

## SİNEFİLİK TUTKUNUN İZİNİ SÜRMEK: GÖRSEL-İŞİTSEL DENEMELERDE OTOETNOGRAFI

### TRACING CINEPHILIC PASSION: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY IN AUDIOVISUAL ESSAYS

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#### ABSTRACT

*In this study, I explore the influence of audiovisual essays' autoethnographic qualities and cinephilic tendencies on this form. Through examples such as Pass the Salt (2011), Encounters (2016), The Eye Was in the Tomb and Stared at Daney (2017), and That Moment (2023), I examine how these audio-visual essays blend personal and cultural narratives, and whether they offer new methodological and theoretical opportunities in videographic research. Fundamentally, by adding visual and auditory dimensions to traditional autoethnographic work, I aim to introduce an innovative perspective to research methodologies and create interdisciplinary hybridity. During this process, I discuss the potential of integrating the performative qualities of autoethnography with cinephilic tendencies. I seek to usher in an innovative perspective to research methodologies. Furthermore, I highlight the transformative potential of merging the performative elements of autoethnography with cinephile sensibilities. This synthesis enriches scholarly inquiry and offers a dynamic platform for engaging with complex socio-cultural phenomena..*

## INTRODUCTION

Audiovisual essays transcend conventional text-based forms of expression by fusing visual and aural components, creating new and adaptable forms of artistic expression. This process ignites the passions of cinephiles. In this respect, while shaping the viewing experience, audiovisual essays complicate the relationships between cinema and individual experiences by illuminating and influencing events in one's life. The resulting audiovisual essays also transform into a creative academic discourse tool. They take the viewer on an emotional journey, integrating emotional responses and cinephilic passions with the exploratory aspects of the cinematic object, substituting it for an academic tool. Indeed, Keathley and Grant (2014) suggest that cinephilia could offer a new path to function as a form of creative academic expression. On the other hand, O'Leary and Rengo (2020: 296) highlight problems stemming from the origins of videographic criticism by cinephiles. According to them, even the most productive practitioners prioritize their sensitivities and personal interests over analysis and research objectives. Moreover, they personalize by showcasing their retrospective viewing experiences and fantasies, which is identified as a major barrier to academic institutionalization. Similarly, Fren (2021) reports that audiovisual essays are ontologically positioned between two poles: audiovisual science and cinephile productions, with a constant tension between them. In this research, I argue that this tension is nourishing, suggesting that cinephilic tendencies can unveil new coordinates and layers in videographic research, relating it to the autoethnography method. Of course, I know that videographic criticism constitutes a methodology in its own right. I believe that relating it to autoethnography will reveal the layered and multidisciplinary possibilities. Therefore, I would like to emphasize that I will not think with autoethnography, but rather reflect upon it.

On the other hand, Ellis (2004) emphasised that autoethnography is a research-writing process that combines the autobiographical and personal with the cultural, social and political. I believe autoethnography will be a practical pathway in creating audio-visual essays. Stemming from this idea, in this study designed as compilation research, I will discuss the autoethnographic qualities of audio-visual essay examples such as *Pass the Salt* (Keathley, 2011), *Encounters* (Talbot, 2016), *The Eye Was in the Tomb and Stared at Daney* (Galibert-Laîné, 2017), and *That Moment* (Zecchi, 2023). My research aims to create a hybrid by merging audio-visual essays and cinephilia with autoethnography and to discuss the potential of videographic research. The importance of the study lies in its ability to add a new perspective to research methodologies by incorporating visual and auditory dimensions to traditional text-based autoethnographic studies and to penetrate unexplored areas deeply. It also presents a multidimensional and layered understanding by encouraging the unique combination of different disciplines. Ultimately, I will demonstrate how the performative qualities of the autoethnographic method can be integrated into cinephile-inclined videographic studies and reveal the methodological and theoretical possibilities of this integration, assessing whether audio-visual essays can technically be used in autoethnographic research.

## CINEPHILIA AS THE ORIGIN OF THE AUDIOVISUAL ESSAY

Cinephilia, not limited to merely a love for films, is a phenomenon that deeply influences the ways visual media is understood and interpreted. With the digital age, changes in viewing experiences as well as cinephilic actions can be observed. Before delving into these changes, it's useful to discuss the distinction between classic and new cinephilia. Jullier and Leveratto (2012) describe classic cinephilia as a film culture nourished by quality art pieces accessed in specialized spaces like cinemas and film clubs, where individuals live their cinema experiences. This period corresponds to a trend shaped by going to the cinema in the traditional sense, where access to films and the cinema experience were centralized in certain spaces offering quality art pieces. As Shambu (2020: 7) put forward, new cinephilia has been restructured by the emergence of new communication technologies that diversify the film-watching experience and the variety of viewing tools, along with the introduction of the internet and DVDs. Similarly, Jullier and Leveratto (2012: 147-148), in parallel to conceptualizing new cinephilia, introduce the term "Cinephilia 2.0", explaining it through the lens of cinema enthusiasts becoming informed consumers who enrich their leisure time and strengthen their individual cinema experiences with the opportunities provided by the internet. This new form of cinephilia is shaped around dimensions such as information sharing, access to films, publication, and archiving personal judgments. Clearly, whether we call it cinephilia or Cinephilia 2.0, it is evident we are discussing a set of personalized tendencies characterized by emotion and sharing. As Shambu (2014) notes, when cinephiles engage in activities such as discussing or writing about cinema, they are known to be deepening and expanding their cinema experiences. They aim to continue and enrich their unique emotional states through their interaction with films. Audiovisual essays take this interaction a step further by providing the opportunity to express the interaction with films through a visual and auditory format. This format allows cinephiles to continue and enrich their unique emotional states verbally and with the unique tools of cinema - image and sound. As Grant emphasized (2014: 50), the intersection of cinephile practices with the realm of audiovisual essays harbors a profound capacity for cultivating innovative insights. Grant perceives this as merely a tool of expression as actions that reveal creative practices.

Audiovisual essays, positioned at the boundary between academia and entertainment, become a communication tool that can employ watchability as an argument. This encourages cinephiles to use audiovisual essays as a tool and context for production, creating a deeper area for discussion. It is unsurprising that Laura Mulvey predicted that the abilities of digital video players to slow down, freeze, and repeat film objects would create a new wave of cinephilia and be a stage for new inspirations. The transformation of these developments into a playground for cinephiles through audiovisual essays is a natural progression. As Mulvey highlighted (2006, 145), there is an individual aspect in the combination of intellectual curiosity and fetishistic admiration. This individual aspect is shaped by cinephilic moments that enter cinephiles' radar, impact them, and etch into their minds. This notion, conceptualized by Keathley, is a collection of images that mark the memories of cinephiles' relationships with films.

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More plainly (2005: 39), the fetishization of moments visible to everyone but provocative only to a few is a 'cinophilic moment.' The cinophilic moment corresponding to a specific moment left by an image can be considered the personal resonance of a film scene or a unique image. These specialized moments ensure that certain images or sequences leave a deep and lasting mark in the viewer's memory. Over time, these traces create emotional and intellectual resonance, thus establishing a pure, subjective relationship with the film for the viewer. The selection of cinophilic moments reveals the subjectivity of reinterpretation using other media. By highlighting the viewer's activity, it materializes these moments (Keidl, 2023: 290). The cinophilic moment embodies the answers to questions about what the individual sees and how they see it through audiovisual essays. These essays are served and interpreted in various forms, expanding the discourse related to films for cinephiles while creating more maneuvering space with audiovisual tools. These essays make visible the potential to create intense and emotional experiences by offering a unique and personalized perspective. As Morton (2017: 132) stated, audiovisual essays encapsulate the universal within the personal. This form represents a return to the fundamental mechanism of enchantment and establishes a form of dialogue that elevates the intersections between film history and film theory, potentially adding a new dimension. Martin and Lopez (2014: 82) argue that audiovisual essays merge two different traditions: avant-garde film and found footage works. These essays blend the innovative approaches of the avant-garde tradition with the original use of found footage practices, integrating creative experiences with academic analysis. This results in the emergence of audiovisual essays as a multifaceted and interdisciplinary form of expression. I take this a step further by claiming that the foundation of audiovisual essays is rooted in cinophilic curiosity. Indeed, the nourishment of videographic criticism with emotions such as admiration and curiosity demonstrate that a passion for cinema underlies these works. In this context, as Ann Doane points out (2002: 226-227), a love that is attached to detail, trace, and the gesture within points to the sediments of impressions left by cinema on an individual. Audiovisual essays, serving as carriers and dispositifs of these moments, represent a phase in the history of externalizing human inner memory. Stiegler's (2010) concept of grammatization, the externalization process of memory, triggers a specific form of organization in cognitive capabilities and at a societal level, namely individualization. In this context, Stiegler suggests that the digital environment's decomposition of audiovisual material has the potential to support a comprehensive individualization process that can work in favor of the viewer. To put it plainly, it refers to a process in which memory, made transparent and public, is composed and conveyed through audiovisual elements. In his doctoral thesis, Berksun (2020: 7) argues that the externalization of memory represents a complex process where the techniques that perform the externalization and the inner memory shaped by this externalization mutually transform.

Contrary to sidelining emotional responses and sentiments, audiovisual essays emphasize them to illuminate the connection with cinematic entities. They delve into and articulate how these entities are conceived and employed within the personal realms of individuals (Keathley and Grant, 2014).

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In this vein, Bochner's (2017: 70) incisive and challenging statement that research gains objectivity as it embraces subjectivity underscores the core of cinephile-derived audiovisual essays. Individuals' proximity to their object of study lays the groundwork for new discoveries and insights, nourishing the audiovisual field and creating new discourses. However, these discourses, especially among cinephiles, are distilled from past viewing experiences and are based on cumulative knowledge that encompasses appreciation for films and directors' works. The in-depth understandings and aesthetic evaluations built upon previous viewing experiences of cinema lovers form the foundation for laudatory comments about films and their creators. These productions, which can also be described as a kind of devoted labor of love, embody a common understanding that fetishizes the repeatedly emphasized object of obsession, representing a whole that contains fetishistic pleasures (Fren, 2020: 2). Supercuts, often adopted, group repeating images and form a synthesis that excludes or brackets narrative, preferred in audiovisual essays as an expression tool for cinephiles. Yet, it's essential not to overlook oppositional attitudes toward content-oriented tendencies. For example, Kevin B. Lee (2013) points out that many audiovisual essays consist only of supercuts, montages, and fan videos that merely repackage and present widespread cultural phenomena, avoiding the potential to provide a deep and critical perspective on the source materials. Conversely, Baptista (2016: 55) argues that there is no contradiction between these forms' capacity to offer a critical perspective on the source material and functioning as a new form of consumption; rather, these two characteristics support and reinforce each other. The tension between these two aspects turns them into texts representing digital culture. Thus, audiovisual essays emerge as a medium that highlights the interaction between critical analysis and cultural consumption. The purpose of making an audiovisual essay is not only to develop a stable research method but also to make the discovery process effective by leveraging the unique characteristics of audiovisual material. Therefore, it should be considered a practice where skills transferring from knowledge effect to experience effect are tested and applied.

To expand on this with examples, in Cüneyt Çakırlar's audiovisual essay, *Mothers on the Line: The Allure of Julianne Moore* (Çakırlar, 2016), he connects Moore's recurring roles between the lost mother and the sexualized mother figure, focusing on Moore's performance with examples from various films and different roles. Using supercuts, Çakırlar delves into the repeating patterns of the star image. Çakırlar (2016) brings clarity to the essence of his work by quoting Kojiman, focusing on the potential of "insisting on allure in the face of criticism" and "criticizing through affect." On the other hand, in Elif Akçalı's audiovisual essay, *Ceylan's Women: Looking | Being Looked At* (Akçalı, 2015), she points out that the common features of inaction and silence in female characters in Nuri Bilge Ceylan's films display the dynamics of a style fixed to the male gaze, and through supercuts, she exposes these motifs. Akçalı, instead of criticizing or deforming the director's amorphous view of female characters, leaves the critique to the audience's discretion by making these leitmotifs visible and handling them with a poetic style.

I believe these two audiovisual essays share common features. One recontextualizes the stylized preferences of the auteurist tradition, while the other concretizes the similarities in star performances. Their intersection set is cinephilic tendencies. At the heart of auteurist aesthetics and interest in star actors lies classic cinephilia, shaped by passion and reflecting a love for cinema. These tendencies determine the ways of intensely appreciating/criticizing films and their creative processes. The intertextuality directly relates to these tendencies, embodying the thought form of cinephilic actions as it encompasses a film's explicit or implicit connections with other films or texts. As Shambu defines (2020), this aspect of cinephilia is life organized around films. It expresses a way of existence involving a deep love and commitment to cinema. Considering this connection to thinking about and even thinking with films, it's possible to recognize intertextuality as a feature that envelops the minds of cinephiles like a network. These practices, guided by remembrance and as Grant suggests (2013: 7), explore the sensory and somatic dimensions of film viewing experience through a *déjà*-viewing epistemology, encompassing cinephiles' processes of forgetting, distortion, and reshaping in their relationship with films. Clearly, there's a tight connection between cinephilic tendencies and memory. When transferring this through audiovisual materials, constructive subjective parameters such as appropriation, recontextualization, and deformation come into play. As Hager highlights (2014: 81), audiovisual essays use the original material analytically to recompose and reframe the film's original, offering new configurations for film analysis and awakening new possibilities as a cinephilic method. However, its position in the academic world remains controversial. The objective gaze of academia and its reserved attitude towards external reality attempt to absorb and eliminate the cinephilic experience (Grant and Keathley, 2014). Understanding the contrasts between cinephilic tendencies and the academic aspects of audiovisual essays requires a close look at the steps toward institutionalization and methodological identity debates of audiovisual essays.

### **AUDIOVISUAL ESSAYS, THE TENSION BETWEEN THEORY AND PASSION**

Videographic research is stepping out of the comfort zone for academia, serving as a humble practice that creates alternatives by adopting a different methodology and way of thinking from conventional tendencies. It introduces a new way of thinking and seeing for researchers engaged in film studies, representing a new challenge and a virtue that can be embraced with flexible dedication. In this context, how visual and auditory essays can be integrated with traditional text-based academic works is fascinating. Moreover, whether this form can have its unique rhetoric is questioned. With autonomous rhetoric, the ability of visual and auditory forms to express knowledge and arguments clearly remains a matter of debate (van Den Berg and Kiss, 2016). On the other hand, according to McGoff (2017), audiovisual essays blur the boundaries between traditional criticism and academic research, adding new dimensions to media analyses. This perspective simultaneously constructs a unique multi-dimensional discourse space and homogenizes the distinctions between criticism and scientific research. According to Türkgeldi (2021: 824), video capabilities enable a transimagery approach that displays connections between images and generates new images from these connections. This mode of thinking can lay the foundation for a performative methodology in film studies.

On the other hand, audiovisual essays contribute to cinema and media studies through subjective viewpoints, interpretations, and inspirations while challenging academia's strict standards of objectivity. They correspond to a broad field of examination and experimentation within and beyond academia, enabling the production of critical, analytical, and theoretical works by recomposing visual and auditory resources through montage. By deforming and appropriating the primary source, these practices initiate mechanisms that prepare the ground for critical exploration, knowledge reproduction, and interpretation. Mittell (2019) refers to these arrangements as "deformative criticism" highlighting novel areas of critical practice that generate new forms of expression by unexpectedly transforming media objects. Similarly, the removal, displacement, or deformation of some aspects from the original work spurs new thoughts, creating fragmented knowledge clusters, reconstructing images through temporal and spatial flexibilities and imbuing audiovisual essays with a palimpsest identity. These arrangements, resulting from the closeness to the object of study, underscore the necessity of practice as a part of educational philosophy and learning. Alvarez Lopez and Martin (2014) emphasize the importance of practice, suggesting that action precedes thought. Haseman (2006: 103) highlights the significance of considering material practices—static and moving images, symbols, and digital indicators—alongside qualitative and quantitative research within the category of performative research. This foregrounds the value of practice-oriented research and illustrates how performative research encompasses a wide spectrum, including reflective practices and participant tendencies.

Audiovisual essays offer a new pathway of expression and encompass new sensations, affective states, and forms of sensory knowledge. Theory becomes a continuous performance, challenging the cartesian tradition's position of the subject in relation to epistemology. This performance characterizes the subject's new coordinates in the face of concepts like knowledge, reality, and becoming. When considering the creation process of audiovisual essays, it takes on a laboratory role, indicating the researcher's derivation of their style from subjective sources and methods. However, positioned at the opposite pole, van Den Berg and Kiss (2016) argue that the stylistic practice is not entirely compatible with academic writing and that the theoretical development of videographic rhetoric is incomplete compared to traditional text-focused formats. They emphasize that current practices are not self-sufficient and require enrichment with supportive texts. Similarly, Eriksson and Sorensen (2012: 12), inspired by Dogma95, have prepared a manifesto for audiovisual essays seen as an experimental laboratory. According to them, the first rule for these essays is to be audiovisual, and the second is to meet academic standards, contributing new observations, insights, and theories to the existing body of knowledge while being self-critical and reflective.

Considering the context of this work, I oppose the arguments put forward by van den Berg and Kiss and Eriksson and Sorensen. I argue that audiovisual essays, which also encompass subjective viewpoints, should be valued and understood in their unique forms. Moreover, I believe the mentioned approaches are insufficient and unnecessarily restrict the methodological discipline of academic writing, narrowing the potential of visual-auditory content in academic research.

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Whether within or outside academia, removing the emotional and associative qualities from audiovisual essays means losing the inspirations and creative pathways driven by cinephilic energy. This practice encourages thinking with materials as an extension of practice-based performative research. From a broad perspective, it's readily apparent that the mentioned contrasts are defined and categorized based on forms. Although the variety of forms within audiovisual essays is acknowledged, making categorization challenging (Lavik, 2012), the focus on the taxonomy of the form by numerous scholarly studies, as highlighted by Godfrey (2021: 39), indicates a systematic dominated by formal differences. The distinction between expository and poetic modes, widely accepted and developed by Keathley (2011), has been a significant foundation for understanding audiovisual essays. According to Keathley (2011: 181), the explanatory mode is mediated by verbal and written language, where even creatively manipulated works to support a specific argument are considered expository, accompanied by a written-verbal argumentative description. Conversely, the poetic mode encompasses experimental modules where creative possibilities are expanded limitlessly, emphasizing artistic forms that think along with images. Keathley (2011: 190) argues that audiovisual essays in the poetic mode resist critical authority and show resilience. Furthermore, according to O'Leary and Renga (2020: 298), while the expository mode may continue the positivist tradition denying the critic's subjectivity, the poetic mode can be seen as a product of aesthetic creativity driven by emotional investment. Grizzafi (2020: 3) suggests a hierarchy between the expository and poetic modes, implying that the poetic mode deconstructs traditional film and media studies. He highlights the potential of the poetic mode as a new tool for critiquing asymmetric acceptances in evaluation and interpretation criteria alongside methodological orientations. From this perspective, it is plausible to deduce that audiovisual essays with cinephilic tendencies lean towards the poetic form. The creativity and aesthetic sensitivity highlighted by the poetic mode, enriched with images and emotional investments, align with the emotional connections established by cinephilic tendencies through unique visuals, experimental narratives, and aesthetic innovations. However, this doesn't mean the poetic form cannot contain hypotheses tied to a particular argumentation, making it crucial to determine the fundamental criterion. The point I advocate for prioritizes evoking strong emotional and intellectual responses in both the creator and the viewer, using rich, innovative visual and auditory languages to explore multi-layered meanings. In this framework, I argue that aesthetic and emotional depth, the ability to use visual and auditory language innovatively, and the power to transform viewers' thoughts, feelings, and perceptions constitute the fundamental factors. Like Gürkan emphasizes (2019: 287), "The audio-visual essayist, possessing the same excitement a child feels when discovering, encounters both the new and the familiar. By disrupting what is already known, the audio-visual essayist asserts their subjectivity and creates something new." This approach positions hybrid forms as the key to audiovisual essays caught between academia and passion, accommodating both pedagogic and poetic preferences. Cinephilic tendency audiovisual essays, embodying both inclinations, contain "exploratory" qualities suggesting beyond speculative research.

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This is consistent with Van den Berg and Kiss (2014) argument who note that, as with studies produced about films, the boundaries between theory and critique, poetic and expository forms in audiovisual essays are blurred, which I believe stems from the ontological hybridity of audiovisual essays. Regardless of the intentions behind them, it's observable that formal choices interweave, creating permeabilities that can be identified as eclectic, fragmented, and possessing a non-linear facet. Mittell (2024) adds the impulse for exploration to the taxonomy of videographic methods, revealing the layered structure of the video format. He notes the challenge of merging videographic rhetoric without becoming lengthy and complex. Nevertheless, the amalgamation of different forms and styles transforms into a polycentric-rhizomatic structure. Cinephile-oriented audiovisual essays thrive on this hybridity and layered structure. Cinephiles reflect their inspirations from various periods and genres into their productions, allowing these works to develop a rich and diverse audiovisual language. As Rosenbaum (2010) underlines, cinephiles not only personalize their relationship with cinema through autobiographical narratives but also "objectify their subjectivity" by positioning it within a historical, cultural, and personal context. This approach emphasizes the importance of subjectivity in producing and evaluating audiovisual essays, facilitating the transition from the personal to the objective from a critical distance. To illustrate what is meant by objectifying subjectivity, consider Christian Keathley's audiovisual essay *Pass the Salt* (Keathley, 2011), which adopts the rhetoric of the expository mode, using voice-over in a creative function to establish an effective correlation with film clips. In the prologue of the essay, Keathley uses the phrase: "There's a scene in *Anatomy of a Murder* (Preminger, 1959) that looks quite simple, but I can't help feeling there's more to it than what's shown to me." These words signify a subjective nuance by appropriating a scene from the film. He then engages in structural analysis using techniques like rewinding, fast-forwarding, and slowing down, thereby objectifying subjectivity through layered analysis. The associations this audiovisual essay triggers relate to Keathley's (2006) concept of "panoramic perception." According to him cinephiles tend to focus on captivating details by maintaining a distanced approach to the screen, creating a panoramic perception with their critical viewpoint. This is not about following the narrative but about moments that emerge in nuances shaping cinephilic choices. This understanding, a reflection of the passion for cinema, forms an engagement in a passionate exploration of its aesthetic and emotional depth. As Todd McGowan (2007: 29) states, cinephilia represents a passionate approach to cinema's illusionist nature, unveiling its fundamental characteristics. Certain segments of films function as a fantasy space that appeals to individuals' collective imagination, possessing significant political and existential dimensions. The power of cinema lies not so much in its ability to reflect reality but in its capacity to transform and distort it. This distortion facilitates viewers' engagement with the interplay between fantasy and ideology, enabling interaction within this process. For cinephiles, exploring these distortions and understanding cinema's aesthetic and ideological layers presents an opportunity. Hasan Akbulut exemplifies this in his audiovisual essay *Passion of The Audience and Love at Last Glance: What Was Love?* (Akbulut, 2023) using a key scene from the iconic Turkish film *Selvi Boylum Al Yazmalım* (Yılmaz, 1977) In this scene, the female lead is forced to choose between two men, one representing love and the other labor.

She chooses labor, leading to a melancholic finale where labor triumphs over the audience's desires. Akbulut creatively reverses this final scene in his audiovisual essay, rewinding to a moment in another film *Gönderilmemiş Mektuplar* (Kurçenli, 2003), where the female character and the man representing love share a kiss, thereby crafting a new finale through a phantasmagorical arrangement that warps reality. This satisfies the cinephilic passion by creating a new form of jouissance. Thus, the apparent tension between audiovisual essays and cinephilic desires with academic form should not be viewed as a divisive element but rather as a convergence point of diversity and discoveries. This understanding will facilitate cross-disciplinary approaches and the notion of hybridity, enabling the exploration of new creative pursuits and innovative methodologies in academic work.

### **DIALOGIC PROCESSES BETWEEN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AND AUDIOVISUAL ESSAYS**

Autoethnography, as defined by Ellis (2004; Ellis et al., 2011), is a research approach based on the process of using personal experiences (auto) to describe cultural experiences (ethno) and systematically examine these descriptions (graphy). It embraces the researcher's impact, significance, and emotionality in the study, placing these elements at the core of the research rather than ignoring or assuming their absence. Individuals in autoethnography bring their pasts, views, and ideas into the work, which does not mean the work solely consists of or lacks anything other than individual perspectives; instead, it acknowledges the presence of individuals in everything experienced and created (Adams and Jones, 2018: 142). This situation brings various challenges. One challenge of autoethnography, as mentioned by Bochner and Ellis (2016), is the necessity to skillfully organize life to enhance readers' understanding of both the author's life and their own. This requires narrating stories that reflect past events, confront difficult experiences and dissonant identities, and impart a sense of movement and transformation to the reader. In a way, making oneself vulnerable, exposing one's strengths, weaknesses, and deepest thoughts for others to critique, can be seen as marking the crossroads in one's life, defining "epiphanic" moments that determine the course of one's life (Forber-Pratt, 2015: 822). These turning points can be considered moments of crisis that drive individuals to analyze and internalize their experiences. While these epiphanic moments are subjective and personal, they can potentially affect transformative insights and shared understandings for others.

From a broad perspective, audiovisual essays can also allow viewers to form a personal connection with the author's or creator's experiences, even prompting them to reflect on similar epiphanic moments in their own lives. Audiovisual essays with a cinephilic tendency, defined by the principle of objectifying subjectivity, share a similar ethos with autoethnography. Drawing from the correlation established by Eriksson and Sorensen (2012) between audiovisual essays and autoethnography, it's possible to see how these perspectives align with practice-based research. Both fields commonly focus on the individual's self, practice, and work.

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While autoethnography seeks to decolonize the positivist tradition (Chawla and Atay, 2018; Dutta, 2018), audiovisual essays decolonize the tradition of text-based academic writing. The significance of autoethnography lies not just in its existence but in its purpose: to engage with personal stories not just analytically but interactively, emphasizing sharing, repeating, and storytelling (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 744), qualities exemplified in Catherine Grant's work. As noted by O'Leary and Renga (2020: 290), Grant's works aim not just to illustrate an argument but to invite different interpretations through questioning. Grant's initial venture into audiovisual essays is depicted as a method for capturing personal historical events and infusing them with fresh utility. This underscores the innovative avenues available to cinephiles in the digital era, such as crafting elaborate archives (Grant, 2020: 58).

The primary goal of autoethnography is to produce texts that can reach beyond academic circles to wider audiences (Adams, Ellis and Jones, 2017). Similarly, audiovisual essays tend to achieve visibility, necessitating this approach. Lee (2021: 33) describes audiovisual essays as a Trojan horse, marking them as an autonomous space that expands cinema culture to broader audiences. The similarities between these two fields embody decentralizing intentions while fostering alternative ways of seeing and knowing.

"The questioning of the dominant scientific paradigm, the making of room for other ways of knowing, and the growing emphasis on the power of research to change the world create a space for the sharing of unique, subjective, and evocative stories of experience that contribute to our understanding of the social world and allow us to reflect on what could be different because of what we have learned" (Wall, 2006: 148).

This perspective encourages diversity in knowledge production and presentation, inclusivity in research methodologies, and aims to engage in dialogue beyond academia, expanding forms of representation. According to Denzin (2006: 423), autoethnography is performative, pedagogical, and political, challenging hegemonic ways of seeing and representing by adopting a particular way of seeing and being. Similarly, audiovisual essays offer a medium that utilizes not just sensory and bodily experiences but also directly employs the body, memories, intuitions, and imperfections (Kreutzer and Binotto, 2023). Likewise, autoethnographic works are associated with researchers exposing themselves through their experiences when addressing sensitive topics. This process of self-disclosure becomes part of the appeal of the study as researchers try to convey in detail the pains, sorrows, losses, and other emotions they experience during life's challenges. Vulnerability is one factor that draws the reader's interest in the work (Ngunjiri, Hernandez, and Chang, 2010: 8). While there are concerns about openly displaying these vulnerabilities, it can also be liberating to some extent. For instance, Evelyn Kreutzer discusses audiovisual essays, noting the impact of repeatedly used texts, images, and sounds that become a product of multiple sources. She raises a critical question about the relationship between vulnerability and academic accountability, feeling less inhibited to post a short video on her Vimeo channel, especially if it's in a more poetic or personal tone (Kreutzer and Binotto, 2023).

Likewise, autoethnographic works are associated with researchers exposing themselves through their experiences when addressing sensitive topics. This process of self-disclosure becomes part of the appeal of the study as researchers try to convey in detail the pains, sorrows, losses, and other emotions they experience during life's challenges. Vulnerability is one factor that draws the reader's interest in the work (Ngunjiri, Hernandez, and Chang, 2010: 8). While there are concerns about openly displaying these vulnerabilities, it can also be liberating to some extent. For instance, Evelyn Kreutzer discusses audiovisual essays, noting the impact of repeatedly used texts, images, and sounds that become a product of multiple sources. She raises a critical question about the relationship between vulnerability and academic accountability, feeling less inhibited to post a short video on her Vimeo channel, especially if it's in a more poetic or personal tone (Kreutzer and Binotto, 2023). This topic of vulnerability can also be explored in other contexts. For example, Chloé Galibert-Laîné's exceptional audiovisual essay *The Eye was in the Tomb and Stared at Daney* (Galibert-Laîné, 2017) probes the effect of a scene from *Eyes Without a Face* (Franju, 1960) on Serge Daney, starting from Daney's fears and memory. By appropriating these feelings, she constructs a prosthetic memory. Centering on the audio-visual relationship, this essay features hybrid forms that point to cinephilia while transferring vulnerabilities and fears. Designed essentially as a desktop documentary, it blends expository and poetic formal choices, emerging as an eclectic narrative. Starting from Daney's cinephilic moment, Galibert-Laîné reflects on her recollections related to *Shallow Grave* (Boyle, 1994), eventually inviting the viewer to ponder with her: "Would Daney remember that? Would he have noticed it in the first place? In the same way, isn't the music in the scene that haunts my own nightmares?" This instance, which can also be described as screen trauma, becomes an autoethnographic excavation starting from another's thoughts. Ariel Avissar and Evelyn Kreutzer have curated *Once Upon a Screen": Screen Traumas and Cinephilic Hauntings* for the 15th issue of *The Cine-Files* journal, directly addressing this topic. In the introduction, they express their intent:

"We wondered whether a videographic form of exposure therapy, placing the source of our trauma 'under the scalpel' of the editing software, might reverse the ghostly power that these haunting sounds and images imposed on us, specifically by countering memories of passive subjection with the active control over filmic motion and temporality that we presume to hold as video essayists" (Avissar and Kreutzer, 2020).

In light of these statements, using audiovisual essays as a methodology for autoethnographic research enriches how researchers express their experiences and subjective realities. This approach enables individuals to convey sensitive situations from their perspectives and life stories through visual and auditory tools. Indeed, as Keathley (2020) expands on this relationship to include intuition, he emphasizes the importance of not excluding emotion from reason but rather expanding the experience through an unstructured thought process. The audience empathizes and feels in tune with the producer's experience and intuitions in these productions.

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The repetitions in Donnelly's text create a kind of acoustic echo in Zecchi's timeline, turning into a melody wandering through the corridors of memory. These melodic echoes activate the viewer's intuition, inviting them into a cohesive audiovisual experience. In another example, *Uncanny Fusion* Catherine Grant (2014) explores the connection between a scene in Roberto Rossellini's "Journey to Italy" and her memories of watching *The Hideaways* (Cook, 1973) at age 13. Grant depicts the aesthetic connection and somatic enlightenment moment she establishes between these two films as an intuitive epiphany, later sharing:

"Watching it now, it is my video's evocation of an environment of mystery and its distilled staging of processes of decryption and sudden discovery that gesture towards what was perhaps most at stake, for me, in this uncanny fusion: my first experience of a 'magical' connection to *The Hideaways*" (Keathley and Grant, 2014).

In sequentially listing these examples, I aim to highlight the apparent similarities between audiovisual essays and autoethnographic methodology. However, I want to take this discussion further by proposing that audiovisual essays can be effectively used in autoethnographic research. To conclude this section, I'd like to mention one last example. In a workshop titled *Scholarship in Sound & Image* at Middlebury College in 2015, led by Jason Mittell and Christian Keathley, an audiovisual essay titled *Encounters* (Talbot, 2016) produced by Michael Talbot focused on his memories related to New Argentine Cinemas in 2001. Participating in Talbot's memory process, which deepened his understanding of another culture through cinema, feels like witnessing his fragmented recollections. Talbot makes his memories visible through brief yet detailed images, bringing his experience closer to the audience. His approach incorporates a significant dialectic. Talbot opts to use voice-over not to impose or override the images but to offer hints. Furthermore, it's possible to note the dominance of poeticism throughout the visual and auditory essay. The statement at the video's end, "I went to Argentina in 2001 but never left home" implies Talbot embarked on a mental and emotional journey. This demonstrates how experiences through cinema allow an individual to construct a world of memory and imagination beyond geographical boundaries. In this context, cinephilia becomes a concrete tool through which emotions are transmitted visually and auditorily, evoking a sort of spiritual journey. Talbot has made the following statement about his work:

I undertook making this video essay to harness my fading memories of cinematic encounters more than a decade old. It is not intended to offer definitive answers but to raise questions--to serve as a point of departure for reflections on the structures of film circulation that brought me, and so many others, to study the medium (Talbot, 2016).

In autoethnographic research, the existential connection points of the performer hold central importance. These evolve throughout the research, battling their incongruities and bearing a reflective quality.

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On the other hand, concretized autoethnographic research is a collaboration that people form with culture and time. These works reflect on the past and engage in dialogue with it, serving as a cultural bulletin board, as Spyr (2001: 719) emphasizes, that people can read and interpret within the context of their own experiences. Practicing autoethnography provides a space within the academic discipline for the liberation of voice and body. Accordingly, identifying the shared axes between videographic criticism and autoethnography, and pursuing the potentials that can emerge on the axis of self-reflection, is necessary. The synergy between videographic criticism and autoethnography expands the sharing and analysis of individual experiences; these experiences show potential to complement each other within social, cultural, and theoretical frameworks.

### CONCLUSION

Although I defend audiovisual essays as a legitimate and alternative medium, my preference for using the traditional academic form, at first glance, may seem contradictory. However, it's crucial to open up the theoretical aspect to ensure its institutional recognition. Throughout the research, I discussed how configurations spawned from cinephilic tendencies find maneuvering space with audiovisual tools. Then, I delved into its relationship with autoethnographic approaches to highlight the potential this connection creates. While avoiding a teleological error—viewing the outcomes as a predetermined process—I didn't include my experiences. Instead of my production processes or audiovisual essays, I chose a range created by other practitioners, where cinephilic tendencies are prominently visible, to form a spectrum. By making the similarities with autoethnographic approaches visible, I aimed to demonstrate how these works explore and express the interaction between personal experiences and cultural critiques. However, as audiovisual essays are recognized as a research methodology in their own right, I invited consideration of the dialogue and potential between autoethnography and audiovisual essays. Nonetheless, I argue that audiovisual essays themselves, with these sensitivities in mind, might be considered a technique for use in creative autoethnographic work. As Manning and Adams (2015: 193–194) suggest, creators of creative-artistic autoethnographies focus on aesthetic beauty, compelling and clear stories, and use various formats to express their work, including poetry (Faulkner, 2017; Maurino, 2016), performance (Pelias, 2018; Denzin, 2018), music and sound (Bakan, 2014; Daly, 2022; Findlay-Walsh, 2018), and blogs (Boylorn, 2013; Lapadat, 2020). In this work, I proposed how autoethnography could be conducted consciously or unconsciously through audiovisual essays, exemplifying how this medium could explore and express personal experiences and memories centered around films. I mentioned that these productions often contain hybrid forms, melting the techniques of expository and poetic forms in a crucible. Yet, I observed they consist of memories brought along by the cinephilic experience. I identified narratives predominated by tangible moments where memory and the act of remembering are central. As Keathley (2020) states, every cinema experience exists as part of a network that relates itself to other experiences, and its value is defined by the quality of its connections to other experiences. Sharing any of these experiences, especially the unique ones, inevitably relates this experience to other individuals and their experiences.

Therefore, I propose that the value of the subjective, capable of being presented through audiovisual essays, can be adopted as a technique usable in autoethnographic research.

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