Meeting, Meetings, New aspects, No issues, Not being pushovers, Openness, Organizing special screening, Participation, Positive environment, PowerPoint presentation, Real people divorced from character, Real people-Actors, Reassurance, Recognition of talent, Seeing the potential, Shooting, Soundtrack suggestions, Spending time, Synergy with sponsors, Taking time to communicate, Team effort, Tight schedule, Tribute shot, Trust in one another, Trusting movie makers, Trusting the process, Trying, Unnecessary/Voluntary participation

Collaboration process (BTR):

Actor-editor-director, Control, Director-Organisation, Dynamic complex, Employer-employed relationship, Gospel choir, Limited voice, Lot of interplay, Magical moment, Not being difficult, One cannot succeed alone, Organisation-Churches, Organisation-School, Partnerships, Paying money for story, Post-processes, Producer-workshops, Real people-Creatives, Reflections on scripts, Real people-Organisation, Script checking, Script writing, Writing a one pager, Writing to a band, Reassurance, Partners-Organisation

Design factors (BTR):

Allowing conversations to emerge, Dependence on money, Ensuring quality, Not enough time, Popularity of films, Raising money being lengthy, True story metaphors, Attention to

detail, Authentic location, Campaign, Cinematic production, Changing the genre, Commercial release, Communicating with real people, Embedding real prejudices, Ensuring quality, Feel-good moments, Financial restrictions, Focus group results, Full feature film, Future workshops, Having enough time, Having money, Induce fruitful discussions, Limiting factors, Living room for interpretation, Loosely basing it on real story, Luck, Lucky timing, Non-spoon-feeding dialogues, Not being Hollywood, Popularity of films, Post-process planning, Raising money, Relying on actors, Small marketing budget, South African issues, Specific messages, Story coming to them, Time constraints, Time-consuming, True story, Unpopularity of sports films, Writing a film on racism

Design processes (BTR):

4 years process, Academic research, Being costly, Campaign, Campaign academy, Canoeing training, Casting, Checking on scripts, Consultation, Contracting, Designing messages, Detail-orientedness, Developing campaign, Directorial heart, Effect of script, Entertaining perspective, Establishing partnerships, Extending knowledge, Finding problems to communicate, Finding solutions to communicate, Finding the DOP, Focus groups, Focus group exercise, Happening quickly, Helping, Hindering factor, Information to emotion, Integrating messages in the story, Interviews with real people, Learning about canoeing, Learning from people, Legal processes, Meeting with funders, Ongoing, Packaging discussion booklets, Participation, Passion, Power relations, Pretesting, Previews, Raising money, Reality inspired storyline/dialogue, Relying on money, Relying on true locality, Research, Research (academic, business, church, youth), Running organisation, Searching for messages, Script reading, Script writing, Shaping up real story for cinema, Social messages (race), Story approach, Story as entertainment, Story-sharing campaign, Subtitling, Unintended messages, Workshops, Meetings with funders, Raising money

Design roles (BTR):

Advertising agencies, Advisor, Body double, Broadcaster, Cable company, Catalyst, Church mobilization, Commercial sponsors, Controlling the message, Creatives, Day-to-day work, Dealing with cash flow, Editor, Education department, Facilitating conversations, Facilitator, Financial and legal tasks, Freelancers, Funders, Funding companies, Gospel choir, Hiding messages, Leadership department, Line producer, Music band, Producer, Production

company, Real people, Reconciliation, Script writer, Script analysis, Small team, Social and cultural department, Writer, Film promotion, Leading role, National broadcaster

Dramatic elements (BTR):

Criminality, Authenticity, Backstory, Building emotional states for characters, Compexifying characters, Deepen the characters, Deviation from reality, Dramatic journey, Emotional acting, Emotional scene, Emotions, Engaging, Enhancing character drama, Exeggeration, Grief, Hollywoodification, Information to emotion, Irrelevant dramatic elements, Message internalized with Character, Moving moment, Music, Non-true elements, Showcasing real people, Stiring the emotions, Supporting the story, Touching the heart, True story, Two stories coming together

Entertainment-education (BTR):

Accuracy, Actors getting to know eachother, Addressing misunderstandings, Adjusting storylines, Authenticity, Campaign, Cinematography, Conferences, Content before script, Creatives impact on society, Cultural aspects, Cultural traditions, Dealing with difficult topics, Different background of actors, Drama for messages, Easing conflicts, Easy to go wrong, Emotions being powerful, Engagement material, Experimental learning, Experimental learning exercises, Film plus interaction, Films being too long for workshops, Following up the movie, Hidden messages, Hiding messages in the story, Incorporating research, Inspire change, Inspired by life, Interrelated concept, Long-term process, Meaningful project, Miracle, Motivate to do better, Movies having macro reach, Multi stakeholder partnerships, No drama equaling no message, Not being offensive, Not doing harm, Personal narrative, Popularity, Power of media, Power of narrative, Power of stories, Prework, Quality of presenting educational content, Real life experiences, Real story is powerful, Reflecting reality, Representative scenes, Research process, Simplicity of story, Social messages being dramatic, Soundtrack is a story, Sound bites, Story capturing materials (videos, excerpts, training packages, PowerPoints, discussion guides), Story comming first, Story generating metaphores, Story is the message!, Story tells, Story-message, Strategic approach, Touching upon economic reality, Training workshops, Unscripted acting, Video material in workshops

Goals (BTR):

Alumni system, Being picked up internationally, Building partnerships, Committing audiences, Mandatory school viewings

Lessons learned (BTR):

Applying professional consultants, Bringing in money, Documenting, Factors in long-term engagement Importance of commitment, Importance of multi stakeholder work, Listening, Media people-social sector people, More preparation, Movies having a unique reach, Not do it again, Partnerships, Patience, Starting earlier, Take time, Working in community

Metaphors (BTR):

Analogy for South Africa, Authenticity, Becoming one person, Canoeing as an escape, Crashing the boat, not succeeding, Differences colliding, Doable long process, From shooting location, Going in the right direction, Life-Dusi, Life-sport, Paddling together, Races working together, River as an obstacle, River-Process, Running from cops - Escaping crime, Shooting inspired metaphors, Steer the country forward, Steering, Superiority in boat, Teamwork, Travelling in a boat together.

Personal importance (BTR):

Amazing experience, Audience reactions, Beautiful moment, Collaboration, Favourite scene, Friendships made, Large part of one's life, Magical, Meaningful, Media cultivation, Moments to live for, Reflecting on real-life partnerships, Talking about it for days, Writing a book

Post processes (BTR):

Authentic engagement, Advertising agency workshops, Anxiety, Banking association showing, Broadcasting company, Campus movie viewings, Church mobilization, Connecting, Dealing with people, Establishing relationships, Ex-offenders workshops, festivals, Getting to know one another, Getting to know origins, Involvement of real people, Leadership retreat, Meeting with leaders, Motivational talks, National television, Ongoing process, Origin is secondary, Real problem-solving, Relating story to life, School resources, School showings, Showing campaigns, Showings, Showings with the real people, Spreading conversations, Spreading internationally, Story sharing, Story sharing being a messy process, Too powerful story, TV, Town hall movie viewings, Viewing sessions, Workplace workshops, Workshops

Results and Impacts (BTR):

Achieved objectives, Becoming an advocate, Being a good movie, Being more conscious, Benefitting the underprivileged, Best film, Cinematography awards, Character identification, Cheering audience, Commercial success measurement, Company viewings, Complicated success measurement, Considerable effect, Debate, Deeply emotional, Discussions, Edutainment tool, Effect of true story, Effect on director, Emotional crying, Enjoyment, Entertainment success, Healing, Identification, Impact on real people, Induced conversations, Inspiration, International impact, Lack of resources to measure, Life transforming, Macro reach, Measuring social change, Message internalized with Character, Moving, National campaign, Not living up to expectations, Not making money, Not picking up on it, Not taking people for granted, Ongoing effect, Ongoing measurement, People loving it, People's lives, Positive feedback, Positive impact on life, Powerful effect, Press, Realizing social inequalities, Recognition of the underprivileged, Religious coexistence, People engaged, School viewings, Self-fulfilling, Sharing, Sitting together, Social impact, Social media, Social success measurement, Standing ovations, Steering emotions, Story sharing, Struck a chord, Success measurement, Tapping in the story, Temporary change, Thesis writing, Unaging story, Unintended messages, Visible change

Social message (BTR):

Moving past differences, Addressing arrogance towards minority, Addressing divides (social, economic), Addressing economic disparity, Addressing historical issues, Addressing linguistic prejudices, Also for the 'dominant', Ask listen and tell, Authenticity, Background sharing, Backing the younger, Beating origin, Being supportive, Building bridges, Building trust, Coaching/Mentoring, Commitment, Communicating with one another, Community, Compromise, Country specific, Crime vs Achievement, Crossover between different people, Diversity, Effort, Empathy, Encouragement, Expect to be surprised, Experience vs Inexperience, Father-son relationship, Feeling like they are in the movie, Fighting prejudices, Friendship, Helping to be better, Honesty, Hope, How one should live, Interracial understanding, Interrelated learning experience, Joint goal, Journey, Knowing one another, Language barriers, Language means connection, Learning from each other, Levelling with one another, Linguistic openness, Managing relationships, Motivational movie, No judging, Not a sacrifice, Not giving up, Open prejudiced relationships, Origin does not matter, Partnership,

Passing on the baton, Persistence, Privilege vs Disadvantage, Race-related messages, Racial conflicts, Racial difference, Racial equality, Recognise others' issues, Recognition of contribution, Reconciliation, Relevant issue, Religious coexistence, Self-fulfillment, Social cohesion, Social inclusion, Spending time with minority, Story sharing, Succeeding, Support, Swallowing pride, Taking things for granted, Taking time, Teamwork, Tell your story, Thinking about the other, Trust, Two different worlds, Understanding one another

Appendix 4: Selective coding of the interviews

Themes:

1. Design Roles and Processes
 - Main code groups: Design roles (BTR), Design processes (BTR), Challenges (BTR)
2. Utilizing Entertainment-Education Strategy to Challenge Racial Prejudice: Designing and Delivering Effective Social Messages
 - Main code groups: Entertainment-education (BTR), Social message (BTR), Design factors (BTR), Audiences (BTR), Post processes (BTR), Results and Impacts (BTR), Goals (BTR)
3. Collaboration Challenges and Facilitating Factors
 - Main code groups: Collaboration process (BTR), Collaboration challenges (BTR), Collaboration positives (BTR), Lessons learned (BTR)
4. Incorporation of True Story and Dramatic Elements: The Importance of Authenticity
 - Main code groups: Characters (BTR), Dramatic elements (BTR), Acting (BTR), Personal importance (BTR), Metaphors (BTR)