Identity Construct Dialectics:
Text, Meta-Text and Discourse Construction in Autoethnographic Film as Post-Modern Genre

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ABSTRACT

This paper contextualizes autoethnographic film in its appropriation of an epistemics of subjectivity. This is analyzed in terms of autoethnographic film's methodological appropriation in systematic fourfold discourse construction relational to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Such discourse is constituted through autoethnographer-as-filmmaker participant-observer praxis of a "self-as-Other" identity-construct, the positionality and performativity of which enacts a progressive destabilization, deconstruction, reconstruction and self-actualization structural modeling of subjectivity epistemics through which to meta-textually engage the spectator. Autoethnographic film's split from ethnographic film is correspondingly examined in deference to the central question of the representation of self-as-Other interpretivist phenomenology through montagist cinematic aesthetics which locate such praxis within a mimetic social reality the delimiters of which inform identity construct formation as context-specific variables. Examples are given from selected key ethnographic and autoethnographic film texts chronicling the still-evolving progression of ethnographic film into autoethnographic film as a specifically post-modern genre.

KEYWORDS: autoethnographic film, hierarchy of needs, "self-as-Other", interpretivist phenomenology, subjectivity

INTRODUCTION

"Autoethnography" was first coined as an oppositional term for a radical departure from traditional ethnography: "If ethnographic texts are a means by which Europeans represent to themselves their (usually subjugated) others, autoethnographic texts are those the others construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations" (Pratt, 1992. p.7). Autoethnography hence "seeks to utilize creative processes in order to connect personal experiences with those of a larger culture (by) reflect(ing) upon specific personal moments and represent(ing) them using creative techniques... to essentially communicate expressions of self and cultural phenomenon" (Kelly, 2016). As such, Kelly's (2016) definition pre-supposes the mutual inter-dependence between autoethnography and autobiography proposed by the frequent description of autoethnography as "a style of autobiographical writing and qualitative research that explores an individual's unique life experiences in relationship to social and cultural institutions" (as cited by Custer, 2014, p. 1).

Custer (2014) defines autoethnography as a "qualitative, transformative research method because it changes time, requires vulnerability, fosters empathy, embodies creativity and innovation, eliminates boundaries, honors subjectivity, and provokes therapeutic benefits" (p.1). As a qualitative method, it "employs a variety of methods (personal narratives, experiences and opinions) which imply a humanistic stance in which phenomena under investigation are examined through the eyes and experiences of individual participants... (wherein) personal narratives, experiences and opinions are valuable data which provide researchers with tools to find those tentative answers they are looking for" (Mendez, 2013). As such, these recent directions in autoethnographic theory expand upon

Hayano's 1979 view that "as anthropologists moved out of the colonial era of ethnography, they would come more and more to study the social worlds and subcultures of which they were a part (such that) in contrast to the detached-outsider characteristic of colonial anthropologists, contemporary anthropologists would frequently be full members of the cultures they studied" (Anderson, 2006).

Custer's (2014) article on his own research project, however, as a piece of self-reporting, falls into the quagmire of subjectivity / objectivity dialectics that inherently problematizes autoethnographic research methodologies in comparison to those of parent discipline ethnography, competing in an Academia that values scientific objectivity and arguably disavows human subjectivity in favoring the quantitative over the qualitative (Delamont, 2007). Hence, postmodernism's challenge to ethnography was to its very claim to validity and reliability in deference to such objectivity, facilitating a "crisis of confidence" which "introduced new and abundant opportunities to reform social science and reconceive the objectives and forms of social science inquiry as (s)cholars became increasingly troubled by social science's ontological, epistemological, and axiological limitations" (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). In particular, following Rorty and Kuhn, these scholars began "illustrating how the 'facts' and 'truths' scientists 'found' were inextricably tied to the vocabularies and paradigms the scientists used to represent them" (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011).

Correspondingly, these scholars also:

> recognized the impossibility of and lack of desire for master, universal narratives; they understood new relationships between authors, audiences, and texts and they realized that stories were complex, constitutive, meaningful phenomena that taught morals and ethics, introduced unique ways of thinking and feeling, and helped people make sense of themselves and others. Furthermore, there was an increasing need to resist colonialist, sterile research impulses of authoritatively entering a culture, exploiting cultural members, and then recklessly leaving to write about the culture for monetary and/or professional gain, while disregarding relational ties to cultural members. ((Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011)

In the emerging postmodern view, ethnography's much-vaunted "objectivity" was a facsimile construct of post-industrial and post-colonial malaise, authentic in iconographic photo-realist verisimilitude but wholly unreliable and thus invalid in its textual disavowal of the consequences of participant-observation research practice on the individualized subjectivity of the participant/observer him/herself. Such was recognized by Heider (1976) who asserted that "it is inconceivable that an ethnographic film could be made in such a way that it did not distort or alter or select its images of reality in a myriad of ways" in effect thus rendering moot any question of film's objectivity in deference to the subjectivity of the ethnographer-as-filmmaker (as cited by Falzone, 2004). Consequently, reflexivity became a distinguishing qualifier of ethnographic film as such "concretely implies that the most serious source of misunderstanding the concepts of alien cultures is the inadequate mastery of the conceptual apparatus of our own society" (Scholte, 1983 as cited by DeGroof, 2013, p. 109). This conception of culturally-informed social reality, of a triumvirate of research subject, researcher and spectator, correspondingly made of reflexivity a subjectivity/objectivity dialectics that led to a transformational crisis in ethnographic film which developed into specifically autoethnographic film.

TRANSFORMATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHIC FILM & THE CRISIS OF REPRESENTATION

Traditional ethnographic film was based on observational cinema (McDougall as cited in Suhr & Willerslev, 2012, p. 283). That is, appropriating a realist style based in mimesis (Stam & Taylor as cited in Suhr & Willerslev, 2012, p. 283). Critiques of early ethnographic films - from Robert Flaherty's _Nanook of the North_ (1922) to Robert Gardner's _Dead Birds_ (1963) - centered on the inherent limitation of film as, while photo-realist, inherently framed the viewed culture through a positional relationship to the camera (and thus the subjective decision-making of the filmmaker-as-cameraperson) such that "the eternal authorial filter of authorship is always present, through both composition of shots, and the subsequent editing of shots to form a comprehensible narrative" (Falzone, 2004, p. 328). Ethnographic film, however, was not simple empiricism or anthropological film-making. Instead, it served as an aesthetic process to self-consciously merge the ethnographic filmmaker as perceiving body relationally with the corporeal body perceived on screen such that "the mimetic camera is here used as 'a physical extension' of the cameraperson's body... thus allowing viewers intimate access to the film-maker's sensuous engagement with the social life portrayed" (Suhr & Willerslev, 2012, p. 284). This was exemplified in the French New Wave cinema verite ethnographic film practitioner Jean Rouch's films wherein a humanist ideal proposed that cultural difference was assuaged by a concept of "familiarity";

TOP: IMAGE 1.1 Observationally representing the cultural "Other" with anthropological photo-realism from the point of view of a reflexive "Self-"in *Reassemblage* (1982: d. Trinh T. Minh-ha).

according to MacDougall (1998), a "sense of how, despite cultural differences, we are ultimately all subject to the same plane of embodied spatial and temporal existence" (Suhr & Willerslev, 2012, p. 284). Such a theory of mimesis foregrounded an incipient autoethnographic emphasis on film-making as both practice and product (Mekas, 1972)

In ethnographic film, the break with traditional forms of mimetic representation was signaled by Trinh T. Minh-Ha's _Reassemblage_ (1982) in which the voice-over commentary is personalized and does not directly speak "about" the images represented, resisting the impetus to qualify the human research subjects as "Other" in relation to an objective set of culturally analytic criteria and foregrounding the film-maker's conscious state of being as participant-observer as one of detached but affective immersion rather than as orchestrator of a master narrative (Basu, 2008). For Suhr & Willerslev (2012), _Resassemblage_ "directs the attention of viewers toward their own acts of seeing and the ways in which ethnographic films conventionally establish their subjects (as) the invisible that is made visible in Minh-ha's deconstruction is effectively ourselves as ethnographic film viewers and the politics of looking at others" (p. 285). With _Reassemblage_, meta-textual self-reflexivity transformed ethnographic film away from the scientific rigors of cultural observance and to a more interpretivist analysis of the act in viewing and film-making praxis of constructing a discourse of the cultural Other in relational positioning to a representation

of the self borne of spectator identification with the ethnographer as allied to the camera and thus as controlling point of view.

Basu (2008) chronicles the subsequent movement in ethnographic film away from the culturally expository or analytical interpretivist commentary to incorporate images assembled in montage as discourse constructed to generate meaning subjective to individual viewer experience in relation to their positioning vis-a-vis the filmmaker whose goal is immersion. a filmic appropriation of ethnographic written texts' "thick description", as expressed by Kim Longinotto: "What I am trying to do is plunge you straight in, so that there's nothing to save you from the experience" (p. 100). Correspondent to the emergence of subjectivity dialectics affecting a relational crisis in spectator positioning in relation to the film text, was the deliberate deployment of montage techniques to subjectivize the iconographic representation of interpretivist phenomenology (Suhr & Willerslev, 2012). However, in that, the photo-realist convention of ethnographic film necessitated caution over unduly aestheticizing the film-maker's relational positioning - and thus that of the spectator - to the social reality depicted in the film. The observational style of ethnographic film was thus transformed in praxis by a mounting subjectivity epistemics that demanded acknowledgment of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker's role in making the film and thus in representing social reality and constructing the discourse of self and Other

inscribed in it. Autoethnographer-as-filmmaker participant-observation praxis was the root of discourse construction, of the engagement of self with Other to enact, in praxis, a transformational self-as-Other identity construct.

This quality of experientialism as representational interpretivist phenomenology was seized upon by specifically autoethnographic film as evidencing an epistemic of subjectivity, wherein the film's aesthetic choices construct a discourse founded on subjectivity/objectivity dialectics, inherently destabilizing the viewer from any identification with a camera gaze at an objectified Other offered for scrutiny and forcing them into meta-cognitive engagement with their position vis-a-vis the filmmaker and the social reality of the filmed human subjects. So too, Minh-Ha's narration in *Reassemblage* states, self-consciously, that she is not talking "about", but "nearby", dislocating the spectator from their traditionally omniscient narrator position and calling attention to the construction of social realities in ethnographic film. In this way, a representational crisis infiltrated ethnographic film in the inclusion of experiential data interrogating the very representation of the social reality framing the Other under examination. Such data centered on the ethnographer-as-filmmaker's existential quality of being in relational standing to the diegetic content: to their self and the cinematic means of its construction as a filter for positional spectatorship. Inherent in this was a new, and qualifying, research question: what is the methodological affect of the participant-observation research process on ethnographer-as-filmmaker praxis such as was represented in montage as interpretivist phenomenology?

Suhr & Willerslev (2012) thus posited a new "conceptual framework through which to expand our understanding of how montage and other disruptive devices can and must be used to break the mimetic dogma of the dehumanized camera, thus enabling an enhanced, humanist perception of the social realities depicted in ethnographic films: (h)owever—and this is a key point—using film to reveal the invisible aspects of social life depends crucially on maintaining a tension between a strong sense of reality and its occasional, and therefore only then effective, disruption through montage" (p. 283). Facilitating spectator dislocation to prompt awareness of the filmic construction of social reality in this way directs attention to the person (and persona) of the specifically now autoethnographic filmmaker. Where in conventional ethnographic film this is acknowledged only in reference to the final product, the meta-textual self-referentiality inherent in montage as a dislocating and destabilizing trope pushed the ethnographic towards the autoethnographic and the function of

montage in self-reporting: i.e of transformative meta-cognitive interpretivist phenomenology as self-as-Other discourse construction.

Consequently, what transformed ethnography was acknowledgment of its systematic obliteration of praxis in favor of product and hence the refusal to acknowledge the epistemically transformative paradigm shift in autoethnographer identity construct as self-as-Other required to meta-cognitively deconstruct an otherwise de facto binary oppositional dualism between Self and Other, in response to post-colonialist critiques of anthropological and early ethnographic film. Hence, particularly evocative autoethnographers "bypass the representational problem by invoking an epistemology of emotion, moving the reader to feel the feelings of the other" (Denzin, 1997 as cited by Anderson, 2006). In so doing, the invocation became the representation of the interpretivist phenomenology of self-as-Other identity construct formation as the inherently transformational consequence of participant-observation praxis. Indeed, in postmodernism's anti-ethnographic campaign - such as it was Academically - subjectivity dialectics are not only of equivalent importance but also offer a radically alternative epistemic reconfiguration of traditional ethnography into what was defiantly termed "autoethnography" as an oppositional research discipline. Correspondingly, Ellis, Adams & Bochner (2011) define auto-ethnography in the manner in which it utilized and referred to in this paper, as:

> an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)… This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act … A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and (create) autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product. (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011).

As to a core ideological platform from which to correspondingly derive and delineate a justifiable, valid and reliable qualitative research design methodology specific to autoethnography in contra-distinction from its parent Academic discipline ethnography, Custer defers to Ellis' (2013) hybrid theory fusion of epistemic integrity with subjectively interpretivist phenomenology:

> Autoethnography is not simply a way of knowing about the world; it has become a way of being in the world, one that requires living consciously, emotionally, reflexively. It asks that we not only examine our lives but also consider how and why

we think, act, and feel as we do. Autoethnography requires that we observe ourselves observing, that we interrogate what we think and believe, and that we challenge our own assumptions, asking over and over if we have penetrated as many layers of our own defenses, fears, and insecurities as our project requires. It asks that we rethink and revise our lives, making conscious decisions about who and how we want to be... (as cited in Custer, 2014, p. 1)

From this, the core ideological platform of subjectivity epistemics specifically characterizes autoethnography in defiance of ethnography's objectivity epistemics, and thus also of the basis of which it claimed validity as a reliable form of scientific inquiry, while not eliminating it but transforming it. It is possible to extrapolate from this, as does Anderson (2006) a fivefold analytical autoethnography characterized by: "(1) complete member researcher (CMR) status, (2) analytic reflexivity, (3) narrative visibility of the researcher's self, (4) dialogue with informants beyond the self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis" (Anderson, 2006). Montage as a means of discourse construction became thus the means of representing the inter-relationship between these criteria: that is, of their experiential, perceptual and cognitive/meta-cognitive validation.

Autoethnographic film methodology - such that attempts analysis beyond data collection, recording and interpretivist representation - thus re-conceptualizes subjectivity epistemics in meta-textual engagement with parent ethnography's definitively qualitative research design methodological tenet: that of participant-observation research data collection during a fieldwork based research process. Signaling the inclusion of subjectivity dialectics superimposed thus on conventional ethnographic analytical criteria, Spry (2001) thus takes the definition of autoethnography a step further, positioning it as "a self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts:... both a method and a text of diverse interdisciplinary praxes" (Reed-Danahay, 1997, as cited in Spry, p. 710). This is centered on the insider perspective of the researcher, as opposed to the outsider perspective of anthropology: "the ethnographic researcher differs from the rest of those in the group or subculture under study since she or he is also a member and a participant in the social science community" (Anderson, 2006). Such a meta-textual centrality on participant-observer praxis consequently, through engagement with the text's own montaging of autoethnographer identity construction as a self-as-Other, methodologically determines discourse construction of the autoethnographic film text.

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN IMPLICATIONS FOR AUTOETH-

NOGRAPHIC FILMMAKER PERFORMATIVITY

These dialectics of Self and Other thus have methodological design implications for the data collection and analysis stages of the research process: "In the autoethnographic research method, researchers analyse their own subjectivity and life experiences, and treat the self as 'other' while calling attention to issues of power, (in the aestheticized (textual) juncture of which) the researcher and the researched, the dominant and the subordinate, individual experience and socio-cultural structures can be (meta-textually) examined" (Cayir, 2017). Aestheticizing subjectivity as representative interpretivist phenomenology thus necessarily centralizes autoethnographer-as-researcher performativity of this self-as-Other identity construct in formative praxis. Such is twofold, for "(u)nlike their peers in the research setting(s), autoethnographers must orient (at least for significant periods of time) to documenting and analyzing action as well as to purposively engaging in it" (Anderson, 2006). As per participant-observation, fieldwork thus includes recording of events and conversations outside of the self, making the research process multi-layered and even "schizophrenic" (Adler & Adler as cited by Anderson, 2006).

So too, Spry (2001) eventually asserted that:

> Autoethnographic performance can provide a space for the emancipation of the voice and body from homogenizing knowledge production and academic discourse structures, thereby articulating the intersections of peoples and culture through the inner sanctions of the always migratory identity. Reality is always and already a social construction. Autobiographical performance makes us acutely conscious of how we I-witness our own reality constructions. Interpreting culture through the self-reflections and cultural refractions of identity is a defining feature of autoethnographic performance. (Spry, 2001, p. 727)

It is ultimately, thus, the performativity of autoethnography that characteristically distinguishes its textual representation: an epistemics of subjectivity rather than the objectivity that originated ethnography as a "scientific" research discipline. Subjectivity dialectics - and the ongoing problematic of its simultaneous aestheticized rendering and methodological deconstruction in especially multimedia representations of interpretivist phenomenology - thus distinguish autoethnographic texts as a postmodern genre inherently and simultaneously radical in a fourfold process of meta-textual deconstruction of self-Other dualism: epistemic subversion, methodological reconceptualization, aestheticized reconstruction of individual subjectivity and self-actualization as a self-as-Other identity construct. This is the transformation in autoethnographer self-identity construct affected by praxis, and thus an invaluable source of research data. At issue, is its cinematic representation in the final film.

Academically, as maintaining partial (if allusive) ethnography, "autoethnography is dismissed for social scientific standards as being insufficiently rigorous, theoretical, and analytical, and too aesthetic, emotional, and therapeutic (while) autoethnographers are criticized for doing too little fieldwork, for observing too few cultural members, for not spending enough time with (different) others" (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). Cumulatively thus, "in using personal experience, autoethnographers are thought to not only use supposedly biased data, but are also navel-gazers, self-absorbed narcissists who don't fulfill scholarly obligations of hypothesizing, analyzing, and theorizing" (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). Hence, "(a)autoethnographers are viewed as catering to the sociological, scientific imagination and trying to achieve legitimacy as scientists (while) critics say that autoethnographers disregard the literary, artistic imagination and the need to be talented artists (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). However, autoethnographers counter that:

> These criticisms erroneously position art and science at odds with each other, a condition that autoethnography seeks to correct. Autoethnography, as method, attempts to disrupt the binary of science and art. Autoethnographers believe research can be rigorous, theoretical, and analytical and emotional, therapeutic, and inclusive of personal and social phenomena. Autoethnographers also value the need to write and represent research in evocative, aesthetic ways One can write in aesthetically compelling ways without citing fiction or being educated as a literary or performance scholar. The questions most important to autoethnographers are: who reads our work, how are they affected by it, and how does it keep a conversation going? Furthermore, in a world of (methodological) difference, autoethnographers find it futile to debate whether autoethnography is a valid research process or product. Unless we agree on a goal, we cannot agree on the terms by which we can judge how to achieve it. Simply put, autoethnographers take a different point of view toward the subject matter of social science... Autoethnographers view research and writing as socially-just acts; rather than a preoccupation with accuracy, the goal is to produce analytical, accessible texts that change us and the world we live in. (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011)

The meta-cognitive self-reflexivity of Custer (2014) so too posits the individual subjectivity of the autoethnographer as the ultimate research topic, focusing

on instances of formative and summative sexual identity: homosexual male in the case of Custer (2014). In the process of writing his written textual research report, Custer (2014) presciently cites Raab (2013) that "because many Autoethnographic studies relate to painful experiences, the researcher may encounter difficult moments during the course of the research and writing" (p. 2). Reflecting on his own writing experience, Custer (2014) thus concludes:

> Autoethnography can radically alter an individual's perception of the past, inform their present, and reshape their future if they are aware and open to the transformative effects. Much of the process of autoethnography revolves around the idea of time and space. Time, as a linear procession of past, present and future increments of experience, undergoes a metamorphosis. It becomes a dance without boundaries. Space includes all of the elements that an individual utilizes to construct their identity. Those elements can be corporeal objects (e.g. their body, a house, a loved one, etc.) or non-corporeal manifestations (e.g. beliefs, personality traits, ideas, etc.) (p.2)

Tellingly, Custer (2014) relates his own experience of autoethnographic research and writing in deference to Rowe's association of the "space-time dimensions of movement" with meta-cognitive understanding as a "healing process" (as cited in Custer, 2014, p. 2). This risks reducing autoethnographic research to simply therapeutic writing alone and exposes what is criticized as being the one major shortcoming of autoethnographic research: the elevation of subjectivity threatens the reliable generalizability and thus validity of any research findings and conclusions beyond the individual autoethnographer-as-researcher him/herself. This too, is a frequent dismissive of autoethnography as legitimate "research". However, the autoethnographer as researcher is a participant-observer in the psycho-social and psycho-sexual dialectics of culturally informed identity-construction in which he/she is subject to the same stimuli as any peer-participant human research subjects occasioned during fieldwork. Their experience is authentically immersive: only in that way can autoethnography fulfill its promise as "an intriguing and promising qualitative method that offers a way of giving voice to personal experience for the purpose of extending sociological understanding" (Wall, 2008, p. 38).

The promise of autoethnography is thus what Laslett held was the intersection of the personal and the societal as a new contributive source to social science wherein "(p)ersonal narratives "can address several key theoretical debates in contemporary sociology: macro and micro linkages; structure, agency and their intersection; [and] social reproduction and social change" (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 392). Wall (2008) hence describes the predicament facing autoethnographic inquiry thusly: "Autoethnography might be more of a philosophy than a well-defined method... so there remains considerable creative latitude in the production of an autoethnographic text" (p. 39). Hence, as a hybrid of philosophy and psychology, the epistemic core that validates autoethnographic film as a postmodern genre is the conception of being in pinnacle higher-consciousness state of the human condition as pure self-conscious subjective knowledge of existing in relation to an "objective" reality which is socially constructed. The autoethnographic text singularly concerns a unique, malleable identity construct - the "I" of the autoethnographer in particular, or the "eye" of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker's point of view in camera usage - as the interpretivist phenomenological summation of an individual human being's innate set of criterion-based, cognitive, meta-cognitive, perceptual, experiential and psychological need-based drives: the cumulative rendering, through aestheticized montage and other tropes, of what Maslow (1954) first theorized as "self-actualization", specifically of self-as-Other actualization.

THE REPRESENTATIONAL INTERPRETIVIST PHENOMENOLOGY OF SELF-AS-OTHER ACTUALIZATION

The process of self-actualization is aestheticized in the autoethnographic texts as "self-fashioning" (Clifford, as cited by Russell, 1992) in which the autoethnographer represents him/herself in the dialectics of present or absent signification, thus "inscribing a doubleness within the autoethnographic text" (Russell, 1992). Autoethnographic films and videotexts - for instance - hence portray "other selves as culturally constituted, (and) also fashion an identity authorized to represent, to interpret, even to believe – but always with some irony – the truths of discrepant worlds" (Russell, 1999). The autoethnographer exists in his/her own text as a meta-textual identity construct - "I am other" if you will - systematically destabilized, subverted, reconstituted and self-actualized in the discursive construction of the montaged text. The autoethnographer's individual identity - signified by the first person "I" in written texts, by camera point of view or direct photo-realistic inclusion or by voice-over presence in film texts - is simultaneously the signature of authorial presence and its meta-textual signification of a constructed self-as-other persona, manifest in aestheticized ren-

TOP: IMAGE 1.2 Behavioral observation in actual locations frame the human research subject in darkness in *The Good Woman of Bangkok* **(1992: d. Dennis O' Rourke).**

dering of interpretivist phenomenology of self-as-Other identity construct meta-cognition.

This, of course, relates to what Nichols asserted: "that what films have to say about the reducing human condition or about the pressing issues of the day can never be separated from how they say it and how this saying moves and affects us... (thus) (w)hen an audience views a documentary, (ethnographic film or autoethnographic film) they are engaging with an interpretation of the world that is mediated by the filmmakers own ideologies and motivations (Heubner, 2016). The dominant motif in the autoethnographic text therefore is thus the aestheticized media-based representation of the interpretivist phenomenology of "self-representation wherein any and all subjects are able to enter discourse in textual form, (whereupon) the distinctions between textual authority and (psychological) reality begin to break down" (Russell, 1999). For McDougall thus, "film-as text notes an important departure from the strictly observational cinema theories and recognizes the interplay of primary elements involved in film (such that discourse construction occurs 'in conceptual space somewhere within a triangle formed by the subject, filmmaker, and audience and represents an encounter of all three'" (McDougall as cited by Stern, 2011).

In so doing, the aestheticized representation of meta-cognitive phenomenological subjectivity in presence/absence signification of the autoethnographer being also an individual "creator" of an aestheticized simula-

crum of their own psycho-social (and psycho-sexual) existence is manifest as a meta-textual engagement with a transformative (and potentially even transgressive) psychodrama of self-actualization (Spry, 2001). In this is an appropriation of frisson as a distancing, alienating, Brechtian tool, essayed on screen most self-reflexively by Dennis O'Rourke in *The Good Woman of Bangkok* (1992) (Martin, 1994). Writing specific to film and videotext, Russell (1999) therefore asserts:

> The oxymoronic label "autoethnography" announces a total breakdown of the colonialist precepts of ethnography, and indeed the critical enthusiasm for its various forms situates it as a kind of ideal form of antidocumentary. Diary film-making, autobiographical film-making, and personal videos can all be subsumed within what Michael Renov has described as the "essayistic" impulse in recent film and video. The essay is a useful category because it incorporates the "I" of the writer into a commentary on the world that makes no grand scientific or totalizing claims but is uncertain, tentative and speculative. (Russell, 1999)

This distancing from representational form, from mimesis, as mentioned earlier began with *Reassemblage* in Trinh Minh-ha's "use of montage in the service of deconstruction", renders visible the "supposedly concealed power relations, inherent in the objectifying gaze of ethnographic filmmaking... but only at the expense of dissolving the social world portrayed into obscure haze" (Suhr & Will-

erslev, 2012, p. 291). To resolve the resultant self and Other confusion inherent in this haze, autoethnographic film, having destabilized it via positionality, then seeks to reconceptualize it in relation to a self-as-Other identity construct in reactive formation to the cultural dislocation and audience destabilization. MacDougall proposed of this methodological praxis and structuring pattern of autoethnographic film that it represented an "autonomy of being" wherein "a good film reflects the interplay of meaning and being, and its meanings take into account the autonomy of being" (Suhr & Willerslev, 2012, p. 291).

Autoethnographic filmmakers seized on this conception of being in relation to the emerging discipline's epistemic of subjectivity to assess the acquisition of self-knowledge and the formative processes of psycho-social and psycho-sexual identity construction. The autoethnographer-as-filmmaker was thus equally the subjective self represented on screen - by alliance to the controlling camera - relationally positioned to the on-screen social reality of the Other and the corporeal presence of the filmed human subjects appearing on film and increasingly interacting with the filmmaker him/herself. Discourse construction of self and Other relational positioning of filmmaker and spectator gazes thus sought to represent the interpretivist phenomenology of praxis: meta-textually the methodology of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker rendering of him/herself but also of so doing within a mimetic depiction of the social reality of the initiating socialization process through which the participant-observant researcher is transformed in confronting not just the social reality of an Other, but the social reality into which they themselves have been conditioned.

It is thus the autobiographical essay format which underlies the initiating structure of the autoethnographic text. Thus, by making no traditionally scientific claim, specifically autoethnographic texts comprehensively subvert the conventional ethnographic texts' claim to authenticity as validated in deference to an epistemics of objectivity as this objectivity is strictly codified in its signification in adherence to specific aesthetic tropes - positivism, realism,

IMAGE 1.3 The autoethnographer-as-filmmaker looks to family history and memory in actual objects, evoking initial socialization as source of cultural situating a reflexive "Self"in *The Ties That Bind* (1984: d. Su Friedrich).

and, in film, its aesthetics of "photo-realism" - delineated by Academic theoreticians as authentically more "truthful" representations of trans-cultural or trans-national interpretivist phenomenology. In parallel to the "eye" of the filmmaker represented by the camera gaze (and thus controlling point of view), in the written text autoethnography dialectically engages with these aesthetics of objectivity by inserting the first person "I" of the subjective autoethnographer as researcher / reporter / creator. Autoethnographic inquiry enacts this aestheticiization as the process of discourse construction. The epistemics of objectivity which drive the conceptual unity determining conventional ethnographic texts (especially film) effectively erases the ethnographer-as-creator / filmmaker, obliterating the self altogether as irrelevant, obtrusive and consequently obliterate the process of inquiry from the final product - the research report / text - for to do otherwise would be to validate not an epistemics of objectivity but an epistemics of subjectivity, the moderating affect of praxis.

The postmodern radicalism of autoethnographic texts is thus precisely this inverse correlative epistemics of subjectivity as basis for its validity. Such subjectivity is, furthermore, inherently transformative if not outright traumatic for the autoethnographer in praxis: "(i)t is not an easy task to relate to who we were in the past and understand how that translates into our identity today" (Custer, 2014, p.1). Meta-textual deconstruction of such a self-actualized "identity-construct" as a structural methodological tool of discourse construction is in conceptual unity with its "subjectivity" epistemic integrity. Autoethnographic texts' (especially evident in film texts) distinguishing characteristic is thus their systematic invalidation of objectivity except as the conditional factors of social reality influencing identity construct formation, and simultaneously superimposed validation of subjectivity through aestheticized (increasingly montage-driven) rendering of meta-cognitive interpretivist phenomenology, of the progressive psychological needs-based mechanisms of the autoethnographer-as-researcher/reporter/creator (author or filmmaker) in transformative self-as-Other praxis.

Just as Maslow (1954) postulated the identity-construct is cumulatively self-actualized into a state of "higher-conscious" subjectivity of being in pinnacle form of human condition, auto-ethnography is the means to realize it: "In this sense it becomes essential to trace the coordinates defining this self-inscription, as an auto-reflexive location, a placing of the self" (De Rosa, 2012). Hence, the preponderance of first-person "I" in written texts and of autoethnographer direct camera point-of-view and voice-over in auto-ethnographic film as "intently and unambiguously subjective" (Russell, 1999). The meta-textual "I" in

such as Wall (2008) and Custer (2014) attempt to inscribe in the written autoethnographic text a dialectics which parallel that in auto-ethnographic film - the inscription of the self:

> ...only one of three levels on which a film- or videomaker can inscribe themselves, the other two being at the origin of the gaze, and as body image. The multiple possible permutations of these three "voices" – speaker, seer, and seen – are what generate the richness and diversity of autobiographical film-making. In addition to the discursive possibilities of these three voices is another form of identity, which is that of the avant-garde filmmaker as collagist and editor. This is perhaps the surrealist heritage of the form, the role of juxtaposition, irony, and rétrouvé, through which the film- or videomaker "writes" an identity in temporal structures. By inscribing themselves on the level of "meta-discourse," film and videomakers also identify with their technologies of representation, with a culture of independent film-making, alongside their other discursive identities. (Russell, 1992)

Self, in terms of being, is thus inscribed in the autoethnographic text evocatively and analytically as discourse construct, aestheticized as simulacrum to provoke an emotional/intellectual response in spectator consciousness, which in turn generates meaning for the spectator:

> Our consciousness of our own being is not primarily an image, it is a feeling. But our consciousness of the being, the autonomous existence, of nearly everything else in the world involves vision. We assume that the things we see have the properties of being, but our grasp of this depends upon extending our own feeling of being into our seeing. In the process, something quintessential of what we are becomes generalized in the world. Seeing not only makes us alive to the appearance of things but to being itself. (McDougall, 2006, p.1).

This emotional response is inherently cognitive, the meta-textual nature of autoethnographic film in relation to the diegetically represented person (or persona) of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker extending this into spectator meta-cognition of the film's representational interpretivist construction of autoethnographer-as-filmmaker identity construction. Autoethnographer-as-filmmaker person(a) thus dialectically engages with the destabilized and dislocated spectator identity positioning them in same relation to the social mileau of the Other depicted in the film. In so doing, through constant diegetic engagement and destabilizing disengagement, the spectator is vicariously identified as themselves a participant-observer in

self-as-Other identity construct formation: of immersive praxis.

In representation of same as interpretivist phenomenology, therefore, spectator engagement and identification of self as an individual being in state-of-consciousness awareness of existing in the human condition is displaced in its positionality from being in relation to the objective existence of an external "reality" to identification of self-as-Other as individual being in specifically meta-cognitive state of consciousness in relation to the screen representation of that same external reality, i.e. to a simulacrum, a cinematic media based discursive construct. Destabilization of spectator orientation thus dislocates the spectator self and makes them subject to the social, political, cultural, ideological and sexual factors - such as identified and examined in the film text - as affecting identity construction within the culture or sub-culture examined in the film. Filmic iconography is thus deployed not for diegetic effect or verisimilitude alone but as representational subjectivity epistemics:

> By treating images-in paintings, photographs, and films--as a product of language, or even a language in themselves, we ally them to a concept of thought that neglects many of the ways in which they create our knowledge. It is important to recognize this, not in order to restrict images to non linguistic purposes-this merely subordinates them further to words-but in order to reexamine the relation between

seeing, thinking, and knowing, and the complex nature of thought itself. (McDougall, 2006, p. 2.)

The autoethnographic film text here differs from the ethnographic (and from other film genres, including fictional and nonfictional forms) in its meta-textual self-reflexivity and representational inscription of autoethnographer-as-filmmaker subjectivity dialectics wherein the interpretivist phenomenology of identity construction (as informed by the criteria delineated within the film text) is represented as aestheticized praxis, positioning the spectator in relation to the self-referential presence / absence of the participant-observer in the course of their research. Representation of autoethnographer-as-filmmaker as simultaneously subject and object - of self-as-Other - is essentially a Brechtian alienation trope which breaks the conventional diegesis of conventional cinema, and of anthropological data recording, to facilitate its in-media-res deconstruction and cumulative reconstruction in relation to a praxis-inspired transformative reconstruction of autoethnographer-as-filmmaker identity construct. This culminates in autoethnographer-as-filmmaker self-actualization rendered as aestheticized interpretivist phenomenology borne of participant-observation. The text - as product - is the simulacrum of participant-observation praxis, the discourse construction (through deliberate montage-based aestheticization) of which positions the spectator in direct meta-textual correlation to the au-

IMAGE 1.4 The faux autoethnographer-as-filmmaker confronting the film viewer directly, destabilizing objective distance of the viewer "Self" from the screen "Other" asserts power of the returning gaze in the mock autoethnography of *David Holzman's Diary* (1968: d. Jim McBride).

IMAGE 1.5 Meta-textual layers as the fictionalized film crew film real events as actuality and fictionalized ethnography merge behavioral authenticity and the performativity of "Self" and persona within socio-cultural reality in *Medium Cool* (1969: d. Haskell Wexler).

toethnographer-as-filmmaker self-as-Other identity being constructed (and simultaneously deconstructed).

Russell (1999) thus notes the origins of autoethnographic film as a movement beginning in the domains of LGBT and ethnic cinema, wherein the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker utilizes "their own history as an allegory for a community or culture that cannot be essentialized" (Russell, 1999). Through the use of family histories, political histories emerge as "difficult processes of remembering and struggle" (Russell, 1999). Characteristic of such auto-ethnographic family history films are "(s)pecific, resonant images (which) echo across distances of time and space (as) documentary truth is freely mixed with storytelling and performances" (Russell, 1992). Concerned with "transforming image culture through the production of new voices and new subjectivities", these autoethnographers-as-filmmakers "find themselves in diverse image cultures, images, and discourses" (Russell, 1999). Epistemically, this produces a shift in the aesthetics available to autoethnographic film in dealing with subjectivity dia-

lectics, an evolution which "goes from realism as a style, producing an illusionistic reality-effect, towards realism as a goal, which is "quite compatible with a style which is reflexive and deconstructive" [Stam and Shohat as cited by DeGroof, 2013, p. 110]: deconstructive, specifically, of autoethnographer-as-filmmaker identity construct formation. In this deconstruction is examined "the terms, assumptions and procedures of a practice, the interactional setting where research is conducted, the behavior of the researcher, etc. [Stam 1992; Ruby 1977, 1980, 1982], i.e., as the taking into account of subjectivity" (DeGroof, 2013, p. 211).

Central to these autoethnographic films is the onset of a quest for self-knowledge as self-inscribed self-reflexivity (DeGroof, 2013, p. 212). Contrary to the observational cinema stress on what is being seen in relational positioning to the one seeing, autoethnographic films center on questions of how is it seen and why is it being seen / presented / constructed in such observational terms: it is thus inherently meta-textual. In answer to the questions

of how and why we "see" (or perceive) as we do, autoethnographic film explores the process of social conditioning as it informs the self-identity construct of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker as the one who sees - to the act of seeing, and the interpretivist phenomenology of meaningful identity construction in constructing a relational discourse on that same act of seeing (specifically through the methodology of participant-observation and related interactional engagement with the human subjects whose bodies directly appear in the film diegesis, even if that of the filmmaker him/herself does not, as their camera does for them as a symbolic performativity inherent in participatory praxis as "the interactivity, to the effect that the camera has on characters, to the way a camera functions as a catalyst" (DeGroof, 2013, p. 214). Naturally, such participation in a cultural milieu as a mechanism of socialization begins with the family, and autoethnographic filmmakers post-cinema verite frequently commenced their journeys with what superficially resembled family history films in an effort to rediscover the source of the self-as-Other through personal narrative.

LOCATING THE SELF-AS-OTHER IN THE MECHANISMS OF INTRA-FAMILIAL SOCIALIZATION

The most prominent structural set-piece emerging in these family history films is the staging of an encounter with the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker's parents or grandparents "who embody a particular cultural history of displacement or tradition" (Russell, 1999). Russell (1999) cites the following key examples of this form: Richard Fung's _The Way to My Father's Village_ (1988) and _My Mother's Place_ (1990), _History and Memory_ (Rea Tajiri, 1991), _Measures of Distance_ (Mona Hatoum, 1988), _The Ties That Bind_ (Su Friedrich 1984). In these works, "(t)he difference between generations is written across the film-maker's own inscription in technology, and thus it is precisely an ethnographic distance between the modern and the premodern that is dramatized in the encounter – through interview or archival memory or both: (o)ne often gets the sense that the filmmaker has no memory and is salvaging his or her own past through the recording of family memory" (Russell, 1999). Representing family members, and engaging with them in the course of making the film text - i.e. in film-making praxis - enables the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker to reflexively analyze, re-interpret and re-represent their own initiating socialization to an observationally "objective" social reality as depicted on screen in ostensibly photo-realist aesthetics. This process facilitates the subsequent formation of the self-as-Other

identity construct. The central set-piece of the family history film - the confrontation with parents or grandparents - is thus the first stage in a multi-stage process the end goal of which is transformative self-actualization as the end goal of the process inherent in film-making, to which the end product final film is representational interpretivist phenomenology of socio-relational, culturally-encoded identity construction culminating in self-actualized subjectivity.

It is in effect a psycho-dramatic set-piece: an effective interpretivist phenomenological account of the roots of subjectivity in familial identity as the first stage - Maslow's (1954) basic need stages - physiological, safety, belonging, esteem - rendered in direct correlation to subjectivity's need for incipient identity construct formation in intra-familial relationships. The familial and the socio-cultural context surrounding the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker, as both subject and object of filmic inquiry, are initially presented in documentary form as befits traditional ethnographic film, but as the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker gradually inserts their self - through the dialectics of present/absent signification and direct camera point-of-view - the film space slowly transforms into the personalized political. The family set-piece thus concludes with an assertion of an identity construct rooted in familial/cultural identification - subjectivity takes root (towards ultimate self-actualization) in direct correlation to the greater cultural process of socialization. Thematically, the survival stage of an identity construct is the need to orient the self in correlation to the concepts of family, home and society at large as lived participant-observer experience. While the lived experience is documented in auto-ethnographic film family history set-piece encounters, it is the superimposed condition of identity construct formation that separates autoethnographic film from ethnographic film or documentary. The inscription of self in autoethnographic film thus is the aestheticized process of meta-cognitive engagement with the representation of the interpretivist phenomenology of identity construction. The discourse constructed is inherently that of subjectivity epistemics.

In representing the corporeal on-screen presence of the film-maker's family members, the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker enters a representational psychodrama of identity-construct formation in positional relation to filmmaker physical presence/absence:

> As a product of human vision, image-making might he regarded by some as little more than secondhand or surrogate seeing. But when we look purposefully, and when we think, we complicate the process of seeing enormously. We invest

it with desires and heightened responses. The images we make become artifacts of this. They are, in a sense, mirrors of our bodies, replicating the whole of the body's activity, with its physical movements, its shifting attention, and its conflicting impulses toward order and disorder. A complex construction such as a film or photograph has an animal origin. Corporeal images are not just the images of other bodies; they are also images of the body behind the camera and its relations with the world. (McDougall, 2006, p. 3).

In the family film content thus, the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker may remain absent from any direct iconographically acknowledged presence and be entirely (or mostly) offscreen. Their self, specifically the origin of their self in the praxis of intra-familial socialization, is inscribed in the iconographic presence of the corporeal familial bodies affecting the offscreen/onscreen identity construct formation of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker in relational positioning of his/her individual identity to representatives of primary socialization. As noted by MacDonald (2013), this is a break from traditional ethnography, an inversion of the form, for identity dynamics personalize the content and present the filmmaker-as-subject, constituted as a presence through his/her engagement with family. This is a representation of the interpretivist phenomenology of identity construction in first stage deference to familial socialization, a primary stage in the socio-cultural socialization process: the commencement step in a journey paralleling Maslow's (1954) hierarchy. MacDonald (2013) posits Miriam Weinstein's films, such as _The Family Album_ (1986), and Amie Seigel's _DDR/DDR_ (2008) as "those which achieve the crossover between ethnographic and personal" (Smith, 2013). For Smith (2013) this transformation of the ethnographic film into the personal documentary raised "an important question: does ethnographic film categorically fail when it becomes 'personal, and vice versa?" (p. 136). It is in precisely thus in this gap that autoethnographic film as a genre emerges in departing fusion of forms.

So too this superimposed condition of an inscribed self is rendered aesthetically, in film-making techniques derived by the autoethnographer as filmmaker (often spontaneously during the filming process and/or constructed in relational opposition to Eisensteinian montage theory derivations during the post-production editing process). In in-camera production effects and post-production editing especially, the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker operates within a dualism between researcher and artist: "i.e. subjecting the rushes to such an imposing intellectual or aesthetic agenda that members of the audience can no longer draw their own conclusions about the significance

of what they are seeing" (Suhr & Willerslev, 2012, p. 292). Drawing on MacDougall, Suhr & Willerslev (2012) thus posit a primary purpose of ethnographic film to destabilize and dislocate the spectator from preconceived meanings they may bring to their film spectatorship. Personalizing the ethnographic film through autoethnography self-consciously renders the interpretivist phenomenology of relational being, positioning the spectator in direct engagement with self and Other dialectics, primarily (though not exclusively) through montage.

Over the course of the autoethnographic film genre's evolution these montages initially include autobiographical photogalleries and home movies, and progressively evolve from direct-to-camera "confessionals" (or "testimonials") through to graphic abstractions and even animation. This latter stage progression is characteristically rendered through voice-over as the superimposition of authorial present/absent significations as the first stage of the core autoethnographic film's four-stage process of destabilization-deconstruction-reconstruction-actualization as the structure typifying autoethnographic film as the quintessential postmodern genre and indeed of autoethnographic research methodology as a post-modern discipline. It is in this structure that autoethnographic film anchors an ethics that, in contrast to the observational cinema of such as MacDougall, requires "manipulative effects that disturb the ontological primacy of a shared human identity" (Grimshaw as cited by Suhr & Willerslev, 2012, p. 292), to interrogate self/Other dualism and, specifically, the self-as-Other subjectivity dialectics of autoethnographic film.

Such necessitates the deliberate "sacrifice of the most precious sacred cow of observational cinema: the subject" (Suhr & Willerslev, 2012). Hence, to maintain epistemic construct validity:

> is not at all to maintain a distinctive identity or perspective. On the contrary, it involves finding the unstable zone of continuous becoming, where perspectives are allowed to travel and cross the threshold of perspectival seeing. This only happens when the illusion of the camera as an extension of human vision is broken. (Suhr & Willerslev, 2012, p. 292)

Consequently, from its outset, autoethnographic film positions the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker as not only both subject and object - as had infiltrated ethnographic film - but as representative consciousness of being in the human condition, specifically in relational praxis of identity construction: a psycho-drama of self-actualization paradoxically rooted in the positional destabilization and deconstruction of the social reality presented in (usually

but not exclusively photo-realist - as in the films of Stan Brakhage for example) mimetic diegesis. The autoethnographic film thus becomes the progressive, in praxis, interpretivist phenomenology of being in the human condition in meta-cognitive awareness of self-actualization.

The initiating discursive mode - the confessional mode - is a "testimonial discourse with no necessary validity beyond the viewer's faith in the text's authority" (Russell, 1999). While "(a)utobiographical film and video tends to be couched within a testimonial mode, as the authorial subjects offer themselves up for inspection, as anthropological specimens", autoethnographic film and videotext meta-textually situates the testimonial in relation to the authorial self of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker: as a tool of discourse construction. That is, as an aesthetic trope initiating the dialectics of subjectivity which indeed do validate the testimonial, although not necessarily any factual or scientific objectivity it may have, for such is simply a device to anchor subjectivity in a broader socio-cultural context of "actuality" (usually in tandem with photo-realist iconography for ease of diegesis, though not necessarily so). This they do "ironically, mediating their own image and identifying obliquely with the technologies of representation, identifying themselves as film- and videomakers" (Russell, 1999). The meta-cognitive analysis of identity construct interpretivist phenomenology inscribes self in the text through praxis: the procedural meta-textual discourse construction of authorial presence / absence in the afore-mentioned four stage structure towards the ultimate goal of self-actualization.

Consequently, "(b)ecause autoethnography invokes an imbrication of history and memory, the authenticity of experience functions as a receding horizon of truth in which memory and testimony are articulated as modes of salvage" (Russell, 1992). However, both Hollywood and independent filmmakers have used this form to fabricate faux autobiographical journals / vlogs, exposing the form as essentially unreliable (though not wholly invalid) as "actuality" as in, for example Orson Welles' *F is for Fake* (1975), Michele Citron's *Daughter Rite* (1979), Jim McBride's *David Holzman's Diary* (1968), and the fictionalized premise in a documentary setting that infuses Haskell Wexler's *Medium Cool* (1969). What unites these films "is the articulation of identities that are split, insecure, and plural (wherein) memory and travel are means of exploring fragmented selves and placing ethnicity at one remove, as something to remember, to see, but not quite to experience" (Russell, 1999). The postmodernist self-reflexivity unique to autoethnographic film is its simultaneous discourse construction and deconstruction thus of the interpretivist phenomenology of identity con-

struction not as representation but as lived simulacrum: a representation of individual autoethnographer-as-filmmaker being in the human condition.

POSITIONING AUTOETHNOGRAPHER SELF-IDENTITY BEYOND THE FAMILIAL INTO WIDER SOCIAL REALITY

After the family confrontation stage thus, second is the journey of the anchored self into the outside world beyond the familial identity and testimonial/confessional and into society at large: from Maslowian (1954) needs-based concerns for physiology and safety into belonging and esteem. Usually this is through travel - of the self into the wider social reality in which they must now defer their ongoing identity construct formation - and the means of its representation is in ethnographic film convention of the "travelogue":

> The journeys undertaken by these filmmakers are both temporal and geographic, sometimes tending toward epic proportions. The diary form involves a journey between the times of shooting and editing; traveling becomes a form of temporal experience through which the film- or videomaker confronts himself or herself as tourist, ethnographer, exile, or immigrant. These film- and videomakers may not be representative of the extraordinary diversity of personal, autoethnographic film forms, but they do cover a range of techniques and strategies that merge self-representation with cultural critique. They suggest that the subjective form of ethnography distinguishes itself above all from the passive scientism of conventional ethnographic forms by destabilizing "ethnicity" and its constraints on subjectivity. (Russell, 1992)

On the autobiographical travelogue, Russell (1999) thus quotes Sitney: "it is the autobiographical cinema per se that confronts fully the rupture between the time of cinema and the time of experience and invents forms to contain what it finds there". At issue is once again is montagist subjectivity: "Subjectivity cannot be denoted as simply in film as with the written 'I' but finds itself split in time (such that) the image of the filmmaker, when it appears in a diary film, refers to another camera-person, or to a tripod that denotes an empty, technologized gaze" contained yet again within the dialectics of the present/absent signifier (Russell, 1999). The dilemma here is the representation of the self as embodiment of an absently signified subjectivity: to render self-consciousness itself in formative relation to observed social reality through interpretivist montage: the travelogue as representative intersection of the self with the wider social reality of an

external objectivity, inherent in it the theme of social confrontation by the self-identity in process of formation: i.e. of "being" in participant-observation praxis within the field.

Inserting self-identity as the focal point - or locus - consistently relates any social, cultural, political, ideological, economic analysis to the subjective self-as-Other persona of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker in formative praxis. In film, this relational troping is complex, rendered firstly through the dualism of autoethnographer-as-filmmaker presence/absence in the diegesis through corporeal present/absent signification. Visually, this has two concurrent dimensions: 1) the omniscient presence of the autoethnographer as participant-observer inherent in camera point-of-view (methodologically insisting therefore - to ensure epistemic conceptual unity and construct validity - that the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker must also double as their own camera-person to ensure the authenticity of the camera gaze) anchoring the film in subjectivity dialectics; 2) the visual presence / absence of the filmmaker him/herself in the actual diegesis, i.e. appearing on film (or not) directly as themselves and therefore acknowledging their presence, either visually or aurally through off-screen, over-heard interactive participation - in dialogue, interview or exchange - or voice-over narration (methodologically occasioned directly during filming by speaking into the camera as it films / records and/or through post-production aestheticized rendering during the editing and discourse construction process). Consequently, "(t)his difference in the employment of language has produced one film tradition in which images illustrate a verbal argument and another tradition in which the images (in the sound film including spoken dialogue) must carry the burden of revealing a coherent line of development (wherein) ethnographic films span both traditions and can thus be seen as either illustrative or revelatory in approach, the first form obviously bearing the closer resemblance to written anthropology" (MacDougall, 1978, pp. 412-413). By extension therefore: to autoethnographic films as meta-textually deconstructing the very ethnographic discourses they represent in deference to subjectivity epistemics.

Russell's (1999) point about the signification of the autoethnographer visually as present in the film thereby inserts into the dominant subjectivity inherent in the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker's dual function as camera-person - to ensure consistent subjectivity in point-of-view - a diegetic "break" from subjectivity in which to assert (or insert) glimpses, however sustained, of the surrounding (framing) existence of an objective reality in which the autoethnographer is participant-ob-

server: of the representation of fieldwork within ongoing praxis. The signified presence of the filmmaker by direct iconographic means thus inscribes the self into the diegesis to anchor the autoethnographic film's subjectivity in relation to the existence of a greater, external, objective reality in which the filmmaker a participant-observer is now themselves being objectively observed in the process of their participant-observation research and data collection: in this way, inscribed objectivity documents the process of praxis in ongoing correlation and parallel to - and meta-textual deconstruction of - discourse construction. But, a discourse construction wherein the auto ethnographer-as-filmmaker's goal is the representational interpretivist phenomenology of self-actualization in praxis: i.e. to render "the strategic, critical appropriation of the potential energy of those flashes of radical self-estrangement, moments of epiphany, or jouissance, or vertigo in which one glimpses the dissolution of one's own ostensibly stable subjectivity as (auto)ethnographer" (Dorst, 1989 as cited by Shuman, 2011, p. 148).

The autoethnographic film text is thus both analytical and evocative - through its relational nature and positing of subjectivity dialectics, such that, correspondingly, autoethnographic films in particular "can thus be seen as (both) illustrative (and) revelatory in approach, the first form obviously bearing the closer resemblance to written anthropology" (MacDougall, 1978, p. 413). The autoethnographic film requires "the viewer to make a continuous interpretation of both the visual and verbal material articulated by the film-maker (wherein) voice-over narration need not make images wholly illustrative in character provided the voice is an integral part of the subject matter" (MacDougall, 1978, p. 413): i.e. of authorial revelation in relation to the construction of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker as participant-observer being observed in a socio-cultural milieu. This self-conscious subjectivity - and interrogative onset of subjectivity / objectivity dualism - is hence inherent in self-conscious meta-textual reference to authorial subjectivity through meta-textual acknowledgment of autoethnographer-as-filmmaker camera point of view in relation to an external, objective reality in which the participant-observer is simultaneously observed or overheard during the research and data collection process. Through the travelogue - and journal / diary film-making stage - thus begins what is the phenomenological qualification of the second stage in the four stage structure of autoethnographic film as a genre. It extends the self-awareness of an identity construct rooted in the familial microcosm into the wider sub-cultural, cultural and trans-cultural macrocosm of the social sphere. Here, subjectivity becomes cognitive,

initiating a process of socio-psychological deconstruction centered on the core epistemic paradox of rendering subjectivity through meta-textual presence /absence dialectics: "the image of someone behind the camera encompasses its own impossibility as a representation unable to access its origin, to invert its own process" (Marchessault as cited by Russell, 1999). This cognition is itself an indicative signification of the transformative process of praxis towards increasing meta-cognition of self-identity construct formation.

When the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker is signified by direct presence therefore, the diegetic break from pure subjectivity is a paroxysmic assertion of an objectified self into the film space - a rendering thus of self-actualization. Each successive authorial presence in the film space thus chronicles this second stage self-actualization: meta-cognitive deconstruction of the subjective self in relation to an objective other (and external reality in which the autoethnographer is him/herself observed and rendered an object of study) in its socio-cultural incarnations. This is as participant-observation fieldwork recorded data rendering (again in montage derivation and departure from traditional Eisensteinian principles) of socio-culturally specific details of location, dress, behavior, inclusion and social interaction rites and restraining taboos as they now filter through the meta-cognitive identity construct of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker as subjective "self" in process of middle need Maslowian fulfillment - towards actualization as self-as-Other in relation to an objective, external existence - "reality". This is manifest in film-making praxis as indicated by Lemelson (2013):

> while we always engage our visual sense throughout our fieldwork, filming something in one's fieldworks causes one to focus one's attention and interests in new, different, and at times unexpected ways. Shooting itself (or if working with a camera-person, collaborating on shooting), is inherently visual, and involves the sense of sight in multiple ways—from composing individual shots, to planning on a sequence of activities to shoot, to understanding (and manipulating) light and the myriad ways light transforms, can obscure what one sees, to finding beauty by forcing one to focus on what is (in another of Orwell's phrases) "in front of one's nose." (Lemelson, 2013)

The departure from Eisensteinian montage here enters the field of discourse construction as the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker constructs the film-as-text:

> The film-as-text stimulates thought through a juxtaposition of elements, each of which bears a relationship to the intellectual framework of the inquiry. These elements may reveal information on how materials were gathered, provide alternative perspectives by the film's subjects, or present the evidence out of which the film proceeds. This produces a kind of filmic montage, but montage in which the contributing passages retain an internal life and are not reduced, as in the montage of Eisenstein, to the level of iconic signs. The result is a form of film-making in which observational cinema (or the cinema of duration advocated by Bazin and other Realist critics) can coexist with the generation of meaning through the collision of dissimilar materials. (McDougall, 1978, p. 423)

Such is to situate, in relation to autoethnographer-as-filmmaker self-as-Other identity construct formation, the satisfaction of Maslowian (1954) needs for situational belonging: how participant-observation praxis situates the self within the Other culture under examination. This begins to extend the themes of belonging and esteem represented in the family and testimonial stage - which may be concurrent, depending on the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker's approach to montage in discourse construction of self-actualization - such being a post-production process and the final stage of participant-observation process: discourse construction of self-as-Other identity construct formation. Mirroring the socialization process, the individual moves from the intra-familial to the broader social reality and interrogates the social constraints delimiting their identity-construct formation.

The dialectics of subjectivity thus now inform the autoethnographer's aesthetic choices as the self confronts the imposing social reality as constraining objectivity ironically through travelogue-based participant-observation in actual sites of cultural interchange and correspondingly extends the diegetic signification of the self-as-Other into the affecting social sphere and delineation of the body politic of the Other and its delimiting social reality. The encroaching prism of subjectivity that slowly infiltrates the film space "is split again between the seeing and the filmed body (such that) (e)ven when the subject in history is constructed as a point of origin for memories, geographic and spacial distance comes to evoke a distance in time that separates different moments of the self" (Russell, 1999). Again, to Russell (1999):

> The autoethnographic subject blurs the distinction between ethnographer and Other by traveling, becoming a stranger in a strange land, even if that land is a fictional space existing only in representation. As a diary of a journey, the travelogue produces an otherness in the interstices of the fragmented "I" of the filmic, textual self. As the memory of the trip be-

comes enmeshed with historical processes and cultural differences, the filmic image becomes the site of a complex relationship between "I was there" and "this is how it is." Travel films are collections of images made for other spectators in distant cultures and therefore constitute a kind of traffic in images with the traveler-filmmaker as their unreliable referent and point of origin. Needless to say, the utopian impulse of autoethnography relies on a certain mobility of the filmmaker and remains in many ways couched in modernist, imperialist, and romantic discourses. (Russell, 1999)

This encroaching needs-driven process of self-actualization, while rooted in Maslow (1954) is "the utopian impulse of autoethnography (and) relies on a certain mobility of the filmmaker (as) remains in many ways couched in modernist, imperialist, and romantic discourses" (Russell, 1999). As the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker views an Other culture as inside participant-observer, their interpretive framework is still informed by their prior cultural socialization, dialogic engagement between the autoethnographer and the human subjects represented by direct presence in the film, beginning with the familial stage and extended through travelogue into social reality. This begins to construct meaning through the language of authentic dialogic interchange as representational means of self-other relation (Asch & Connor, 1994). Positioning of the self-as-Other now comes into meta-cognition. Hence, the use of voice-over can give way in autoethnographic film to actual conversational exchange: the self is situated in the praxis of daily social life within the subculture under examination: the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker now directly participates in the social reality traveled through and documented in fieldwork observation recording. This data recording method - of recording non-scripted dialogic interaction - referred to as "participant audition" is a conventionally ethnographic method of "data collection that consists in the recording of verbal interaction in situations that are not directed by the researcher" (Meyer & Schareika, 2009, p. 1). It transforms into a specifically autoethnographic method when the participant-observer also records him/herself in the dialogic praxis of cultural inclusion within the social reality depicted, engaging with the human research subjects whether on or offscreen (or in an interplay of both).

The autoethnographer-as-filmmaker is hence - by aural presence to augment visual presence/absence signification of the self - situated as participant-observer in the position of a cultural interlocutor, interacting with - or commenting on - the spoken expressions of the human research subjects within their now mutually affecting social reality: now belonging, their interactionality seeks self-esteem within the social reality operating upon them,

and which - to the anthropological spectator - delineates their Otherness. For Asch & Connor (1994), in four films from 1978 to 1983 including *A Balinese Trance Seance* and *Jero on Jero*, this owes to literary theorist Bahktin (1981): specifically that the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker by featuring in the dialogic interaction (directly or through commentary voice-over) "strives to get a reading on his own word, and on his own conceptual system that determines this word, within the alien conceptual system of the understanding receiver; he enters into dialogical relationships with certain aspects of this system." (as cited by Asch and Connor, 1994, p. 15). In so doing, the autoethnographer as film-maker's position is in performative dislocation and subversion as a prelude to reconstructing their self-identity in transformative response to participant-observation praxis, "break(ing) through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, construct(ing) his own utterance on alien territory, against his, the listener's apperceptive background" (Bahktin, 1981 as cited by Asch and Connor, 1994, p. 15). In praxis, this is the interpretivist phenomenology of identity-construct formation within the delimiting social reality of the Other, but in that it is interpretively rendered as representative autoethnographer-as-filmmaker self-as-Other construct formation, it destabilizes spectator positionality facilitating deconstructive engagement with the film text as a prelude for identity-construct reformation consequent to participant-observation's transformative praxis.

RENDERING REPRESENTATIONAL SELF-AS-OTHER IDENTITY CONSTRUCT FORMATION IN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC FILM

Jonas Mekas, a Lithuanian immigrant to the USA, had a central role in the development of the American avant-garde film movement, promoting "both personal film-making and a film culture that would form itself around the "truth" and "freedom" of a noncommercial, independent cinema" (Russell, 1999). His twin objectives in this regard are considered best exemplified in his 13 hour diary film project. Tempered sporadically by a somewhat melancholy voice-over narration - which adds a poetic dimension to its reflective antecedents in prior autoethnographic film experiments as it subsumes them - Mekas constitutes his "self" again in a dialectics of subjectivity which to Trinh T, Minh-ha represented the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker as an "inappropriate Other": the subject who by intervening in the reportage "is necessarily that of both a deceptive insider and a deceptive outsider" (Minh-ha as cited by Russell, 1992). The

ABOVE: IMAGE 1.6 Place memory and behaviourism on location are evoked in *Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania* **(1972: d, Jonas Mekas),**

deceptive nature of such positioning inherently destabilizes spectator positioning vis-a-vis the film's discursive construction, while anchored in photo-realist iconography, through montage, movement and other film-making tropes (such as the hand-held camera).

This figure, according to Trinh (as cited in Russell, 1999), originated in post-colonial ethnography as it began to respond to disciplinary critiques of its objectivity-based claims to scientific validity: specifically "to become aware of how subjectivity is implicated in the production of meaning" (Russell, 1999). In conventional ethnographic film's objectivity dialectics thus, the Self is Other by virtue of its superimposition of subjectivity onto the pristine objectivity of a scientific discipline: hence, Trinh terms this figure the inappropriate Other and Russell (1999) chronicles "how the Inappropriate Other functions as a time traveler who journeys in memory and history" manifest in the filmic space through the aestheticized dialectics of autoethnographer-as-filmmaker present/absent signification. Mekas's screen identity construct is that of someone dislocated in time and space, a displaced subjectivity aestheticized by Mekas' filmic technique, "his refusal to stop on any image, to synchronize any sound and image, or to narrate any image" (Russell, 1992). This displacement extends into his handling of his self-shot home movie footage. Shot often years prior to their montage assembly in his diary films, the editing process and montage construction is in direct parallel to that of montage construction using found footage: though the home

movie footage is authentic, lived perceptual experience it is simultaneously de-personalized, re-emerging as fragmentary montage renderings of the reconstituted memory.

Mekas' autoethnographer-as-filmmaker "self" thus co-exists in two different times and spaces - that during the lived perceptual experience of the actual home movie shooting and that as interpretivist renderer of the memory of same as aestheticized construct wherein the home movie footage is reconstituted as fieldwork data collected of actual lived perceptual experience. The autoethnographer-as-filmmaker self is simultaneously subject and object. In Mekas' diary films, autoethnography's subjectivity epistemic transgressively transcends and supersedes traditional ethnography's objectivity epistemic. Ethnography itself is displaced as the autoethnographic film enters the third stage of its four stage methodological structure - reconstitution/reconstruction: both of the filmic subject - the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker identity construct whose progressive self-actualization is chronicled aesthetically in the dialectics of present/absent signification - and the filmic space signifying an objective reality in which the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker exists iconographically in the diegesis to be directly observed as a participant observer in correlation to ongoing praxis. However, at this stage in the four-stage methodological structure, the representation of reality is subject to tropic aestheticization through montaging as rendering of self-as-Other identity construct formation.

In this reconstituted filmic space, inherently re-constructing spectator identity-construct in alliance to the subjective self-as-Other identity-construct formation of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker, the subjectivity of participant-observed fieldwork data recording is in its aestheticized rendering (once again through Eisensteinian montage theory derivations) a representation of the self's perceptual, experiential and meta-cognitive validation of existing in an objective reality wherein that same self's very subjectivity makes of it a simultaneous Other: anchoring destabilized positionality now through self-as-Other performativity. In the third stage of the autoethnographic film's four stage methodological structure therefore, Minh-Ha's Inappropriate Other as autoethnographer-as-filmmaker identity construct is reconstituted in this third stage in the autoethnographic methodological structure as an Essential Other. Videotextual representation of the process of self-actualizing this Essential Other is in the third stage transformative - hence the motifs of dislocation and displacement throughout Mekas diary films - the self-actualizing process culminating in the fourth, and final, stage of autoethnographic film's methodological structure: interpretivist phenomenological rendering as aestheticized representation of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker identity construct as self-actualized Essential Other: a self-as-Other identity construct as facilitated by the transformative nature of participant-observation praxis.

In the final stage of rendering the self-as-Other identity construct, epistemic subjectivity extends into ontological subjectivity in conceptual abstraction of being in pinnacle higher consciousness state in perfection of the human condition. It is therein that autoethnographic film - in rendering as final product - fulfills its Maslowian (1954) needs-driven utopian vision: the filmic space is now that of pure subjectivity in which the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker exists in direct relation to the objective reality informing the socialization process that began with the familial inquiry stage - the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker identity construct is self-actualized as Eternal Other, self-consciously being self-as-Other as existing in perpetual correlation to an objective socio-culturally inscribed reality. Montage-based aestheticization of this perceptual and experiential validation process thus forces engagement with this process upon the spectator as inherently meta-cognitive engagement with the film text as a result of the prior deconstruction and reconstruction stages of the methodological design. Such an objective reality is delimited by time and space - the same delimiters aestheticized in its videotext representational form - and conceptually validated through needs-based me-ta-cognitive engagement with the perceptual, experiential and psychological interpretivist phenomenology of self-actualization.

Significantly, _Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania_ (1972), "is the film in which Mekas confronts himself as ethnographer,... a role that he refuses to assume, and he takes refuge in the avant-garde community where the weight of history and identity can be transcended through art" (Russell, 1999), In that, Mekas' autoethnographer-as-filmmaker identity construct ultimately becomes that no longer of present/absent participant-observer but as self-actualized avant-garde auteur. Consequently.

> The longing for the past that Mekas expresses constructs memory as a means of splitting oneself across a number of different axes: child and adult, old world and new, pastoral and metropolitan, natural and cultural... Represented as a process and a practice... the idea of a film diary, according to Mekas, "is to react (with your camera) immediately, now, this instant. Like the vérité filmmakers, Mekas's film practice was motivated by a notion of phenomenological and emotional truth. The authenticity of the footage is completely bound up in the honesty and humility of the filmmaker. And yet the diary film, as a product, overlays this raw experience with a complex textuality of sound and image. (Russell, 1992)

Utilizing footage shot twenty years prior to their montage construction, _Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania_ (1972) is less diary or journal thus than subjectively mythopoeic memoir. Thus:

> Mekas tells us that there is something inherent within cinematic representation that dislocates the self. The fantasy of identity is produced by the techniques of film practice, and if his diaries indulge this fantasy, they also reveal its limits as ethnography. Mekas's films are all ultimately about himself, and by subsuming history within his own memory, the Others become fictional products of his memory, their own histories evacuated by the melancholia of his loss. Superimposing himself, his desires, his memories, his ego, onto everyone and everything, Mekas's romanticism is a form of possession. (Russell, 1992)

In contrast, Mekas' avant-garde auteur contemporary Stan Brakhage's entirely abstract _Eye Myth_ (1967) is also arguably a diary film: a rendering of a singular moment of perceptual validation of self-actualization in dream state. The rendering is, to Brakhage also, akin to the psychoanalytic process. But Brakhage bridged the documentary quality of autoethnographic film in _Window Water Baby Moving_ (1959) and utilized fictionalized sub-

jectivity dialectics in the ethnographic facsimile of _Dog Star Man_ (1964). So too, the Essential Other is the ability to transcend into an Eternal Other in the self's perceptual validation of Death as an Other in _The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes_ (1971), wherein the object of the autoethnographer's gaze - a cadaver being autopsied - is in the non-existence of a subjective self, non-being except in physical remains: pure objective (non)existence in relation to perceptual and experiential subjectivity. Likewise, in confronting his own potential non-existent self-conscious being, Brakhage denies autoethnography's utopian idealized state of ontological subjectivity, erasing all hope of an Eternal Other. Brakhage too here rejects the autoethnographer role in favor of the avant-garde auteur.

So too, as Russell (1992) demonstrates, a similar case can be made for George Kuchar's 1986-1990 series of 45 video diaries, especially his "weather series" and those centered on a community of friends around the San Francisco Art Institute. Kuchar "creates the impression that he carries a camera with him everywhere, and that it mediates his relation with the world at large (such that) his use of the video medium creates a sense of infinite 'coverage', potentially breaking down the difference between experience and representation" (Russell, 1999). Kuchar's visual style differs from that of Mekas:

> Where (Kuchar's) diary project differs most profoundly from Mekas's is in Kuchar's use of video without a process of secondary revision. He always shoots with synchronized sound and offers an ongoing commentary on what he is seeing, often talking to people in front of the camera. Most of his music, including snippets of "movie music" indicating suspense, is recorded from live sources, and the soundtrack is full of ambient noise, including dogs and cats, traffic, weather, TV, and radio. He also claims that the tapes are entirely edited in-camera, including sequences that are taped over previous ones, enabling him to construct non-chronological editing patterns. The effect is one of randomness and improvisation, enhanced by his off-the-cuff synch-sound narration. (Russell, 1999)

Where Mekas evokes dislocation and distanced reflection - memory - Kuchar evokes immediacy, "the way in which experience is rendered textual, without historical depth or distance" (Russell, 1999). Kuchar:

> ... often intercuts close-ups of himself, employing principles of continuity editing to inscribe his point of view into the tapes. This narrative technique endows the texts with a certain hermeticism, accentuating the sense of infinite coverage by creating a seamless diegesis despite the ad hoc, improvised style of narration and shooting. Kuchar invokes memory only through the proffering of still photos to the video gaze, and not as a structure of loss and salvage. Compared to Mekas's tragic sadness, Kuchar's video and weather diaries are ironically cynical , and his self-analysis is often self-deprecating. Although Kuchar also "finds" himself through the practice of filming, his project is not a redemption. (Russell, 1999)

For Kuchar, "(the) mode of production has the effect of inscribing a threatening "otherness" in everything and everyone he shoots (such that) discourse of horror is extracted from the banality of rural America" (Russell, 1999). Such is especially evident in his weather diaries. Where Mekas abstracts, Kuchar localizes and physicalizes. Correspondingly:

> Kuchar's journeys to rural American towns are modeled on ethnographic fieldwork, but he casually violates all the conventions of humanist anthropology. The Other becomes exotic and often threatening, but Kuchar himself becomes equally strange in the eyes of the Other. Kuchar's documentary subjects are his own first audience, as he makes himself, both on-and off-frame, a spectacle of equal magnitude. A circuit of looks, in which the viewer takes on the role of voyeur, is thereby completed. Like the hyperreality of the televised tornado, Kuchar's encounters with others are always exaggerated... It is by way of his own body and subjectivity that Kuchar presents one culture (rural Oklahoman) to another (urban artists and intellectuals). (Russell, 1999)

These subjectivity epistemics correspondingly infiltrated the mainstream film documentary form with Sherman March's _McElwee_ (1987) and Michael Moore's _Roger and Me_ (1989), which "involve similar conceits of self-representation, but Kuchar's tapes differ in their spontaneity and banality, (the) extremely low production values of these diaries exaggerat(ing) their experiential quality while thoroughly mediating it" (Russell, 1999). Where Moore departs from autoethnographer-as-filmmaker is in his deliberate self-representation in facsimile of humility to facilitate a self-aggrandizing cult of personality around his own present/absent signification: the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker is extended from the justified avant-garde auterist retreat of Mekas and Kuchar into a facile approximation of the Hollywood star system. Ultimately thus, Moore's films stop far short of authentic post-modern discourse in comparison to Mekas or Kuchar.

SELF-AS-OTHER DIALECTICS IN CULTURAL REPRESENTATION WITHIN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC FILM

Philippines filmmaker Kidlat Tahimik most extensively developed the diary film - in the autobiographical _Perfumed Nightmare_ (1977) and the three-hour diary project _Why Is Yellow the Middle of the Rainbow?_ (1981-1993) - "within a discourse of post-colonial cultural critique" (Russell, 1999). His distinctive film-making technique "pries apart the various levels of self-representation so that the primitive, the native, and the premodern are ironically constructed within a discursive bricolage centered around his own subjectivity" (Russell, 1999). Tahimik Incorporates "found footage, newspaper headlines and TV broadcasts, home movies, travel footage, and documentation of public events and political demonstrations, (so that) the film is extraordinarily far-flung – to Germany and Monument Valley, to Magellan and Ferdinand Marcos – while consistently localized in Baguio, Tahimik's hometown in the Philippines" (Russell, 1999). Thus, "(Tahimik) produces a subjectivity that is consistently double, inappropriate, and hybrid, signified by the body of the Other, a body that is inauthentic, textual, ironic, transnational... (a)ppropriation is an economics, an aesthetic, and an identity" (Russell, 1999).

In this, Tahimik directly engages with - and disavows - conventional delineations of ethnographic film "based upon the assumption that an ethnography is a specific style or group of related styles of scientific presentation and that ethnographers make syntactical, lexical, and other decisions based upon a tacit model which they acquired in graduate school, in the field, and at professional meetings where they became "native speakers" of the various anthropological linguistic codes" (Ruby, 1975, p. 107). French filmmaker Chris Marker takes this even further as subjectivity enters the self-reflexive stage of meta-cognition. Thus, in _Sans Soleil_ (1982) Marker equates Otherness with gender identity politics and the inherent spectatorship inscribed as what Mulvey (1974) termed the male gaze. In so doing, Marker "demonstrates the impossibility of an absolutely postmodern, decentered ethnographic film" (Russell, 1999) and posits meta-textual autoethnography as its purely postmodern successor - the analysis of self as a self-as-Other identity construct thus voyeurized as a means of the reconstituted self - the sexualizing, desiring, libidinous and liminal subject.

This movement is also between the representational (i.e. the aesthetic) and the liminal: it is inherently scopophilic if not outright voyeuristic - a fact referenced by _David Holzman's Diary_ in favor of the dismissal of ethnography's confessional mode as having any claims to validity or reliability on grounds of the epistemics of objectivity. So too, the autoethnographic self-reflexive-

ly approaches the (conceivably) pornographic (Russell, 1999). The core concept of the fourth stage self-actualization phase is thus the sexualized Self as desired object and desiring subject formed from a meta-cognitively subjective engagement with prior reconstitution/reconstruction (Custer, 2014): typically Marker "is distinctly silent about the identity of its maker, who hides himself within an intricate pattern of first-person pronouns" as indicative rendering of the reconstituted autoethnographer-as-filmmaker identity construct (Russell, 1999). Indeed:

> Despite his heroic effort of decentering himself, Marker's invisibility, omniscience, ubiquity, and mobility situate him as yet another belated traveler. His preoccupation with gender and the Other is not masked but foregrounded as a fascination with images. While the literary text of the narration mediates on the nature of images as memories, as traces of history, the image track constitutes a new form of voyeurism, one in which the naked stare is reframed as a desperate effort to find something to hold onto in a world where one no longer possesses images. The identity of the filmmaker is unambiguously a Western male... but in the attempt to disavow his own gaze, Marker finds himself cut off from history. (Russell, 1999)

As in Mekas, home movie shot footage is treated as if found footage for post-production montaging sometime after the fact of their filming, rendering the film one of memorial rendering of experientially valid self-actualization. For Marker, "(t)he images are collected and edited together as if they had been "found," but although a few sequences were filmed by other people (credited at the end of the film), most shots originate in the gaze of the absent filmmaker. Hence "_Sans Soleil_ is a film that constantly turns back on itself, systematically detaching images from their "origins" while lamenting the loss inscribed in this process" (Russell, 1999). Hence:

> The journeys undertaken by these film- and videomakers are very different ones, and not necessarily representative of the great range of film-making that might be designated by the term "autoethnography." But they do suggest the possible ethnographic effects of placing oneself under scrutiny. Autoethnography produces a subjective space that combines anthropologist and informant, subject and object of the gaze, under the sign of one identity. (Russell, 1999)

Cumulatively therefore:

> Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal

ABOVE: IMAGE 1.7 Exploring Otherness from within as autoethnographer in *Perfumed Nightmare* **(1977: d. Kidlat Tahimik)**

experience in order to understand cultural experience. This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product. (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011)

Correspondingly, In terms of ethics and professional practice, relationality ethicalizes participant-observation inquiry (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). In film, montaging and associated aesthetic troping renders relational ethics in terms of, firstly, autoethnographer positionality, and, secondly, autoethnographer-as-filmmaker performativity. The core issue facing autoethnographic film thus is the rendered representation - in product form of the final film - of the interpretivist phenomenology of the self-as-Other, an identity construct formed initially through familial socialization and subsequently centered on place as signification of operational socio-cultural reality and human subject interactivity within that space, rendered in the temporal and spatial specifics of montaging techniques evocative of self-as-Other self-actualization in transformative praxis.

Conceptually, this dilemma lends itself in the first instance to videotextual reportage and thus to the prospect of autoethnographic film as a distinct sub-genre in relation to established genre of ethnographic film - ex-

actly mirroring the increasing consensus in the Academic research community that "autoethnography" is a distinct sub-discipline within established parent research discipline "ethnography":

Such a quest leads to the construction of a place that runs hand in hand with that of identity. This path might include different kinds of space, which significantly echo one another under symbolic light: the filmic creation process is the first important space, where the author has the opportunity to express himself freely, and to build a representational world after his manner of visualizing the others and the environment, his obsessions, his taste, his priorities and values... Along this creative journey, a constellation of physical spaces marks the development of the narration and the unveiling of the most intimate sides of the subject through his own voice. Hence, the question is about finding a place for the self in the process of filmic creation." (De Rosa, 2012, p. 531)

FILMIC SPACE WITHIN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC FILM'S PRESENCE-ABSENCE SELF-AS-OTHER DIALECTICS

De Rosa (2012) thus acknowledges the debt that early auto-ethnographic videotextual research reports utilized a video-diary, or vlog, format as its "underlying narration strategy puts forward an action of writing of the self" (p. 531). Methodologically, this transition to the vlog

ABOVE: IMAGE 1.8 The anthropological / observational segues into the abstracted, aestheticized ethnographic assessment of perception in *Sans Soleil* (1982: d. Chris Marker)

format - as exemplified in the video work of avant-garde filmmaker Jonas Mekas - "reveals a superimposition among diverse writing levels: the traditional graphic diary writing is here replaced by a filmic writing, which weaves throughout the narration a space devoted to the subject" (De Rosa, 2012, p. 531). The autoethnographer thus positions the self-as-participant-observer as the auto-biographical self-as-reporter and "carves a personal niche in the fictional and documentary materials" (De Rosa, 2012, p. 531). As a consequence, the auto-ethnographic videotext space:

> "... is a space whose edges are preserved even when the story is told, and when the narration opens to the public the symbolic universe constituted by the text up. Such a sharing of the private sphere with the spectator represents sometimes a sort of confession, a way to lay bare before the eyes of the Other, and consequently entails the action of taking a stand. In structural terms, auto-ethnography implies therefore a disposition of the subject in the story, and thus in History. Just for these reasons, it can be intended as spatialization of the self, as artistic-filmic practice enabling the inscription of the subject in the 'spaces of life', enhancing self-awareness by means of a reflection, and promoting the construction of an identity open to otherness, which features a vivid historical embodied element too. Moreover, the link between self and spatial dimension underscores the chance to think over the construction of identity by means of the articulation of space,

showing how a place can become a true eversion of the self."
(De Rosa, 2012, p. 531)

The auto-ethnographic filmic space is thus distinguished by constant authorial self-reflexivity, in conceptual unity with the epistemics of subjectivity at the core of autoethnography as a post-modernist research discipline. De Rosa (2012) further delineates the underlying dialectics of subjectivity as aesthetic constructs in her analysis of the multi-channel "video installation" corpus of Gautam Kansara - *Rangpur Therapy* (2006), *Last Christmas* (2007), *Don't Hurry, Don't Worry* (2010), and (by Kansara's personal suggestion) *Health, Wealth, Name and Fame* (2009-2011) - wherein the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker "started to conduct a sort of field inquiry about his family in its everyday life" (De Rosa, 2012, p. 532). Yet, by his own admission, Kansara sought something far more individual: defining his production(s) as a sort of journal, "my goal was to allow the viewer into this private space [...] but maybe I was also trying to reveal something about me and figure out who I am" (Kansara as cited in De Rosa, 2012, p. 534). In these films thus begins the direct confrontation and meta-textual engagement with the procedural discursive rendering of self-as-Other identity-construct formation.

De Rosa (2012) thus posits Kansara's corpus as canonic in post-modernist autoethnographic film as a genre

for their transitional transformation of the ethnographic film space into an autoethnographic one by two aesthetic tropes structuring the filmic discourse as subjective journal: "In each piece (Kansara's) presence is also included as voice-over, or as belonging to an embedded/subsequently added image" (De Rosa, 2012, p. 532). As an aesthetic of subjectivity thus: "(b)oth the film and the video installations represent a quite clear result of an Autoethnographic impulse, underlining a deep connection between self-reflexive observation and a principle of situatedness able to embed and enact the personal in the social" (De Rosa, 2012, p.532). Kansara's vlog journal variations ascribe the personal / autobiographical onto the social / ethnographic to posit the autoethnographic videotext as a prototypical reconceptualization of autobiography as a textual manifestation of socio-cultural phenomenological subjectivity aestheticized through "a technique of self-representation that is not a fixed form but is in constant flux... an exploration of the fragmented and dispersed identities of... pluralist society that serves as protection against the homogenizing tendencies of (the modern nation-state)" (Russell, 1999).

De Rosa consequently relates Kansara's videotexts to a new movement based on a core dialectic of self and society: "this rootedness of the subject in the sociocultural structure and in history is expressed through a number of narrative and aesthetical choices, which betray a particular conception of self-inscription as regards to space, and implicitly comply with the canons of new (trans-media auto-ethnography)" (De Rosa, 2012, p. 532). In Kansara's videotext corpus - alongside Zoe Chantre's debut feature _Tiens moi droite_ (2011) also analyzed by De Rosa (2012) in her criterion-based conceptual and aesthetic (tropic) delineation of post-modernist autoethnographic film as incipient genre - the epistemics of subjectivity at the core of autoethnography as a specifically post-modern research discipline are extended into conceptual unity "in the idea of a diaristic poetics rendering the content as a way to detect something about their own identity" (De Rosa, 2012, p. 533). The dialectics of self-as-Other and the four stage methodological process of its rendering in participant-observer autoethnographic film-making praxis in essence qualify the specifically autoethnographic film text.

Correspondingly, subjectivity is rendered in praxis of self-as-Other identity-construct formation - the centrality of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker through the meta-textual placing of authorial self-reflexivity as core principle for aesthetic construct validity in the videotextual rendering of the phenomenology of subjectivity. For De Rosa, "(t)he correspondence between creative practice and identity articulation is... a contemporary technology of expression of the self consist(ing) here at least in a double treatment of the image... (wherein) the creative process of filming mirrors a self-perception dynamics connected to identity, which defines the aesthetical representation of the subject" (p. 535). Returning to Maslow (1954), autoethnographic film as a post-modernist genre in this way - preserving epistemic integrity, conceptual unity and construct validity - can thus be defined as an aestheticized subjectivity rendering in videotext media form of the interpretivist phenomenology of self-actualization into pinnacle higher-consciousness state of being in the human condition: as an Essential Other.

Politicizing the personal, epistemic subjectivity's filmic space is simultaneously that of cultural criticism, "paralleling postmodern theories of (meta-)textuality and knowledge" (Russell, 1999). Fischer describes the "writing tactics" of autoethnography thus: "Contemporary ethnic autobiographies partake of the mood of meta-discourse, of drawing attention to their linguistic and fictive nature, of using the narrator as an inscribed figure within the text whose manipulation calls attention to authority structures" (Russell, 1999) and thus to how Otherness is itself constructed operationally onto the inscribed self. In that, autoethnographic film does truly intersects Structuralist cinema theories though by its meta-textual self-reflexivity in deconstructing the self-actualization of the subjective self as an "identity construct", but in its immersive subjectivity epistemics remains distinctively and definitively postmodernist. Finally therefore, "autoethnography is a form of critique and resistance that can be found in diverse literatures such as ethnic autobiography, fiction, memoir, and texts that identify zones of contact, conquest, and the contested meanings of self and culture that accompanies the exercise of representational authority" (Neumann, 1996, p. 191). Autoethnographic film is, to reiterate, thus the rendering of self-as-Other identity construction in participant-observer praxis.

So too, it must be noted that the epistemics of subjectivity which inform auto-ethnographic film as a genre so defined above is inherently discourse-centric. In that, it is radically subversive in both 1) its disavowal of film as an art form, and 2) its absolutist rejection of film industry standards of "professionalism" in film-making practice and final film form. On the former, "art" is an historically circumstantial and thus wholly arbitrary criterion-based meritocritization of discursive significance in deference to pre-conditional aesthetic constraints on its mode of expression such that then regulate its means of dissemination. Montagism is hence the means by which art is subverted and undermined. The equivalence of the social, cultural, artistic and political significance or "worth"

of a videotext with the specific media channels or means of its dissemination into the body politic is a manifestation of an epistemics of objectivity rather than subjectivity: to pre-configured conformity with the same operational social realities that delineate and constitute the discourse of self and Other, inherently fractured and subverted by autoethnographic film's rendering of self-as-Other identity construct formation in flux. Likewise, on the latter, the assignation of dollar value to such worth, indicated by videotextual adherence to objective "professionalism" in practice and product, monetizes discourse construction on basis of commercial industry-driven conformity to delimiting constraints on subjective expression.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC FILM AS PERFORMATIVE SUBJECTIVITY IN PRAXIS AND PRODUCT

It is here, in the need to separate autoethnographic film as praxis oriented from the production of a marketable product that autoethnography benefits from technological innovation, something both Russell (1999) and MacDougall (1998) identify as a contributing factor to the development of ethnographic film. From its outset in anthropological fieldwork, ethnographic film afforded "educational films about foreign countries and their native population" (Urem, 2015, p. 284). While such were "unsystematic and mostly fragmentary films with ethnographic content, there were also efforts to record numerous activities from the life and culture of so called primitive and half-civilized nations, along with the films as scientific documents" (Urem, 2015, p. 284). It is thus in trans-cultural praxis that autoethnographic film finds a contemporary locus in transmedia, removed from the economic profit-motive necessity of commercial film production by virtue of such technological innovations as the portable video camera in strategic co-ordination with Web 2.0 IT integrated social media video dissemination platform YouTube, for instance. So too, YouTube, by its very nature, allows archiving of video over time, a facet associated with longitudinal ethnographic film studies in the work of Jean-Dominique Lajoix (Laferte, 2017).

Correspondingly, the autoethnographer "is a more analytic and self-conscious participant in the conversation than is the typical group member, who may seldom take a particularly abstract or introspective orientation to the conversation and activities... (such that) the autoethnographer's understandings, both as a member and as a researcher, emerge not from detached discovery but from engaged dialogue" (Anderson, 2006). Yet, in montagist rendering, the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker is simulta-

neously evocative. Hence, autoethnographic film is also the optimum form to facilitate MacDougall's (1978) call for a new film-making methodology to answer a specific set of ethnographic research questions:

> "In this manner, field workers can have a camera available throughout their field work. They can grapple with questions about which aspects of culture are visible and how they might convey that knowledge and other fundamental questions about doing ethnography with camera. How does one translate experience into images? Do images merely illustrate ideas or are there "pictorial" ideas? Can you actually explore and discover with a camera or must you wait until you know in order to film? When you are dealing with people whose sense of space, place, body movement, and event are different from your own, how do you know what you are looking at and when to turn the camera on or off? It is only possible to explore these questions in the field when the (auto)ethnographer is freed from the economic restraints of professional film-making and the need to produce a marketable product. (MacDougall, 1978, p. 414).

In the social observation middle stages, autoethnographer engagement with the social milieu under scrutiny - especially with its other participants - the epistemics of subjectivity are manifested In auto-ethnographic film-making process and product:

> "the self-reflexive action triggered by filming as self-inscription betrays a certain self-enactment promoted by (auto-ethnographic filmmakers). This does not imply a pure exhibitionistic attitude before the camera, even though they recognize themselves as performing subjects and, at times, the action is deliberately reconstructed for the camera. Rather, it shows their awareness of the creative process, and the potentialities of the filmic device. Just because of this, the creative process itself culminates in the elaboration of the images, including the reprocessing phase (wherein) the editing as an essential passage in the auto-ethnographic dynamics, enabling (auto-ethnographic filmmakers) to get the right distance from the image of the self and its symbols. It is precisely thanks to this 'safety distance' that the observation of the self reaches the mental space of reflection. Due to this metabolization, (auto-ethngraphic filmmakers) use their works as a tool for coupling liberatory public testimony and private therapy." (De Rosa, 2012, p. 536).

This debt to Structuralism thus blurs the "distinction between theory and practice, intellectualizing and perceiving, subject and object of the gaze, that because of the desire invested in looking, the spectator,,, is not 'freed'

ABOVE: IMAGE 1.5 Situating the off-screen autoethnographer-as-film-maker "Self" in relation to family as principal agent of cultural social-ization and inter-generational identity in *Rangpur Therapy* (2006: d. Gautam Kansara). RIGHT: the behaviorist social reality of daily life in actual locations in *Tiens moi Droite* (2011: d. Zoe Chantre).

from the technology of the gaze (while) the subject is un-derstood in universal terms (and therefore the subjects' viewing experience) to embrace a confrontation with look-ing that is not divorced from the socially differentiated 'embodied' subject" (Pucill, 2018). Hence: "(a)s distinct from autobiographic work that retains an essential self that is fixed and is revealed as a singular and known 'truth', the autoethnographic instead stages the self as a performance, the self is objectified and as such is acknowledged within the social world" (Pucill, 2018).

In such staging of subjectivity, the "subject is fragmented as a consequence of the inherent quality of the medium... (in) a simultaneous crossing between the spheres of the private and public world where the subjects of documentation are the (autoethnographers-as-filmmak-ers) themselves (often also their family or friends)" (Pucill, 2018). For both Russell (1999) and Pucill (2018) thus "(t)he framing of this 'self' acknowledges that the 'other' within the self already undermines self-awareness: (t)his idea of the 'other' within the self, as the splitting of self

between image/sound, subject/object, and past/present is explored within this self-reflexive approach" (Pucill, 2018). Autoethnography is, on film, synonymous with the performance of autoethnography: that is, of the rendering of the psychologically transformative affects of the partic-ipant-observation praxis on the autoethnographer-as-film-maker. This process is exactly that demonstrated in the four stage methodological structure of autoethnographic film. So too, it is the inherently self-reflexive trope of subjectivity which defines autoethnographic film as the definitive post-modern genre: analysis of the self-as-Oth-er identity construct - what Anderson (2006) described as

"analytic reflexivity" (Anderson, 2006).

Consequently, "autoethnographic performance is the convergence of the 'autobiographic impulse' and the 'ethnographic moment' represented through movement and critical self-reflexive discourse in performance, articulating the intersections of peoples and culture through the inner sanctions of the always migratory identity" (Spry, 2001, p. 706). To Spry (2001): "(a)autoethnographic performance makes us acutely conscious of how we "witness" our own reality constructions, interpreting culture through the self-reflections and cultural refractions of identity (as) a defining feature of autoethnographic performance" as participant-observer in state of self-actualization: i.e. praxis and product (p. 706). Research data is thus "situated within (autoethnographer) personal experience and sense making (so that) hey themselves form part of the representational processes in which they are engaging and are part of the story they are telling" (Atkinson, Coffey & Delamont as cited by Anderson, 2006). Such sense-making is the final stage of the fourfold autoethnographic methodological process - identity-construct self-actualization following the iconographic destabilization of the self as it enters the social milieu beyond the familial. Such is often representational, constructed during the post-production process and, as interpretivist phenomenological account of the personal subjective transformation occasioned during the participant observation process, inherently aestheticized in relation to the self-as-Other via presence / absence signification.

Spry (2001) thus maintains that, the performativity of subjectivity - representing the self-as-Other in autoethnographic film - is akin to Academic "heresy". Yet:

> ... (h)owever academically heretical this performance of selves may be, I have learned that heresy is greatly maligned and, when put to good use, can begin a robust dance of agency in one's personal/political/professional life. So, in seeking to dis-(re)-cover my body and voice in all parts of my life, I began writing and performing autoethnography, concentrating on the body as the site from which the story is generated, thus beginning the methodological praxis of reintegrating my body and mind into my scholarship. For me, performing autoethnography For me, performing autoethnography has been a vehicle of emancipation from cultural and familial identity scripts that have structured my identity personally and professionally. Performing autoethnography has encouraged me to dialogically look back upon my self as other, generating critical agency in the stories of my life, as the polyglot facets of self and other engage, interrogate, and embrace. (Spry, 2001, p. 707)

In other words, that the performativity of the self-as-Other in autoethnographic film-making posits the epistemics of subjectivity as existing in relation to an objective "reality" represented through aestheticized interpretivist phenomenological deconstruction of its socio-cultural, perceptual, experiential and meta-cognitive qualifying criteria. So too, this representation is rendered in a four stage methodologically designed discursive structure: the destabilization, deconstruction, reconstruction and self-actualization of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker identity construct as present-absent signifier of self-as-Other being in the human condition: in pinnacle state as an Essential Other. Thus:"(w)hen researchers do autoethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity: (h)owever, in addition to telling about experiences, autoethnographers often are required by social science publishing conventions to analyze these experiences" (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). Hence:

> When researchers write autoethnographies, they seek to produce aesthetic and evocative thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experience. They accomplish this by first discerning patterns of cultural experience evidenced by field notes, interviews, and/or artifacts, and then describing these patterns using facets of storytelling (e.g., character and plot development), showing and telling, and alterations of authorial voice. Thus, the autoethnographer not only tries to make personal experience meaningful and cultural experience engaging, but also, by producing accessible texts, she or he may be able to reach wider and more diverse mass audiences that traditional research usually disregards, a move that can make personal and social change possible for more people. (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011)

The final forms of the autoethnographic film / videotext differ "in how much emphasis is placed on the study of others, the researcher's self and interaction with others, traditional analysis, and the interview context, as well as on power relationships" (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011).

Likewise, assessment of reliability, validity and generalizability are inherently relativist in consideration of textual personal narrativity, specifically regarding any "literary license" taken in the personal narrativization process that would fictionalize the autoethnographer's self-inscription (by partly fictionalizing their auto-biographical input) in order to enhance its verisimiltudinous believability (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). There is an element of utility thus in the use of autobiographical data in discourse construction which, in striving for believabili-

ty - psychological, emotional, social, cultural, ideological, political, economic "realism" - transforms the autoethnographic text into being less a truthful insight into self but an interpretivist phenomenology of authorial meta-cognition of the self-as-Other identity construct as itself a simulacrum, a hyper-reality. Of this, Plummer (2001, p. 401) cautioned that "(w)hat matters is the way in which the story enables the reader to enter the subjective world of the teller—to see the world from her or his point of view, even if this world does not 'match reality'" (as cited by Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011).

The autoethnographic film text as self-inscribed simulacrum is informed by the functional utility of its discourse construction in facilitating 1) procedural communication between participants and the autoethnographer as participant-observing researcher, and 2) meta-textual engagement with the spectator to facilitate meaning generation and hence, insofar as the simulacrum is accepted as truthful by the reader / viewer, achieve a reliable and valid generalizability in deference to subjectivity dialectics and the utopian dissolution of self-Other dualism in identity construct formation of the self-as-Other. For Ellis, Adams & Bochner (2011) thus:

> In autoethnography, the focus of generalizability moves from respondents to readers, and is always being tested by readers as they determine if a story speaks to them about their experience or about the lives of others they know; it is determined by whether the (specific) autoethnographer is able to illuminate (general) unfamiliar cultural processes... Readers provide validation by comparing their lives to ours, by thinking about how our lives are similar and different and the reasons why, and by feeling that the stories have informed them about unfamiliar people or lives. (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011)

Autoethnographic films thus posit construct validity in the methodological discourse construction of a simulacrum of meta-cognitive identity-construction: of self-actualization. This has emerged in a linear progression from anthropological film and documentary through observational and ethnographic film onto autoethnographic film (see figure 1.1).

The process of so doing aestheticizes, inscribed in the process of discourse construction, the interpretivist phenomenology of meta-cognitive self-actualization: the final film itself is a simulacrum of autoethnographer-as-filmmaker being in higher consciousness state of awareness, the process of identity construction culminating in self-actualization representative of Maslow's (1954) pinnacle state of being in the human condition.

For Martinez (2013), this centralizes process in auto-ethnographic research, specifically ranging from "research about personal experiences of a research process to parallel exploration of the researcher's and the participants' experiences and about the experience of the researcher while conducting a specific piece of research". Martinez (2013) thus draws on Ellis & Bochner in assigning three main characteristics to autoethnography: "(1) The role of the autoethnographer in the narrative: is the autoethnographer an insider or an outsider of the phenomenon being described? (2) Whose voice is being heard: who is speaking, the people under investigation or the researcher? (3) Cultural displacement: some realities are being described by people who have been displaced from their natural environment due to political or social issues" (as cited in Martinez, 2013). Correspondingly, Wood (2008) cautions "(a)s autoethnography continues to emerge, define itself, and struggle for acceptance, it is important that those working with it reflect on the use of the method and share their experiences with others" (p. 40). Surveying the work of written text based auto-ethnography therefore, Wood (2008) isolated legitimacy of self-analysis criteria and data collection within frame of reference to the parent research disciplines as of key strategic importance: specifically "representation, objectivity, data quality, ethics, and evaluation criteria" (p. 40).

CONCLUSION: DIRECTIONS IN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC TEXT-BASED DISCOURSE CONSTRUCTION

Directions in autoethnographic text discourse construction thus fluctuate between the analytical and the evocative / emotional (Martinez, 2013). Consequently, Foley (2002) "advocates more reflexive epistemological and narrative practices, as he considers that they would make autoethnographies a more engaging and common genre which could contribute to bridging the gap between researchers and ordinary people" (as cited in Martinez, 2013). Autoethnographic film-making, in particular, the methodological development of which is argued in this paper, discourages passive spectatorship in favor of generating a personally meaningful, meta-cognitive engagement with the film-as-text (and autoethnographer-as-filmmaker) on a humanistic level. As a postmodern genre thus, autoethnographic film is a simulacrum representing as "reality" the interpretivist phenomenology of meta-cognitive identity construction of self in relation to a spectatorial condition of imposed Otherness: of self-as-Other (as Essential Other), the montagist aestheticization of which renders the transformative process of direct autoethnog-

rapher engagement as participant-observant researcher triggering a Maslowian (1954) inquiry into self-actualization as an individualized subjectivity within context-based socio-cultural delimiters of Otherness.

Reader engagement with that process - identification with, and acceptance of the relative "truth" of the simulacrum - validates the methodology and justifies the text. Procedurally, as a research process, methodological application of a fourfold systematic structure for self-inscriptive inquiry centers on the presence / absence dialectics of authorial identity-construct in the text (first person "I" or sound and image of the autoethnographer-as-filmmaker): destabilization, subversive deconstruction, reconstitution/reconstruction and self-actualization. In epistemic conceptual unity with autoethnography as a postmodern research discipline, this fourfold research methodology (fusing the evocative and analytical in its aesthetic tools for discourse construction) ensures that the autoethnographic film text maintains construct validity. For the viewer of such a film text, however, there remains "the implicit assumption that there must be a concrete meaning to be read from the film" (Stern, 2011) where in fact, the film's discourse of subjectivity anchors the self as point of identification from which it is possible to create multiple meanings, in terms of relational positionality and performativity, as they pertain to individual viewer subjectivity, as integral to knowledge theory and epistemics (Baba, 2000).

So inscribing a subjectivist research methodology into the autoethnographic text - especially perhaps specifically film and videotext(e) - functions as an integral acknowledgment of the transformative nature of praxis over product and thus the need to both represent and meta-textually deconstruct participant-observation praxis through the "thick description" of subjectivity dialectics in montagist aestheticization. By so doing, autoethnographic film sets itself apart from conventional ethnographic film wherein "ethnographic films are descriptive in intent, informed by a theory of culture which sometimes has been translated into a means of organizing the images, tend not to reveal methodology (either within the film or elsewhere in print), and employ a specialized spoken/written anthropological lexicon but do not employ a specialized visual anthropological lexicon" (Ruby, 1975, p. 109). The visual anthropological lexicon included in autoethnographic film is precisely that of presence/absence dialectics as a rendering of subjectivity epistemics wherein the individual autoethnographer-as-filmmaker is positioned and performed as an object of study: as a participant-observer within a discernible objective, external socio-cultural reality mimetically present as framing lived experience

and meta-textually informing the discourse construction of such: subjectivized anthropology, in full conceptual unity with the foundational concept of autoethnography (and autoethnographic film) as a specifically post-modern genre.

Thus, where Ruby (1998) asserts that "ethnographic film is a most perplexing form of cinema occupying a position equally marginal to documentary film and cultural anthropology", by radically reconfiguring ethnographic research methodologies as informed by Maslowian (1954) psychology, autoethnographic film equally reconfigures cultural anthropology to subjectivity dialectics in epistemic accord with a view of anthropology that demands the self-inscription of the researcher specifically in ethnographic persona of participant-observer being themselves represented - and analyzed - as participant-observer. Meta-textual self-reflexivity in pursuit of self-actualization through the transformative (and transgressive) affect of autoethnographic participant-observation praxis applies ethnographic methodologies to in turn subjectivize cultural anthropology, locating itself as an inverse correlative but not fully disassociating itself as Ruby (1998) would assert. It reconstitutes itself in terms of autoethnographer-as-filmmaker self-inscription in praxis of self-as-Other identity construct formation in relation to an alternate epistemics which disavow the objectivity inherent at the core foundation of anthropology as parent discipline to ethnography. In so doing, it is specifically autoethnographic film as a genre which conclusively answers Ruby's (1998) dilemma:

> The future of ethnographic film as a significant contributor to anthropological discourse about the human condition lies in the development of critical expectations about how ethnographic knowledge can be transmitted pictorially. To explore this possibility, anthropologists must understand of current thinking about the visible and pictorial world - both inside and outside of anthropology and examine, critique, and borrow elements deemed usable in the creation of a theory and practice of film as (auto)ethnography. (Ruby, 1988)

Here, it is important to note that, as Russell (1992) mentions, autoethnographic film as a genre was radically transformed by technological innovation - specifically the shift from 16mm film to video. In this respect, "(a)autoethnography in film and video is always mediated by technology, and so unlike its written forms, identity will be an effect not only of history and culture but also of the history and culture of technologies of representation" (Russell, 1992). As these stages involve the self in relation to other - and

possibly Cultural Others - it involves what Ellis (cited by Martinez, 2013) describes as "relational ethics", writing about intimate others, with or without consent (in the case of memoir based discourse for example).

Consequently, autoethnographic film is moving beyond the Academic establishment and opening up to the body politic through such Web 2.0 platforms as YouTube, wherein - following the public posting of lectures by Ellis, Bochner and Wall - it has seen a number of autoethnographic films by Curtis (2014) and others, making it accessible to multiple marginalized communities and individuals whose self-identity is constructed in deference to social reality delimiters constituting their Otherness. In this way, the self-as-Other identity construct formation praxis, is truly being democratized beyond Academic inquiry alone. Just what these non-institutional autoethnographic film works - circumscribed by the opening of film production beyond product-oriented professionalism to in media res praxis through such platforms as YouTube - is thus a worthy subject for further research, particularly in their extension of a sole media means of dissemination to a transmedia-oriented principle of autoethnographic praxis and the multi-layering of self-as-Other interpretivist phenomenological representation.

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