Automethodology: Tracing a Home for Praxis-Oriented Ethnography

Sandra L. Pensoneau-Conway
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
United States

Satoshi Toyosaki
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
United States

Abstract

The authors trace the development of ethnographic practices according to the methodological assumptions of ethnographers within different historical periods. As communication scholars, the authors find Calvin O. Schrag's conceptualization of the self to be informative and advantageous for navigating an ethnographic sense of 'self' in the current status of the methodological contestation. Borrowing from Schrag's work, which focuses on communicative praxis in understanding the self, this article explores an innovative methodological framework called automethodology. By examining the deployment and emplotment of the self within the automethods of autobiography, autoethnography, narrative co-construction, community autoethnography, critical complete-member ethnography, reflexive ethnography, autoperformance, and layered account, the authors develop epistemological foundations for praxis-oriented ethnographers. Throughout this journey, the authors end up situating themselves in a place they consider home—in the practices of automethodology.

Keywords: automethods, epistemology, ethnography, intersubjectivity, praxis, self

Within contemporary academia, ethnography has been expanding its methodological family within and across multiple disciplines (Wilcott, 1999). In such an extended family structure, there have been methodological renovations among various theoretical, methodological, and epistemological assumptions. As a qualitative method, ethnography has been walking through such renovations, which Denzin and Lincoln (2005) trace from ethnography's origin of "the traditional period" (from the early 1900s to WWII) (pp. 14-15) – characterized by pseudo-objectivist criteria – to the "methodologically contested present" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005, p. 1116). In the current period, researchers can no longer be pegged into a particular, singular category of "perspectives, interpretive practices, or paradigms", and are guided by and turn toward "postmodern perspectives, the critical turn, . . . the narrative or rhetorical turn, and the turn toward a rising tide of *voices*" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005, p. 1115).

As ethnographers, we find ourselves in this tricky moment. Contemporary ethnographic movements and innovations must respond to different and differing social conditions than what the formative ethnographers had in mind while legitimating ethnography as a social scientific methodology. No longer are we able to assume monologic, homogenous cultural groups as exoticized targets at which our cultural interpretations are aimed. No longer are we able to ignore the colonizing tendencies—and the colonizing history—of ethnographic practices. No longer are we able to ignore the ethical implications and complications we bring to and encounter in the field as researchers. No longer are we able to ignore the complexities of defining (or not) a "field." No longer are we able to ignore the politics of representation in ethnographic processes and products. No longer are we able to assume ethnography as the progeny of anthropology, but instead, we must recognize its interdisciplinarity, along with the theories and intricacies such interdisciplinarity brings. Indeed, we find ourselves in the tricky moment of ethnographic family expansion; however, we see this tricky moment as an opportunity for furthering the ethnographic paradigm.

We believe that one productive way to approach this tricky moment is through Calvin O. Schrag's (1986; 1997; 2003) philosophical explorations of the praxis-oriented self and intersubjectivity. Schrag, distinguished professor of philosophy at Purdue University, centralizes communicative praxis in underpinning those concepts, to which we as communication scholars are drawn and which we as ethnographers understand as the key compass for exploring a new possibility of ethnography. By focusing on communicative praxis, he uses praxiology as a metatheoretical core in understanding the ontological, epistemological, and axiological components of the self, rendering intersubjectivity as a communicative space of possibility for transversal rationality (Bell, 2002; Dauenhauer, 2002). Schrag's work helps us understand the innovative embodiment of the ethnographer self—his or her discourse, action, and the sense of being together with others (communal participation) in research processes.

In this essay, we refer to a collection of communication research methods which centralize the praxis-oriented self as automethodological. The navigational compass for the terrain of the methodologically contested present is buried in the automethodologists' performance of their praxis-oriented selves in their research practices. It is this notion of the praxis-oriented self to which we refer in order to navigate contemporary ethnography as a more democratic, critical, and qualitative research enterprise. Such theoretical and methodological navigation is the goal of this essay.

With this goal in mind, we first trace the major methodological contestations in ethnography by reviewing literature. Second, we establish Schrag's (1986; 1997; 2003) philosophical work on the praxis-oriented self and intersubjectivity as our theoretical framework through which, third, we define automethodology, a particular family of ethnographic methods, and provide a handful of

automethods as examples. The goal of the fourth and final section of this essay is twofold: we theorize automethodology by identifying several characteristics, which we call methodological pillars, and we hope to make a case for automethodology as new home for post-postmodern or postcritical ethnography (Madison, 2005, p. 7).

Contested Past and Present of Ethnography

In her brief historical sketch of ethnography, Tedlock (2000) explains that ethnography began on the basis of reports by "everyday" travelers (such as missionaries and government officials). Scientists provided them with questionnaires to fill out on their travels, and encouraged them to bring home information the scientists could then use to make claims about other cultures. These questionnaires were filled with "ethnocentric ideas and leading questions" (p. 456). Tedlock (1991) calls these first everyday ethnographers "amateur observer[s]" whose travels into the field provided the material for "armchair anthropologists" (p. 69). Though these questionnaires underwent a series of revisions, scientists began to feel that they could obtain perhaps more accurate or reliable information if they conducted their own fieldwork; thus surfaced trained ethnographers specifically after WWI whose primary task was to study and create order out of the chaos of the war (Tedlock, 1991). After the 1920s, participant-observation became the norm. With their infant understanding of participant-observation, ethnographers became scientists and, with that status, gained validity both publicly and professionally (Clifford, 1983). Scientific value, thus, became bestowed upon the whole endeavor of ethnography.

As a corollary, ethnography inherited scientific criteria. While ethnography today is considered to be a qualitative method, the scientist-ethnographers based their research practices on positivism. The 'quality' of the qualitative research was to be evaluated through (post)positivistic criteria. Toulmin (cited in Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) explains that positivism was founded on traditional Euro-Western natural or physical science models, which presumed an external, knowable, factual reality, existing independently from the researcher. Other (post)positivist criteria included probability (frequency as an epistemology), repetition, and replication. These criteria helped render an image of isolation and identification of cultural patterns (frequency, repetition, and replication) as 'knowing.' Basing their research in these (post)positivistic criteria legitimated ethnographers as scientists.

Since then, there have been many internal renovations of the ethnographic enterprise as it transforms itself as interpretive/critical research. First, traditional (functionalist and realist) ethnographers have been criticized for their cultural outsider status in relation to their epistemological authority in discovering knowledge about cultural others. The emergence of ethnography of cultural others and its practical application were imbued with the political and economic landscape of the period. Chambers (2000) remarks that by the time anthropology became its own discipline, much of non-Western society was "in one way or another politically or economically subject to Western nations" (p. 853). The practical applications of ethnography, then, by Tedlock's (1991) amateur observers, her armchair anthropologists, and Clifford's (1983) post-WWI ethnographers, focused on ways of knowing cultural others which helped colonial administrators govern those cultural others under Western colonial rule and authority. While those practical applications became understood as rather unethical to many ethnographers of today, colonial methodological mechanics remained.

For many contemporary ethnographers, immersing in (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) and understanding "the lives of others different from [themselves]" (Wilcott, 1999, p. 282) are primary research goals. The "outsider looking in" perspective (Wilcott, 1999, p. 282) is predicated upon the (post)positivistic presumption of the epistemological authority of gaining

knowledge of another culture. In *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, Lofland and Lofland (1995) remark that a fieldworker's goal is to collect the "*richest possible data*," which ideally comes about through prolonged, face-to-face interaction with members of a culture (p. 16). This "naturalistic penchant" for immersed interaction reflects an epistemological orientation, the central tenets of which are: "(1) that face-to-face interaction is the fullest condition of participating in the mind of another human being, and (2) that you must participate in the mind of another human being (in sociological terms, 'take the role of the other') to acquire social knowledge" (p. 16). For many postmodern scholars, the ethnography of cultural others legitimated by such central tenets, carries on colonizing tendencies via the modernist faith of the "scientist" as "epistemological bedrock" (Dallmayr, 2002, p. 131). The ethnography of cultural others becomes 'colonial' because of its reliance on a 'scientist' entering the space of an 'exotic' culture and claiming to 'know' that culture and the people who live in and create it.

Second, the 'scientist' authority in ethnography in relation to the practice of participant observation together brought forth interdisciplinary turmoil on the politics of experiential authority and the crisis of representation. "I was there" became the ethnographer's ethos and was enough to merit the perceived authority of the ethnographer who, via his or her participant observation, constructs the cultural other (Clifford, 1983, p. 128). It was the voice of the ethnographer that was given the power to claim and publicize knowledge of another culture. It is clear that, given the colonial context in which early ethnographers worked, their ethnographic methods entailed a sort of help-from-without instead of a working-from-within mentality. That is, ethnographers, largely members of dominant cultures, proposed to come in from the outside and help native peoples, without questioning the colonizing tendencies of such proposals.

What is at issue here is the crisis of representation so often talked about in critical qualitative research. Jameson (1984), in his forward to Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, describes the crisis of representation:

> [A crisis] in which an essentially realistic epistemology, which conceives of representation as the reproduction, for subjectivity, of an objectivity that lies outside it—projects a mirror theory of knowledge and art, whose fundamental evaluative categories are those of adequacy, accuracy, and Truth itself. (p. viii)

This explication of the crisis of representation speaks to the early purposes of ethnography: the *reproduction* of culture (the object) for colonial administrators (the subject), and the move of scientists to engage in their own fieldwork in order to gain more *accurate* knowledge. The crisis of representation results from recognizing that we can never directly reproduce lived experiences through the ways we represent it. This is a 'crisis' because if we cannot directly reproduce these experiences of and within a culture, then how are we to ever claim 'knowledge' of that culture?

Third, the crisis of representation challenged the 'scientist' authority, and interpretive ethnography emerged. The field of anthropology, where ethnography originated, shifted into what Clifford (1983) calls the "second moment in the dialectic of experience," wherein interpretation became the norm of practice (p. 130). Interpretation in this sense was a move to recognize the constructed nature of ethnographic accounts, "an increasing visibility of the creative (and in a broad sense, poetic) processes by which 'cultural' objects are invented and treated as meaningful" (p. 130). We now can identify a shift from ethnography as a practice of representation to "ethnography [as] the interpretation of cultures" (Clifford, 1983, p. 131) through the practice of thick description (Geertz, 1973). Rather than simply reporting on distanced, hence 'objective' observations, ethnographers began to recognize that what they were doing was interpreting their observations. With the shift from report to interpretation came a slight shift in conception of

voice. While the ethnographer still held epistemological authority, there was at least some recognition that this came about through interpretation, and necessarily explicit recognition of the subjective quality of ethnography.

Fourth, the 'scientist' authority was, heads on, challenged by the postmodern construction of the (ethnographer) self and deconstruction of author. As Clifford (1983) warns, "Quotations are always staged by the quoter, and tend to serve merely as examples, or confirming testimonies. Looking beyond quotation, one might imagine a more radical polyphony that would 'do the natives and ethnographer in different voices'" (p. 139). *Interpretive anthropology* funded the textual view of culture, meaning that ethnographers began to recognize that the idea of culture is one of a collection of texts. This move "has contributed significantly to the defamiliarization of ethnographic authority" (Clifford, 1983, p. 133) because it cannot be simply about experience ("I was there") or about interpretation. Rather, "it becomes necessary to conceive ethnography, not as the experience and interpretation of a circumscribed 'other' reality," but as a constructed reality in which all participants (including ethnographer, cultural members, and perhaps even readers) contribute to the sense-making process (p. 133). We can easily see how the authority of the ethnographer has continued to be called into question. Moreover, following from Bakhtin, "the words of ethnographic writing, then, cannot be construed as monological, as the authoritative statement about, or interpretation of, an abstracted, textualized reality" (Clifford, 1983, p. 133). This shift from Other to the Self *and* Other "reflects today's general intellectual climate of epistemological doubt" (Tedlock, 1991, p. 79).

The shift from Self to Self *and* Other calls into question what it means to construct both a Self *and* an Other in ethnographic processes. Further, if we want to maintain the Self/Other dichotomy, we have to ask, how is an ethnographer to draw the line between the two? Or perhaps, more importantly, should we draw such a line? Traditional ethnographers sought to remain outsiders—to keep their Selves to their Selves and preserve the Other as the Other—because too much immersion within the culture would invite the postmodern messiness of no authority. Similarly, though in contrast, ethnographers shouldn't strive to be complete outsiders, either (according to tradition). If we are complete outsiders, how, then, are we to understand subtle meanings and practices of a culture enough to 'catch' them? Clifford (1983) suggests that work by scholars such as Edward Said and Paulin Hountondji demonstrate that ethnography necessarily relies on dichotomies and the construction of a separate Self and Other, but within that, the ethnographer can (and should) still trouble those dichotomies and constructions. Contemporary postmodern ethnographers seek to trouble this dichotomy, and instead, aim to produce more engaging, complex, complicated, and collaborative ethnographies. Ethnographic authority isn't eliminated; however, it has been dispersed and displaced.

We have traced several, not all, moments of significant methodological contestations in the ethnographic enterprise. We understand these moments are opportunities for methodological innovations. While we appreciate the trajectory on which the enterprise has walked in the past, we see a need to renovate our ethnographic house, and to move it towards a democratic methodology of culture which opens up our hearts and space for a particular kind of understanding of culture and for dialogue. We hope to address such understanding later in this essay. We are particularly interested in the fourth moment of the methodological contestation above; we believe it is the core contestation which ripples to others. The methodological shift from Other to the Self *and* Other merits our vigilant attention. In hoping to establish a clear theoretical framework through which we make a persuasive case for a particular ethnographic practice in this essay, we now introduce Schrag's (1986; 1997; 2003) works, along with others, on the praxis-oriented self and intersubjectivity.

Calvin O. Schrag's Praxis-Oriented Self and Intersubjectivity

We turn to Schrag (1986; 1997) and his theory of the self as constituted within communicative praxis. In his 1986 book, *Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity*, Schrag situates subjectivity within the space of communicative praxis. This space, he asserts, encompasses "the interplay of thought, language[/discourse], and action . . . contextualized in a world . . ." (p. 6). This space relies on the intersections of thought, discourse, and action, and necessitates the recognition of the overall situatedness (temporal, social, ideological) of self and other. It is within the space of communicative praxis that 'implicated' subjects are constituted. An 'implicated' subject is a subject which arises – is implicated within – communicative praxis. Through thought, discourse, and action, subjects come to 'be,' though this 'being' is not ontologically pre-given for Schrag. He (1986) argues, "The subject . . . is announced in the conversation and in the participatory social practices" (p. 143). Bell (2002) explains that "the self 'called into being through community and communication' is enmeshed in a complex network of social practices and relations with others" (p. 172). We can see here how subjectivity for Schrag is not pre-given or fundamental, but constructed. Thus, nothing we do is wholly individual. Schrag makes a point of explaining how the 'I' is always interconnected and inseparable with the 'you.' He says, "The 'I' and the 'you' thus need to be seen as coemergents within a more encompassing intentional fabric of intersubjectivity" (1986, p. 125). Similarly, for Giddens (1991), the communicative act of coemerging in such an intersubjective way helps one reflexively understand the self in the very communicative act, instead of one's individual subjectivity conditioning the possibility for the coemergence and intersubjectivity.

Schrag (1986) is not alone in highlighting the philosophical significance of the relationship between the self and the communicative. Habermas (1979; 1984; 1990), for example, sees the transformative nature of communication as vital in understanding ego identity. "Habermas is after a notion of ego identity that centers about the ability to realize oneself under conditions of communicatively shared intersubjectivity" (McCarthy, 1984, p. xxiii). Intersubjectivity as constituted within the space of communicative praxis necessitates the subject as praxis-oriented. Schrag (1986) translates "praxis" into "'practice,'. . . 'action,' 'performance,' or 'accomplishment'" (pp. 18-19). We find Lather's (1991) definition of praxis useful in understanding Schrag's praxis-oriented self:

> Praxis is the self-creative activity through which we make the world . . . . The requirements of praxis are theory both relevant to the world and nurtured by actions in it, and an action component in its own theorizing process that grows out of practical political grounding. (p. 11-12)

Thus, the praxis-oriented self is simultaneously self-generative, theory-driven/-generative, social, and performative.

Schrag (1986) conceives of this communicative praxis as a three-dimensional space, viewing thought, discourse, and action as each "*about* something, *by* someone, and *for* someone" (p. viii). This threefold character of communicative praxis constitutes subjects as praxis-oriented, active subjects. A praxis-oriented subject is a subject directed toward and constituted by performance, characterized by the three concepts of temporality, multiplicity, and embodiment. First, situating subjectivity within the space of communicative praxis turns the subject into "an event of temporalization" (Schrag, 1986, p. 146). Though the subject is constituted in the present, this present is "a *living* present coming from a past and projecting into a future" (Schrag, 1986, p. 146), oftentimes, generating a restoration of the past. However, this restoration is not a mirroring, but a "reclamation that continues to inform the living present" (Schrag, 1986, p. 147). Here,

restoration gives us a way to understand the absence of the past as constitutive of the present. In the present, we experience a simultaneous absence of the 'already' (the past) and the 'not yet' (future) (Schrag, 1986). The living present is infused with possibility in the ways we can actualize visions of the future informed by the past. Along with this, Schrag (1986) explains that our actions and our discourse are informed by sedimented ideologies and motivations. The ways these ideologies and motivations play themselves out in our daily lives "need to be detailed and described" (p. 39). Therefore, understanding how the self is implicated within the space of communicative praxis involves recognizing the sedimented ideologies and motivations that inform how the self (and therefore, the other) is interpreted.

Second, Schrag (1986) indicates that the subject situated within communicative praxis is constituted as "multiplex personae" (p. 148). The 'who' of communicative praxis – the one who engages in thought, discourse, and action – is never a solid, fixed, unified subject. The contextuality of subjectivity necessitates its multiplexity. Also, when we speak of the subject, there is no one referent to which we can point. Situating the subject within communicative praxis calls us not to look for what the subject truly is because there is no one, true (solid, fixed) subject. Rather, we aim for descriptions and interpretations of the praxis-oriented subject in the actual context of subjective performances. There are a myriad of performances (and interpretations of those performances) that could actualize in any given communicative moment. For example, we can at once perform our subjectivities as raced, gendered, classed beings. We can also at once provide multiple interpretations of those contextually situated subjectivities.

Finally, as praxis-oriented, subjectivity as situated within communicative praxis is constituted as intersubjectively embodied. Gestures embody a speaker. Texts embody their authors, with each reading a revisiting (not a reproducing) of that embodiment. Social actions embody a social actor (Schrag, 1986). These embodiments situate subjects within a space of intersubjectivity. We are constituted through our embodiment, which is a response to others with whom we are intersubjective coemergents. We come to know one another through those embodied relationships. Recognizing our own embodied subjectivities is recognizing our social embodied subjectivities. Our embodied practices that allow us to know one another as subjects take place within social contexts. For example, when I am in conversation with another person, it is not simply 'I,' nor is it simply 'I' and 'you.' Rather, 'we' are situated within a larger social context (larger than only you or only I), which informs our embodied subjectivities.

Schrag's contemplation continued on in his 1997 book titled The Self after Postmodernity with his dissatisfaction against both modernist and postmodernist configurations of the self. Modernism fantazies Cartesian *cogito* or the self/mind as "epistemological bedrock"; postmodernism debunks epistemological authority and throws away "'every sense of self'" (Dallmayr, 2002 p. 131). The postmodern self is too abstract, lacking substance and displacing – and sometimes jettisoning – agency from the self as it is dissolved (Dauenhauer, 2002). Schrag (1997) writes the following passage in describing the self after postmodernity:

> In the aftermath of the deconstruction of traditional metaphysics and epistemology, a new self emerges, like the phoenix arising from its ashes—a praxis-oriented self, defined by its communicative practices, oriented toward an understanding of itself in its discourse, its action, its being with others, and its experience of transcendence. (p. 9)

The very nature of the praxis-oriented self, the culmination of discourse, action, being with others, and transcendental experience, point to its own ethico-moral considerations (Dauenhauer, 2002), as the praxis-oriented self is, indeed, a culmination and succession of sociohistorical

embodiments. The praxis-oriented self is axiologically conceptualized with its ethico-moral responsibility bestowed upon its own constructs of temporality, multiplexity, and embodiment.

Automethodology: Definition

Along the streets of intersubjectivity, we find ourselves nearing our ethnographic home, which we call 'automethodology.' Simply breaking down the term – an elementary but perhaps no less useful exercise – provides insight into our project here.

> 'auto' = self (from the Greek αυτο)
> 'method' = process of knowledge discovery and creation
> '-ology' = knowledge, theory
> Automethodology = knowledge and theory about method about the self
> Automethodology = knowledge and theory about method by the self
> Automethodology = knowledge and theory about method for the self

Does this sound familiar? Try this on for size: An automethod is a method "*about* [the self], *by* [the self], and *for* [the self]" (Schrag, 1986, p. viii).

We find it necessary (as have contemporary others working with/in ethnography) to understand the role of the self within ethnography. Sclater's (2003) nested self allows us to understand how our own experiences within various cultural locations can provide insight into culture. Thus, the idea of 'auto,' or 'self,' finds a home within contemporary methods about/by/for the self [the praxis-oriented self (Schrag, 1986; 1997)], and within the ethnographic moments of intersubjective coemergence and co-construcion. Such intersubjectivity embedded in ethnographic research is the heart of automethodology. Infusing ethnographic practices with 'auto' has a variety of implications:

(1) The ethnographer can no longer claim ethnographic authority over and ownership of knowledge about the 'other,' as the self becomes the other.
(2) The line between the ethnographic self and the ethnographic other becomes blurred, as the seemingly distant two are merged into (an albeit slippery) one.
(3) The self is fragmented, as the ethnographic process and product highlight the contingencies associated with working to understand and articulate a singular, solid sense of self.
(4) The situated self moves to the forefront, illuminating the ways that the individual is never *merely* an individual, but an individual situated in a myriad of contexts, such as cultural, geographical, historical, political, and social. It is the interaction of the self and the self's situations that serves as the ethnographic data.

We use the term 'automethods' deliberately, to acknowledge the various ways of writing about, understanding, constructing, and performing the self within critical qualitative research—and no less, within critical, qualitative ethnography. We mean automethods to describe any sort of qualitative method—critical in nature—that accepts and underscores the implications outlined above. We describe a handful of such methods below, offer several exemplars of each, and paint a picture of the praxis-oriented self as conceptualized within each.

Automethods: Examples

Autobiography

Autobiography refers to an account of one's life written by oneself. Here, the self is generally assumed to be in relationship with others, but not necessarily intersubjectively constituted within those relationships. Autobiography is often written for a popular audience, and makes use of anecdotal experiences in order to capture the autobiographer's life as a whole, as an accumulation of events leading up to the present moment. Here, the self is accepted as a singular entity constructed additively.

Autobiography is a well-liked genre of popular literature. One can find autobiographies of many different types of people, including celebrities (such as comedian Kathy Griffin and actor Rob Lowe), politicians and historical figures (such as peace activist Ghandi and politician Shirley Chisholm), and 'everyday' people who have gained widespread notoriety (such as Paralympics competitor Bob Bardwell and the well-known Helen Keller). In her 1989 *Autobiographical Voice: Race, Gender, and Self-Portraiture*, Francoise Lionnet described the autobiography of literary figure Zora Neale Hurston as "autoethnography," writing that Hurston's autobiography is "the defining of one's subjective ethnicity as mediated through language, history, and ethnographical analysis; in short, that the book amounts to a kind of 'figural anthropology' of the self" (p. 99). Thus, we get the sense that autobiography can, in some way, give rise to autoethnography, the next automethod we discuss below.

Autoethnography

Ellis (in Ellis & Bochner, 2006) and Denzin (2006) conceive of autoethnography as a change agent. Ellis and Bochner (2006) explain autoethnography as "unruly, dangerous, vulnerable, rebellious, and creative" (p. 433). In this postmodern research praxis, the autoethnographic self offers his or her "personal body and felt experience as research instrument" (Banks & Banks, 2000, p. 234) and research site/data. Autoethnography's simultaneous treatment of the researcher self as interrogative instrument and site renders biographical, narrative, and self-reflexive turns in ethnographic inquiry (p. 234). Locating and theorizing the ethnographic self within these methodological turns, Ellis (2004) constructs the autoethnographic self as a particular kind of epistemological agent. We cite her at length here:

> Back and forth autoethnographers gaze: First they look through an ethnographic wide angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition. (p. 37-38)

Autoethnographies connect ethnography, culture, and performance and ought to be "thought of as processes, as events, in short, as acts rather than artifacts" (Lockford, 2002, p. 91). Thus, instead of a replaceable positivist mind or a set of trained cognitive guidelines, the autoethnographic self is a particular kind of full body social actor, constituted, interrogated, revised, and reconstituted within the liminal, intersectional, discursive, and performative space where these multiple layers of ethnographic gazes interact. Autoethnography is a living text which renders a careful understanding of "the complexities of cultural identities in the postmodern world" (Yep, 2004, p. 71).

In *Narrating the Closet: An Autoethnography of Same-Sex Attraction*, Tony E. Adams (2011) uses autoethnography to deconstruct the metaphor of the closet in the context of gay male identity. Throughout the book, he weaves his own personal narratives of coming out experiences within the realm of his relationships to "close, meaningful others" (p. 132), social institutions, mediated messages, and scholarship within both communication studies and sexuality studies to highlight the closet as a communicative, relational, and social phenomenon. In "My Father's Shoes: The Therapeutic Value of Narrative Reframing," Christine E. Kiesinger (2002) uses autoethnographic narrative to reframe her experiences of child abuse by her father, and in a reflexive turn, she engages in a perspective-taking exercise. She uses the process of writing autoethnography to work towards understanding the conditions that made possible her father's engagement in abuse, and theorizes the value of autoethnographic narrative to transform the ways we might come to understand traumatic experiences. Finally, in "The Academic Tourist," Ronald J. Pelias (2003) uses autoethnography to provide cultural commentary on the politics of the academy, and how such politics potentially prevent a scholar from thorough and longstanding engagement with an area of inquiry. In this way, the academic functions much like a tourist, experiencing a little bit of this and a little bit of that, oftentimes never quite constructing a deep identification with any aspect of the academy.

Narrative co-construction

In keeping with notions of narrative (see *autoethnography* section above) and reflexivity (see *reflexive ethnography* section below), Bochner and Ellis (1995) created a method that recognizes a self constituted in relationship with others, and used narrative as a means to explore the intersubjective self. Their method, narrative co-construction, highlights narrative as an epistemological project in which the narrator(s) come to know the self differently. Within narrative co-construction, relationship partners engage in a process wherein they narrate a shared experience in an effort to understand their individual perspectives on that experience, and how those perspectives shape both the experience and the relationship. While partners begin by individually narrating the events of the experience, the process eventually leads to a single narrative constructed by both partners. Ellis and Bochner's germinal work in co-constructed narrative, "Telling and Performing Personal Stories: The Constraints of Choice in Abortion" (1992) illuminates the complexities involved for one couple as they reflect on an abortion experience. Readers are invited to share in the narration of the experience from both partners as individuals, and as a couple. The insights provided through the use of co-constructed narrative draws attention to the social, personal, and professional conditions that complicate the notion of 'choice' in any given life event.

In adapting narrative co-construction, Satoshi Toyosaki and Sandra L. Pensoneau (2005) combined this method with the concept of a critical incident (from intercultural communication studies) to investigate, from a cultural perspective, the culture created between relational partners. 'Interpersonal culture analysis' involves partners investigating their identities in relation to one another and examining their relationship as a co-created, intersubjective culture. The self here is a self-in-relationship, necessarily multi- and inter-cultural. The specific focus on the self highlights the cultural situatedness of the self, and defines "culture" broadly. Particular to this 2005 project, Toyosaki and Pensoneau focus on a seemingly mundane communicative event – providing directions from one geographical place to another – in an effort to highlight communication as a cultural construction, and how persons from different communicative traditions experience and interpret the same event quite differently. Through developing the method of interpersonal culture analysis, the authors theorize the intercultural, interpersonal relationship that forms between persons who invest in one another as relational partners, and how those partners can reflexively analyze their own misunderstandings in an effort to better understand intercultural,

interpersonal relationships (including their own).

Community autoethnography

Community autoethnography is a critical qualitative research practice in which participants engage in dialogic narrative thematically organized around a sociocultural topic (Toyosaki, Pensoneau-Conway, Wendt, & Leathers, 2009). Community autoethnography (CAE) situates the self in relationship with others—the self-in-community—and takes seriously the self as intersubjectively constituted. CAE heavily relies on autoethnographic narratives set in dialogue with one another. In this way, narrators come to understand how their seemingly individual experiences are necessarily interdependent upon and in relationship with others (and their subsequent seemingly individual experiences), and in so being, create sociocultural phenomena (both at the macro, systemic level and at the micro, behavioral level). CAE "invites its participants to envision and engage in 'critical' community building that works to resituate identified social/cultural and sensitive issues" (Toyosaki et al., 2009, p. 59). Narrators come to understand their sense of self and the particular sociocultural issue differently through the process of CAE, as dialogue here is an epistemological undertaking. Through this "community-building research practice" (Toyosaki et al., 2009, p. 59), the notion of a contingent, unstable self-in-relationship emerges as a rhetorical agent in constructing a democratic community and communal-epistemology of the given social issue at stake for the research.

In "Community Autoethnography: Compiling the Personal and Resituating Whiteness" (Toyosaki et al., 2009), community autoethnography participants engaged dialogically in autoethnographic narratives of whiteness and the U.S. American education system. Through these two intersecting, discursively constructed sociological issues (whiteness and education), the participants theorized resituating educational relationships (for example, acknowledging the blurring of the roles of 'teacher' and 'student'), using CAE as an exercise in perspective-taking, and understanding critical pedagogy as therapy.

Critical complete-member ethnography

Toyosaki (2011) sees critical potential in complete-member ethnography where ethnographers are full members of the speech community that they investigate (see Yep, 2004). Adler and Adler (1987) use the term "complete-member-researchers" to indicate that researcher and participants share a "common set of experiences, feelings, and goals," and that the researcher and participants enjoy a close emotional stance as a result of shared cultural locations (p. 67). The critical potential arises from a practice of epistemological intimacy (Smith, 2005) and a methodological shift in focus from participant observation to observation of participation (Tedlock, 1991). Toyosaki (2011) methodologically locates the critical complete-member ethnographer self at the intersection of ethnography of communication (EOC) (see Philipsen, 1975; 1992), critical ethnography (see Madison, 2005), and autoethnography (see Ellis, 2004). EOC helps critical complete-member ethnographers study their own and their participants' collective participations in their speech communities and build consensus theories (Fiske, 1991) of communication. Further, such collective constructions are interrogated through methodological commitments of critical ethnography (see Madison, 2005). Thus, the critical complete-member ethnographers are equally invested in conflictual theory building (Fiske, 1991) which helps criticize their own collective participation in speech communities. Autoethnography helps the critical complete-member ethnographer navigate the complex and delicate terrain between the consensual and conflictual theorizations. The critical complete-member ethnographic self is constructed within the dialectic tension of the consensual and conflictual theorization of his or her own speech

community and its communication codes at work – cultural discourse. The critical complete-member ethnographer emerges as a discursive, performative, and transformative reality, both consensually and conflictually theorizing and theorized within their own observations of their own collective participations in their speech communities. "Thus, [critical complete-member ethnography] renders a specific type of a self-constitutive, future-making act, which leads to possible communal transformation if and when necessary and desired by community members and/or readers" (Toyosaki, 2011, p. 75).

In his 2011 "Critical Complete-Member Ethnography: Theorizing Dialectics of Consensus and Conflict in Intracultural Communication," Satoshi Toyosaki specifically interrogates his own participation in the culture of voluntary international student, understanding his Japanese identity in the context of the United States. As a participant/researcher in his critical complete-member ethnographic project, he uses autoethnographic narrative to contextualize the contributions of other Japanese international students in a large Midwestern university, and their shifting perceptions of their identities as Japanese sojourners. The personal becomes political for Toyosaki and the participants as they struggle to make sense of their perceptions of U.S. Americans both before coming to the United States, and after they have spent some time in the United States. Toyosaki finds he is at once critical of and identifying with the stereotypes the participants perpetuate and deconstruct. Similarly, though not necessarily with the critical framework that Toyosaki uses, David Hayano's *Poker Faces: The Life and Work of Professional Card Players* (1982) underscores the role of the researcher-as-member. Hayano, a skilled poker player, set out to ethnographically investigate the world of professional poker. In Appendix A, he details his experiences with poker, establishing himself as a member of the culture of poker players. This Appendix could be considered autoethnographic. He even identifies it as such (p. 150), and defines *autoethnography* as "a cultural study that is conducted among one's 'own people'" (1982 p. 150).[1] He points readers to an earlier work of his (1979) where he first uses *autoethnography* to describe such a study Throughout his book about poker culture, Hayano narrates his experiences with poker players and the world of poker *as* a poker player himself, not simply as a person studying poker.

Reflexive ethnography

Many researchers have begun to recognize that their own experiences, assumptions, and theoretical motivations influence not only what they see in the field, but also *how* they see; not only what they report, but also *how* they report; not only what relationships they form, but *how* those relationships are formed; not only what meanings and interpretations are created, but *how* meanings and interpretations are created (Davies, 1999; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Reflexive ethnography is unique in its explicit attention to the fact that, as researchers, "we are part of the world we study" (Burawoy 2003, p. 655). In short, Ellis and Bochner (2000) explain that "although **reflexive ethnographies** primarily focus on a culture or subculture, authors use their own experiences in the culture reflexively to bend back on self and look more deeply at self-other interactions" (p. 740). Reflexive ethnography is characterized by four defining features: (1) reflexivity, (2) participants, (3) narrative, and (4) connections.

The first, reflexivity, demonstrates a turning of the researcher lens back onto ourselves. In this move, researchers recognize and take responsibility for their positions within the research. This explicit focus on the self through reflexivity accounts for the situatedness of the researcher as well as the other participants (Davies, 1999). Secondly, in reflexive ethnography, there is an effort to provide a balance between primary participants. Unlike some other branches of ethnography, reflexive ethnography recognizes the researcher as an equally important participant. The balance entails a tacking back and forth between self-as-subject and other-as-subject. A third

defining feature of reflexive ethnography regards connections of the researcher to various parts of the research process (Burawoy, 2003; Crawford, 1996; Davies, 1999; Ellis & Bochner, 2000), including: (a) the topic – a researcher is personally invested in and connected to the topic of study, (b) the discipline – the researcher and the study are connected to and situated within a discipline, and (c) other participants – the researcher develops relationships with other participants. These connections highlight specific attention to the researcher self within the reflexive ethnographic process. Finally, a fourth defining feature of reflexive ethnography concerns the use of personal narrative within and first-person accounts of the ethnographic process. In narrating personal experiences, a researcher works through the ways those narratives (and the experiences from which they were born) add to understanding the studied culture.

Reflexive ethnography understands that we know the world only through our own lenses. In that sense, we can learn more about ourselves through learning about others. First-person accounts and personal narratives are ways to be aware of those lenses and that learning (Davies, 1999). Doing so also problematizes the traditionally essentialized notions of self and other (Davies, 1999; Visweswaran as cited in Denzin, 2003). By using personal narrative, we blur the boundaries of self and other, constituting self *as* other and turning the ethnographic lens back onto ourselves as researchers. This can help us to further understand and interrogate self-other relationships (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740). It can also help us recognize that there is no sole ownership of those relationships; rather, they are co-constructed (Crawford, 1996). Narrating our experiences as researchers demonstrates researchers' responsibility for questions they ask, rhetorical choices they make, modes of representation they utilize, and judgments they place in relation to the participants (Crawford, 1996).

In her 2006 *Gender and Sexual Identity: A Reflexive Ethnographic Account of Learning through Drag*, Sandra L. Pensoneau uses the method to examine her shifting self-perceptions of gender and sexual identity within the context of drag culture as it specifically plays itself out within a local small town gay bar. She traces her journey from the first time she saw a drag show – which was in this particular bar – to her ethnographic interactions with drag participants/members (including drag performers and audience members). Framing her participants as vernacular theorists (McLaughlin, 1996), Pensoneau and the participants collectively reflexively analyze drag as a pedagogical context in which members not only learn *about* gender and sexual identity, but in fact *construct* their identities through their participation in the practice of drag.

Autoperformance

Autoperformances are "presentations conceived and performed by the same person" (Kirby, 1979, p. 2); the term refers to both the performer – which necessarily includes the writer/conceptual author, but may also include others – and the content – which necessarily has an autobiographical element. The self in autoperformance takes on a fractured character, as an autoperformer cannot at once perform the whole of self. Moreover, the conception of a whole singular self is contested within autoperformance. Carroll's (1979) analysis of three of Amy Taubin's autoperformances makes this point clearer. Carroll argues that Taubin's style of performance interrogates the relationship between herself as performer and the other as spectator. The interrogation of this relationship throughout the three performances that Carroll analyzes requires an active choice by the audience to engage themselves *as* audience, and therefore, to engage Taubin *as* performer. At the same time Taubin is performer, she is also audience to the spectators *as* performers-of-audience-members. Her autoperformances highlight the role of the self as at once self and other—other to others' selves. Further, the self Taubin engages is a situated self, as she actively acknowledges her self as a gendered, cultured, social object. Two characteristics define 'autoperformance' for us: (1) its function as an umbrella term and (2) its

attention to the constructed nature of the self within the performance. First, we find that many authors use autoperformance as a term under which other sorts of performance methods fall. Second, and perhaps in contrast to autobiography, autoperformance uses the mode of performance to highlight the self and the performance as constructions.

Tim Miller's "My Queer Body: An Anatomy in Six Sections" (1993) uses the space of the stage to confront issues of body politics, sexuality, and cultural critique through performance. Many consider well-known performance artist Spalding Gray to be an autoperformer, as his performance pieces revolve around his life experiences. A 1979 issue of *The Drama Review* is dedicated to autoperformance, and features both autoperformances in written form (i.e., provides scripts) and commentary about/critique of the autoperformances.

Layered Account

Carol Rambo is perhaps most widely known as developing the method known as *layered account*, which she originally developed in "The Reflexive Self through Narrative: A Night in the Life of an Erotic Dancer/Researcher" (Ronai, 1992). In this method, a researcher explores multiple voices of the self, highlighting the postmodern notion of the 'self' as multiple and fragmented. Layered accounts seek to situate an event or phenomenon within the realm of the personal and individual, the sociological, and the academic, all the while understanding the temporal nature of experience – that one can reflect on (and be reflexive about) an experience in the past, analyze how that experience constructs one's understanding of the self in the present, and how the future self might be a function of this past and present. The style of a layered account is unique in that it utilizes a sectional approach. Literally, the page is separated into sections of text, with each text being a different part of the self (or a different self altogether). As Rambo (2005) describes, such a technique allows "a writer to incorporate multiple voices including theory, subjective experience, fantasy, and more to convey aspects of a topic at hand that would be otherwise excluded from a more traditional format" (p. 563). In addition, the method offers to readers these layers of experiences "so [the reader] may fill in the spaces and construct an interpretation of the writer's narrative" (Ronai, 1995, p. 396).

In her 2005 "Impressions of Grandmother: An Autoethnographic Portrait," Rambo (2005) theorizes how her relationship with her grandmother has constructed Rambo's identity and sense of self. Through the frameworks of Derrida's mystic writing pad, difference, and *sous rature*, Rambo asks how she both is and isn't her grandmother, complicating both her and her grandmother's identities and demonstrating identity as a relational process. In so doing, she greatly contributes to the literature on granddaughter-grandmother relationships.

Rambo also used the layered account format to approach the socially taboo topic of children of mentally challenged parents (Ronai, 1996) and the horrific topic of child sex abuse (Ronai, 1995). These essays, in particular, explicitly detail Rambo's struggles and tragic experiences associated with being the daughter of a mentally retarded (as she names it) mother, and a survivor of her father's sexual abuse. While perhaps extremely difficult to read for some audiences (due to their explicit nature and ability to call forth heart-wrenching feelings), the beauty of Rambo's writing is that it gives voice to survivors of such experiences. While academics may study these themes from a more scholastic standpoint at the expense of a personal standpoint, Rambo is able to weave a more distanced and macro-level study of the themes (as an academic and a sociologist) with her autoethnographic narratives of having lived through such experiences.

Automethodology: Theorization

By paying particular attention to Schrag's praxis-oriented self and intersubjectivity, we have studied these automethods and the ways in which these automethodologists move through their scholarship. We have come to understand six theoretical pillars on which automethodology can be built: (1) self, (2) cultural criticism, (3) transversality, (4) writing, (5) reading, and (6) community. Below we explain these pillars one by one.

Automethodological self

The automethodological self is neither modernist nor postmodernist. It escapes the modernist construction of the epistemological authority as well as the postmodern abstraction by being praxis-oriented. Borrowing Schrag's (1997) term, it is the self after postmodernity, "defined by its communicative practices" (p. 9). It is "concrete engagement in the life-world" (Dallmayr, 2002 p. 133). This concrete 'communicative' engagement in the life-world is how the praxis-oriented self comes to life in the everyday. The automethodological self lives in the concrete communication praxis in its research process. Automethodologists engage in their life-world through their scholarship.

Schrag (1997) understands that anyone's subjectivity is inherently sociohistorical.

> [T]he self that acts is always embedded in social practices that form a tradition and that recall persons and things of the past while at the same time its own actions prepare that way for its, and others', future deeds. All of this is just to say that every self is always a self in community. (Dauenhauer, 2002, p. 156)

The automethodological self 'acts' in dialectical tensions between itself and the social, and itself and others as a form of scholarship. Automethodologists' heightened sense is directed to their being "*in* history but not *of* history . . . transcending the historically specific" (Bell, 2002, p. 173) without resorting to colonizing epistemological authority. This realization of the praxis-oriented self in action always comes with ethico-moral considerations, as being praxis-oriented is always in the realm of the communal, the social, and the historical and means constituting and being constituted within "a complex network of social practices and relations with others" (Bell, 2002, p. 172). The praxis-oriented self, therefore, is reflexive, simultaneously being a methodological instrument and data/sites in automethodology. Schrag (1997) writes, "The self is implicated in its discourse as a who that . . . understands itself as a self that has already spoken, is not speaking, and has the power yet to speak, suspended across the temporal dimensions of past, present, and future" (p. 17). This is what and how automethodologists engage in their praxis-oriented scholarship and live their life-world, of which their scholarship is an active part.

Automethodological cultural criticism

The praxis-oriented self is the self in community with ethico-moral considertations. "Self-constitution always has anterior sociohistorical sources. But it also involves ethico-moral considerations that the self ought to bring to bear to evaluate and criticize these sources" (Dauenhauer, 2002, p. 156). Being praxis-oriented, the automethodological self is methodologically situated to engage in a particular kind of cultural/social criticism. Instead of relying on universal criteria, McKerrow (1993) asserts that the critic's task is to work with "texts from a collection of fragmentary episodes" (p. 62) and explains the goal of social criticism.

> The goal . . . is not to produce a master text encompassing all known and possible conditions of its making. Rather, the goal is to pull together those fragments whose intersection in real lives has meaning for social actors—meaning that confines them as either subjects empowered to become citizens or social actors with a potential to enact new relations of power. As such, the invented text functions to enable historicized subjects to alter the conditions of their lived experience. (p. 62)

He goes on to say, "To care for oneself includes the remaking of social practices within which one is inscribed" (p. 64). This is the very core of 'praxis' where social theorizing and critiquing of our fragmented lived experiences informs and constructs one's being, acting, being with others, and being in a community.

Automethodological transversality

For Schrag, being praxis-oriented embodies an art of liminality, or middle voice. He explains, "both 'sociologism' and 'egologism' are equally unacceptable alternatives" (Dallmayr, 2002, p. 135). Schrag (1997) understands that intersubjectivity is the mode for communicative responsivity and responsibility for the self and other. Intersubjectivity as a communicative – concrete and performative – praxis of the selves enables the development of relational and organic ethics, or in his term 'transversal rationality.' Dauenhauer (2002) explains Schrag's transversal rationality as a communicative process which achieves "convergences and conjunctions without canonizing any particular method, belief system, or set of practices as universally obliging requirements of reason" (p. 158). Transversal rationality prevents domination of a relationship by one partner over the other. Transversal rationality is one's purposeful and conscious effort and actions to become connected with others—ethical union, not absorption or domination. The transcendental self embodies the transversal rationality in his or her communicative praxis of intersubjectivity. The transcendental self resists "absolutism and hegemonic tendencies" (Bell, 2002, p. 175), unites with others predicated upon "diversity" (p. 176), and cross-culturally communicates with "generosity [and] nonpossessive love" (p. 176). Automethodologists aim at 'researching' and 'inquiring' within the realm of transversal rationality. Automethodology's scholarly goal is to envision and possibly reach transcendence as the performative accomplishment of the praxis-oriented selves in community.

Automethodological writing

Rather than being a product, Sclater (2003) identifies narrative as a "dynamic signifying practice" that interrogates subjective situatedness (p. 321). Thus, narrating creates space for the praxis-oriented self/automethodologist to engage in a dynamic signifying practice. Automethodology, then, via its heavy reliance on narrative writing, is the very means of (re)constructing, criticizing, and (re)inventing one's cultural identity. Indeed, it is a self-constitutive act. McKerrow (1993) writes,

> While not wholly formed through discourse, it is through that discourse that the subject gives expression to its "I" and thereby enacts self. The "I" implicates itself in both its past and future history as a contingently derived self. When the subject enacts self in the form of critique, its commentary is but one more fragment that enters the here and now as it reflects the past and conditions the future. (p. 64)

This realization signifies the presence of the self as a simultaneous writer-reader-reader-writer of his or her own textual activities.

Through narrative, the automethodologist can come to understand her/his self(ves) differently as the self comes into being. In this way, narratives do not represent and/or recreate the experiences of the self, but rather, construct those experiences; they create experiences of the self in reference to an *a priori* understanding of experience and the self. In so doing, narratives rely on a fluid and plurivocal sense of reality. Our stories subjectify us; they create a subject, a self that we can understand through the discourse of the narrative. As Sclater (2003) explains, the author of a narrative – the speaking subject – is often taken to be the narrative subject – the subject one reads in a narrative. However, the speaking subject and the narrative subject are not necessarily one and the same, as the speaking subject is *creating* the narrative subject.

When we understand the narrative self in this way, we have to also understand that the narrative self is necessarily partial and fragmented. The goal is to write into being the contingency of the self. What one attempts to do in narrative is to construct a fragment (or perhaps, several fragments) of the self in order to understand how the self is situated in relation to others—to other people, to other communities, to other social systems, to other histories, to other discourses, and to other identity locations.

Thus, the automethodological text "celebrates the figure of a narrating self, a *homo narrans*, or a 'story-teller who both finds herself in stories already told and strives for a self-constitution by emplotting herself in stories in the making'" (Dallmayr, 2002, p. 133). In this way, automethodology imbues the researchers' agency on their own praxis-oriented self construction through its narrative construction. Automethodology requires researchers to be and claim to be life-experiencing subjects and asks them to emplot their being, becoming, acting, being with others, and being in community in a concrete – communicative – full body embodiment in their writing. The automethodological text is a culmination of researchers' commitment to the automethodological self, cultural/social criticism, and transversality.

Automethodological reading

And, such automethodological writing needs automethodological witnessing. Just as the ethnographer and participants emerge in the space of intersubjectivity, so, too, do the automethodological writers and readers. A discursive 'I' is impossible without a discursive 'you,' and vice versa (Schrag, 1986). We – your authors here – depend upon you as the reader to construct the meaning of the words in our project, to give the words life. Does a written word without a reader have meaning? "The 'I' and the 'you' thus need to be seen as coemergents within a more encompassing intentional fabric of intersubjectivity" (Schrag, 1986, p. 125). As the automethodologist constructs his or her praxis-oriented self prior to, throughout, and after his or her automethodological writing, readers, we hope, choose to engage their praxis-oriented self constructions with their intentionally activated transversal rationality. Clifford (1983) turns to literary theory, and the idea that the meaning of a text is much less dependent upon the author(s) and much more dependent upon the reader. Automethodological readers give life to the text. Automethodological reading of automethodological writing is, indeed, an automethod, as such temporal, multiplex, and embodied reading is a performance of the praxis-oriented self. This reading is the culmination of the readers' automethodological self, cultural/social criticism, transversality, and writing. This continues as the readers' responses to the original text gains other readers. The automethodoloical circle goes on. Automethodology is living texts among the praxis-oriented selves, on and off pages and in and out of academia.

Automethodological community

The automethodological researcher and reader are, and the automethodological community is, praxis-oriented, constituted with the complex network of intersubjectivity with concrete communicative praxes. This network relies on the nexuses made between multiple automethodological writings and readings. The automethodological community constructs, criticizes, transverses, writes, and reads stories of itself, driven by its ethico-moral commitments to itself. Thus, the automethodological community does social theory in the most caring, democratic, and concrete praxis-oriented way, placing intersubjectivity at the heart of doing the theory and abolishing the colonial epistemological authority.

Automethodology as Home of Praxis-Oriented Ethnography

In an era where, perhaps more than ever, our practices are rife with social and cultural complexities, we find automethodology to be the most ethical and responsible choice for ethnographers. At once never fully separated from culture(s), and at once never fully immersed in culture(s), a reflexive, critical stance remains a responsible and response-able way of being in this ethnographic world. What does it mean to have an ethnographic home? Does having a sense of home inform a sense of movement, of place, of change? How does an ethnographer anchor her/his practices without a sense of where those practices emerged – without a sense of their home? We have come to find home in automethodology. Tedlock (1991) offers ethnographic dialogue as a method for creating "a world of shared intersubjectivity," and a way for us to understand that which we may initially take to be irreconcilable differences (p. 70). Automethodology, we believe, helps ethnographers create the world of shared intersubjectivity. Isn't that the spirit of ethnography? This is our hopeful home for now. Yet, it is just a start.

Notes

1. Some credit Hayano with coining the term *autoethnography*, while others credit Francoise Lionnet with coining the term in reference to Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography. While Hayano does demonstrate a very early use of *autoethnography*, we do not identify his work as such because he uses it differently than we describe in our essay here. If anything, this demonstrates the way both a methodological label and the practice the label represents are fluid, and potentially change as methodological practices and epistemological positions change.

References

Adams, T. E. (2011). *Narrating the closet: An autoethnography of same-sex attraction*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Adler, P.A., & Adler, P. (1987). *Membership roles in field research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Banks, S. P., & Banks, A. (2000). Reading "The critical life": Autoethnography as pedagogy. *Communication Education*, 49, 233-238.

Bell, L. (2002). Calvin hears a who: Calvin O. Schrag and postmodern selves. In B. Beck Matuštík & W. L. McBride (Eds.), *Calvin O. Schrag and the task of philosophy after postmodernity* (pp. 165-178). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (1995). Telling and living: Narrative co-construction and the practices of interpersonal relationships. In W. Leeds-Hurwitz (Ed.), *Social approaches to communication* (pp. 201-213). New York: The Guilford Press.

Burawoy, M. (2003). Revisits: An outline of a theory of reflexive ethnography. *American Sociological Review*, 68, 645-79.

Carroll, N. (1979). Amy Taubin: The solo self. *The Drama Review*, 23, 51-58.

Chambers, E. (2000). Applied ethnography. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 851-69). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Clifford, J. (1983). On ethnographic authority. *Representations, 2*, 118-146.

Crawford, L. (1996). Personal ethnography. *Communication Monographs*, *63*, 158-170.

Dallmayr, F. (2002). 7. Transversal liaisons: Calvin Schrag on selfhood. In B. Beck Matuštík, & W. L. McBride (Eds.), *Calvin O. Schrag and the task of philosophy after postmodernity* (pp. 129-151). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Dauenhauer, B. P. (2002). Schrag and the self. In B. Beck Matuštík & W. L. McBride (Eds.), *Calvin O. Schrag and the task of philosophy after postmodernity* (pp. 152-164). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Davies, C.A. (1999). *Reflexive ethnography: A guide to researching selves and others*. London: Routledge.

Denzin, N. K. (2003). *Performance ethnography: Critical pedagogy and the politics of culture*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. (2006). Analytic autoethnography, or Déjà Vu all over again. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *35*, 419-428.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A.P. (1992). Telling and performing personal stories: The constraints of choice in abortion. In C. Ellis & M.G. Flaherty (Eds.), *Investigating subjectivity: Research on lived experience* (pp. 79-101). Newbury Park: Sage.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, and reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 733-768). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Ellis, C. S., & Bochner, A. P. (2006). Analyzing analytic autoethnography: An autopsy. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35, 429-449.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fiske, J. (1991). Writing ethnographies: Contribution to a dialogue. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 77, 330-335.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Habermas, J. (1979). *Communication and the evolution of society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action, Volume one: Reason and the rationalization of society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. (1990). *Moral consciousness and communicative action* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Hayano, D. (1979). Auto-ethnography: Paradigms, problems, and prospects. *Human Organization*, 38, 99-104.

Hayano, D. (1982). *Poker faces: The life and work of professional card players*. Berkely: The University of California Press.

Jameson, F. (1984). Forward. In J. Lyotard, *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Trans., pp. vii-xxii, pp.vii-xxii). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kiesinger, C.E. (2002). My father's shoes: The therapeutic value of narrative reframing. In A.P. Bochner & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature, and aesthetics* (pp. 95-114). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Kirby, M. (1979). Autoperformance issue: An introduction. *The Drama Review*, 23, 2.

Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York: Routledge.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Denzin, N. K. (2005). Epilogue: The eighth and ninth moments – Qualitative research in/and the fractured future. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 1115-1126). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Lionnet, F. (1989). *Autobiographical voices: Race, gender, self-portraiture*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Lockford, L. (2002). Breaking habits and cultivating home. In A. P. Bochner & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature, and aesthetics* (pp. 76-86). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira/Rowman & Littlefield.

Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. H. (1995). *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Madison, D. S. (2005). *Critical ethnography: A guide to researching selves and others*. London, England: Routledge.

McCarthy, T. (19840. Translator's introduction. In J. Habermas, *The theory of communicative action, Volume one: Reason and the rationalization of society*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

McKerrow, R. E. (1993). Critical rhetoric and the possibility of the subject. In I. Angus, & L. Langsdorf (Eds.), *The critical turn: Rhetoric & philosophy in postmodern discourse* (pp. 51-67). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

McLaughlin, T. (1996). *Street smarts and critical theory: Listening to the vernacular*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Miller, T. (1993). *My queer body: An anatomy in six sections*. Theatre, 24, 30-34.

Pelias, R.J. (2003). *The academic tourist: An autoethnography*." Qualitative Inquiry, 9, 369-373.

Pensoneau, S. L. (2006). *Gender and sexual identity: A reflexive ethnographic account of learning through drag*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Philipsen, G. (1975). Speaking "like a man" in Teamsterville: Culture patterns of role enactment in an urban neighborhood. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 61, 13-22.

Philipsen, G. (1992). *Speaking culturally: Explorations in social communication*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Rambo, C. (2005). Impressions of grandmother: An autoethnographic portrait. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography,* 34, 560-585.

Ronai, C.R. (1992). The reflexive self through narrative: A night in the life of an erotic dancer/researcher. In C. Ellis & M. Flaherty (Eds.), *Investigating subjectivity: Research on lived experience* (pp. 102-124). Newbury Park, Sage.

Ronai, C.R. (1995). Multiple reflections of childhood sex abuse: An argument for a layered account. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 23, 395-426.

Ronai, C.R. (1996). My mother is mentally retarded. In C. Ellis & A.P. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing* (pp. 109-131). Walnut Creek, Sage.

Schrag, C. O. (1986). *Communicative praxis and the space of subjectivity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.

Schrag, C. O. (1997). *The self after postmodernity*. New Haven, MA: Yale University Press.

Schrag, C. O. (2003). *Communicative praxis and the space of subjectivity*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.

Sclater, S. D. (2003). What is the subject? *Narrative Inquiry*, 13, 317-330.

Smith, C. (2005). Epistemological intimacy: A move to autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 4, 68-76. Retrieved from http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/article/view/4448

Tedlock, B. (1991). From participant observation to the observation of participation: The emergence of narrative ethnography. *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 47, 69-94.

Tedlock, B. (2000). Ethnography and ethnographic representation. In N., K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 455-486). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Toyosaki, S. (2011). Critical complete-member ethnography: Theorizing dialectics of consensus and conflict in intracultural communication. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 4, 62-80.

Toyosaki, S., & Pensoneau, S.L. (2005). YAEZAKURA—Interpersonal culture analysis. *International Journal of Communication*, 15, 51-88.

Toyosaki, S., Pensoneau-Conway, S.L., Wendt, N.A., & Leathers, K. (2009). Community autoethnography: Compiling the personal and resituating whiteness. *Cultural Studies* ←→ *Critical Methodologies*, 9, 56-83.

Wilcott, H. F. (1999). *Ethnography: A way of seeing*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Yep, G. A. (2004). Approaches to cultural identity: Personal notes from an autoethnographical journey. In M. Fong & R. Chuang (Eds.), *Communicating ethnic and cultural identity* (pp. 69-81). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.