Re-membering Home Movies

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My mother's parents had their old 8mm and super8 tapes put to DVD and brought it to our Christmas party to watch as a family. While my grandfather was narrating the movie to a few of us on a portable player, I got the idea that it would be interesting to record what he had to say – since the films were silent. And then I thought it would be interesting to hear what all of the family has to say – but individually, not as a group, because that would tease out the differences in their stories. I took four of them aside and had them narrate it separately. I recorded their narrations. Then I took a turn. After that, I used the movie that prompted our narration as the key and overlaid all of our narrations onto that. In other words, I have five separate narrations going at the same time explaining the silent film. Listening to the narrations all at once, timed to the images, is a form of inquiry in itself, not readily translated into text.

Shooting film

How are home movies constructed, not captured?

> A light mapping is recorded onto a reel. Light reflections of a place-time-event are collected and scaled down through a glass lens, and then intermittently allowed to reach a halted strip of advancing film where the light modifies (exposes) the medium of the film to leave a trace (the frame). (This is something of an ap-

21proximation of the human visual apparatus where light is scaled down through a lens and reprojected onto the back of the eye lighting up nerves.)

> An exterior is brought interior through a modifying membrane. Light modifies a medium that will similarly modify light. Scaled in will become scaled out. An interior is shared, re-inhabited as an exterior. The eye works backwards, rather than absorbing, it projects mottled light: images.

During a place-time-event, rays of light are filtered through the atmosphere and then reflected off of (or absorbed into) objects, scattered in many directions. Tracing back from an arbitrary point (a human head or camera) within this scattering, the rays that hit this point appear as a sunburst, but when selected through a lens (the eye or camera lens), appear as a cone. The rays traveling through this lens produce an inverted cone on the other side, which is then intermittently intercepted by an absorbing plane (shutter) or filtered through a plane of film, which is modified by the light.

How are framing/user/content assumptions built into the camera and our use of it? What are the limits and tendencies of the medium?

If the conditions are made right, a point-of-view within a landscape is focused onto half of a 16 millimeter wide film strip (aka Standard-8) in frames of 4.8 mm x 3.5 mm and sequentially exposed at 16 frames per second for about two sessions of two minutes (25 feet is run through once, then flipped to expose the other half).

IMPOSITION OF SHOOTING ONTO THE SCENE: STAGING

How do we stage our lives, environments, selves for "the camera"? Who is this camera, who is the imagined and real audience? Who do you show them to? What is NOT shown? How does social commentary appear? How did we learn to take movies? How do we create family myth? How does history appear in home movies? Is photography a way to preserve life while living it, to savor it?

But wait, let's look at that moment of translation (Latour – ANT). Only light is mapped from a particular point onto a particular medium. The rest is left there. But in order for that light to be mapped, it must fall within a certain threshold. Exterior shots provided lots of light from the sun. If not, what then? Then of course the scene can just not be selected. This brings up a technical limit that produces part of the null curriculum of home movies: scenes that we experience that simply do no have enough light to produce a film with the equipment we have.

Or, of course, light can be added to the scene.

Both Mom and Aunt Deb remembered the imposition of the device onto the moment. They recognized that a mode change occurs at the moment of use.

> Mom: *Grandpa had a big bar with lights on it. Whenever he used it inside he had these big spotlight type things. He'd flip 'em on and it'd blind you to death when you were inside. Y'know, to get the inside shots, to get the light level that ya needed.*

Aunt Deb: *I can't remember what he did call it. It had a huge light bar, this big, that would blind you. It had like - uh, the kind of lights you screw in outdoors for outdoor lights, those big bulbs, and it had like six or eight of them across. And we'd come out at Christmas morning blinded, could not see the packages because we were blinded because we had the movie camera in our face so that was always kind of fun.*

Commenting on a mode of use in which representation and reality affect one another undermines an argument that these categories can be separated – even from the start. From the beginning, home movies are constructed, not captured. Reality itself is re-membered, re-cast, re-constructed, re-presented, made again real.

These technical limits double back onto the photographer's selection of a scene. A scene isn't selected just because it is interesting. It is selected because it is interesting and matches the technical requirements. And interest does not just stem magically from the photographer, but is also deliberatively determined at a point that is the intersection of many influences (forces, power).

It is also selected because it takes advantage of the medium. A landscape scene without humans or visible movement *can* be taken with a home movie camera, but a still camera works just as well and more efficiently. Sure there are those time-lapse landscape scenes where the clouds skate across the landscape, but this is beyond the patience if not technical limits of the "average" home user. Movement that is too fast is also excluded, providing only a blur or no image at all. Instead, here we see subjects such as sledding, skating, and large moving ice chunks on a river that provide a movement, a life, easily reproduced with movie equipment that is simply not possible with a still camera. And there is a time limit imposed by how patient the viewer is as well as by the expense of the media. Smile for the camera becomes wave to the camera.

And then there are, of course, the limits of what must fit in the frame. The photographer can adjust what falls in the frame by rotating up, down, left, right or by moving closer or further away. Also temporally, the photographer adjusts when to start and stop shooting. What happens when this is not possible? Again, one option is to simply not take moving pictures of that scene. It is too big, too small, too close, too far, too spread out or too close together – in time or space. Or the scene can be arranged.

The actors are instructed to move closer together

        or to move out from behind someone, I can't see you.

Something is lost   outside of the frame.

Something is changed inside of the frame.

The actors are instructed to wave at the camera

        or to act busy.

        To do it again, I didn't get it that time.

Often, the actor(s) complies.

Does this make the scene less real? Is to stage a scene to remove part of its authenticity? How can we see reality as constructed without falling into solipsism, without seeing all as empty? Where are the limits of our belief? How can we create if we no longer truly believe? (Latour, 1993)

> This assumes an authenticity devoid of viewer and internal "censor". Such an assumption opposes a natural self to a society. It assumes desire as inherent and natural. It assumes a real as exterior of our definition of it. The photographer and the actors negotiate (often off stage) what happens on stage, what counts as too staged or too real, what should be remembered and what should be forgotten. Wave to the camera (perform!) quickly becomes keep doing what you were doing (perform the real!). Actors invent new strategies in light of a lens that captures and projects. To act is to play with the selection and multiplication of the present, to reinforce the doubling of meaning onto the present, to subvert it through parody, to lay down ambiguities, to claim more and less than the frame.

> > Aunt Deb as a toddler comes up to the camera and talks to it. She misunderstood the mode – the camera couldn't record sound. Her misconception exposes (one of) the limits of how she was framed. By talking directly to the camera she shatters a suspension of disbelief, she exposes the edges of the medium as well as the fourth wall – not only is the medium limited, not only are things lost, but in (not) talking directly to us we realize that we cannot talk back. Grandpa, Grandma, and Aunt Deb all comment on this scene, as if to point to this as proof that there *was* more.

To point to what is lost is to allow the addition of something more, to re-member, to multiply.

What of God? of wind? of the smell of cloves? of a certain feeling in my gut? of a flashback to years past? What of meaning to me?

TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE

This film is then advanced, rolled, dropped off, developed, retrieved, and stored. When unrolled and advanced, a new cone intersects the stored medium and then intersects a plane which reflects back as a cone, the cone is inverted by a lens and is then received by nerves that process the light into objects and movement.

Photography allows time travel – to see light beams again that have already passed. It allows those beams (technically it is similarly modified ones) to be scaled up, copied, multiplied, and replayed as many times as possible, to be re-produced, created again, to again become members of our world, of a shared world.

> Before, or in addition to the lens of the eye, we have a lens that records and then a lens that projects.
>
> The home movie is a wormhole between lenses.
>
> Images are moved.

> Times are transported.
>
> 48 years later, we narrate a movie.

This allows position shifting and multiplication. One or some of the infinite number of points-of-view can be experienced at a later time. This allows changes in scale or time scale.

PROJECTION

During the act of recording, the light from a three-dimensional (length, width, time) real|reel is mapped into a series of two-dimensional semi-transparent frames. The third dimension of time is translated into a linear dimension that includes within it frames that contain two more dimensions. During the act of projecting, this linear dimension (film) is run through an intersection with a perpendicular, focused (via the condenser lens), intermittent (via the light shutter) light beam (produced by the lamp), a new discrete series of images based on each frame (sometimes two or three projections of the same frame before the frame is advanced while the light beam is interrupted via the shutter) is formed in sequence in space, expanding in width and height while moving through depth.

> An interior is turned out through a modifying membrane.
>
> A light-modified medium modifies light.
>
> Scaled in becomes scaled out.
>
> An interior is shared, re-inhabited as an exterior.
>
> The eye works backwards, rather than absorbing, it projects mottled light: images.

If we could see it from the side in slow motion, we would see a series of uniform lengths of light (each carrying a discrete image) interrupted by spaces of darkness (the moment between frames when the shutter closes and the film advances). Pointing the projector to the sky, we send an infinitely expanding (doubly spinning as we rotate and orbit) message without a screen to catch and bounce back or to dampen/filter (rear projected).

> Project a movie to the sky. Next year, project the movie 1/16 of a second beyond the last. In 16 years a full second will have been sent from/to the same point.

This beam of discrete images is then intersected with another plane (screen) that scatters the light back towards pairs of small lenses (the fronts of the eyes: eyeglasses/contacts, cornea and crystalline lens) that focuses the image on the back of each eye (retina) and via electrical impulses (optic nerve) is sent and processed in the brain, so that we observe the series of smaller two dimensions (frame) in sequence, and thus experience the linear dimension of film as time rather than length. Our brain fills in the difference between the discrete, static images, thus perceiving the images as movement. The gap between frames, between

images, serves as the limit-possibility between which we creatively re-member movement to the series of static images. The integral of calculus, of movement, is avoided, left to the magic assumptions of the brain.

What makes us focus on the frame as given? What makes us see a singular image within that frame?

> Project multiple frames at once, a long line of light that projects the width of many frames rather than 1. Adjust the speed until we can see the images move from left to right.
>
> Run the film through a long line of shuttered lights so that we see a series of adjacent images at once, that many "different" movies, 1/16th of a second slower than the next, all stemming from the one reel of film.

A mapping of light is stored in order to re-create (repeatedly as desired) a similar mapping of light. We understand this as reality shrunken and stored to then be re-stored and shared. We understand this as a moment collected, as reality doubling into itself to be extracted back out later, multiplied and repeated, as desired.

How is this different from say, a rock, that also similarly projects light beams through the ages?

Some attributes are not stored by film: the tactile, the audio, the smell and heat. Typical light beams are excluded to the preference of those from a new singular source, which reflect off the projection screen in a more even manner. To properly experience film we must maintain a particular, limited and somewhat static relation between our eyes and the projection. We sit still and the movement comes to us. Not that this doesn't happen normally, with someone walking by or waves washing in. But the shifts in point-of-view can occur without any change in our position. The normal connections between position and view are disrupted. We cannot interact or change the light beams – at least not in the typical manner of moving an object or changing our position. But that one position can now have any view, or be subdivided into multiple views.

Clearly the storage of film is different from that of memory. Part of the magic is the vividness of the image restored by film – an image that triggers and re-builds a similar memory. And in some ways then, if taken by someone else, it seems we are inhabiting that someone else's memory because it was their point-of-view.

But also not. That person is off camera, unseen. Instead we are a new member of a preserved scene. We step in as ourself, not as other. We inhabit an absent subject. We accept the borders (suspension of disbelief) and fill in the rest with what I know.

The home movie projector is also the re-membered to the electric grid. More broadly, the camera and projector exist at intersections of industrial manufacturing, corporate supply, consumer demand, advertising. The subject matter is limited and made possible by the above as well as personal technical know-how, cultural stories of family,

Exterior social limits are imposed here, at the point of development. Someone else other than the photographer, other than the family, will view the film, at least in part, to ensure that it is developed properly. The film leaves the hands and the control of the photographer and is in control of someone else. When home video appeared, this step was no longer necessary. Transferring of videos could be done privately via VHS or Beta, and eventually the photographic equipment was within consumer reach and control also. Of course one could create their own development track with a trusted developer, or develop it oneself, but the consumer norm was to drop it off. This change also allowed a cheap medium that could be overwritten more easily, while film was a one shot deal that involved a separate development cost beyond the film.

The DVD actually watched here, it is worth noting, is actually a collection of what were separate 2 or 4 minute scenes. The original technical limits of watching (the length of the film and of projection) were transferred to a new set of limitations.

NARRATION: THERE I AM (NARRATIVE DISPLACEMENT)

Re-membering is a constructive process. Restorative, additive, selective.

A mutual genesis occurs. Narrating is an in-process construction (Bergson, 1913/1998; Deleuze, 1988). Home movies and their narration, like the selves and families that produce them, are both personal and social constructs. As such, not only do we locate our selves both here and there, now and then, we also locate our selves simultaneously as me, we and they within familial, socio-economic, cultural, spiritual narratives (see Hirsch, 1997). Each narrator constructs their relation as members to the events, place, and family featured in the movie. Each person re-members – that is he/she again becomes a member.

But a member of what, exactly? Perhaps the movie works as a fetish onto which desires are projected. Personal, family, and broader social desires overlap, compete, and revise each other and themselves. The home movie acts as a prop that sparks the creation of and membership to a "shared" desire. By "[r]eworking memory and tradition as fantastic forms of cultural desire - rather than sites of authenticity - ontologies of loss can become allegories of desire" (Russell, 1999, p. xviii). "For what can be more binding amongst beings than the discovery of a common desire" (Man Ray, 1980, p. 16)?

This seems plausible if we take a look at our *use* of movies, both as product and process (Kuhn, 2003). The movie provides enabling limits. The movie/camera/narration is primarily a tool that allows us to enter certain modes of relating (media). The borders of the construction, the frame, work to "capture" (limit-construct) a real|real. Yet it is these very limits that also allow a space and overlap between narratives and therefore an extension, a plugging-in, a re-membering.

There is another multiplication inherent to the process of narrating the silent movie.

What appears unique to moving images, an opportunity exploited here, is the timing of these narratives in relation to the image. The duration of each narrative segment is largely controlled by the movie, and thus by the duration of the original moment and/or the length of time the photographer decided to shoot. Moving images present a track we follow, with sudden jumps that we attempt to navigate off the cuff. Our daily changes of environment appear smooth compared to the rough and sudden leaps between the scenes of the movie. The change is not telegraphed and so we work a step behind. Or, on subsequent viewings, a step ahead. (My mom remembered what was about to be shown in the movie.) The moving image is a structure around which narrative/memory is constructed.

The pacing is all messed up. A sentence is left unfinished, interrupted by a change in location as we struggle to catch up. With no time to pause, we rush into a new sentence on a completely different topic. We try our best to cope with the unforeseen and unannounced immediate passage of days or weeks or months. Our path is always subject to the whim of what's next. Any story we tell is subject to be interrupted by unpredictable and untimely cuts in scenes. Our feet are cut from under us, the backing of our narration violently dislodged. With our words, we chase the moving landscape, the disappearing and reappearing people. We say things like, "That's Grandpa. And Grandma. My Mom. That's Grandma again." Worst of all, the sudden disappearance of our bodies and our landscape undermines our basic premise – that this is me. The image, seemingly ambivalent, projects a body that we claim and do not claim. Working the border of this body, we move back and forth, stumbling on the edges of our selves. Where else do we here these conjunctions?

> *There I am. There I was. There's me. That's me. There we are. There we were. This is there. Here we are. This is at. This is when.*

What should we call those people in the movie? Is it them or us? Do I use present tense or past or past perfect? Is that me doing this now, again? The narrative difficulty is nicely displayed in the statement from my grandfather:

> *There they got a big blanket stretched between us...*

In one sentence, he switches from third person to first person, from past to present. Two sentences are merged: There they had a big blanket stretched between them. Here we have a big blanket stretched between us. Grandpa starts out with the first sentence and switches midway to the second one. Continuing with his description, he switches back and forth from a first person "us", me-in-the-movie, to a second person "you", if-you-had-been-there.

> *There they got a big blanket stretched between us, and uh letting the wind blow us down across the lake. Uh, it really sent us, sent ya. You had to, sometimes you had to drop the blanket to keep from going too fast. (Laughs.) We weren't that good of skaters. But that's, it would take you-us about as fast as you wanted to go.*

Or look at Aunt Deb's statement, she starts with a third person "they" and switches mid-sentence to including herself with "us". In the next sentence she switches to "I remember", removing herself from the time and place. In the next two sentences she switches to second-person "your" implying the universal viewer, then back to "we" and then "them".[i]

> *Ah, the blanket, yes. They would hold the blanket and the wind would pull us across the ice. I remember seeing that before and hearing them talk about it. It's like having your own sailboat, only we were on skates. Got a bunch of them on the blanket there.*

While narrating an image of our lives, we find language clunky. It is easy to think that the multiple changes in point-of-view are the result of a confusion, or worse an alienation stemming from movie itself as a medium. But instead of imagining this as stumbling and bumbling, we see this as a creative moment involving multiple conceptions of self and other. We construct complicated bodies, jumping back and forth, locating our self on the screen, locating our self off the screen. We use moving images to show multiple selves, and that is reflected in the language we use to describe it. Constant changes in point-of-view are the narrators' way of creating what is well-known to film-makers: montage, spliced views that show a simultaneous event. These narrations are a montage of the boundary of self/other, here/there, present/past; they are spliced points-of-view that show simultaneous self/other constructions. We locate our self both on and off the screen, but language doesn't naturally facilitate such a disperse or multiple view of self/other, here/there, present/past. So we splice stuff together: I am there and I was here and you are here and if you had been there and here we were and there they are, again, at this moment. And here we are...

Where do we locate self when viewing a photograph? What strategies do we use to overcome the idea of singularly located self?

> The evidence is abundant. There is already an excess of reals. Narrators invent new strategies in the face of multiplication of self, of family, of audience, of place, of time, of image, of event. To narrate is not to tell a singular smooth story, but to jump and splice, to hedge and extend.

We understand this. We provide ourselves ways out. Aunt Deb provides an escape route for herself while at the same time allowing herself to opt-in to the narrative:

> *I was.. two or three? So I really don't remember it. I remember having seen the pictures.*

I do the same thing, claiming on the one hand, "It's before I have any memories." and on the other hand, "This is the place that I remember."

What constitutes interest?

There are lots of constraints as to what makes up the subject matter to be shot for a home movie. While those constraints are different from those of narration, both attempt to construct a story. From a simplified perspective of use from the point of view of a narrator, the selection of the scenes for a home movie is simply in order to provide prompts for narration.

Why do we take the pictures that we do? What do we choose to remember? What is photographed in a second, a minute, an hour, an event, a week, a month, a year, a lifetime? Are we actively creating utopia, nostalgia? What do we desire? How does desire operate to "preserve"/(re)create the self(s)/others moment-by-moment? What is the subjective experience of desire? What desire propels us? How do we use the photograph as evidence of desire, as construction of desire socially?

Beyond the technical limitations, there are still a lot of options of what could constitute the subject matter of home movies.

The magic of home movies.

By dislodging movie/self/reality as given, and re-conceiving them as a form of group desire, any moment becomes more open. "When one relates movement to any-moment-whatevers, one must be capable of thinking the production of the new, that is, of the remarkable and the singular, at any one of these moments: this is a complete conversion of philosophy" (Deleuze, 2005, p. 8).

> Mom: *But we did watch the movies growin' up, on a cold winter nights every now and again, we made popcorn and get the movies out. And set and watch 'em. It was kind of a fun thing.*

How do we construct narrative socially, in family groups, in larger groups? How do we use the photograph as evidence of desire, as construction of desire socially?What is the structure of these narratives? How are they organized?

We need stories to share. We need to know we were/are alive with others. We "consume images and no longer... beliefs" (Barthes, 1981, p.119). The image is belief; it provides us with a reality. It makes real. The self is always in the process of producing self. We want to re-member our self into the image, and yet we do not want to be bound by it. Mom remembers how large the ice is; she claims additional authenticity, that of experience and scale left out of the movie. Grandpa remembers what he thought he took a movie of, what he meant to put on film, what should have been there. Mom and Grandpa, even Deb and I, remember more to prove that we were more. We have strategies for stretching the "real" which encompass the image. We locate the spiritual beyond the real, and then tack back.

The movie is the modernist absent center, the organizer of desire, the plane on which we imagine the overlap of selves, where we believe we are together. We make the spiritual real. We align our words. We tie back to the image, for legitimacy. It is there. It proves our story. It diverts attention from trans/di-gressions. And yet, it provides the measurement of these transgressions. The movie is re-membered through the addition of narrative members presumably "lost" (not included). If the movie is the body trunk, the narrations extend as members added. Reality is re-membered to be more than what is shown.

Photography, like painting before it, is "torn between two ambitions: one, primarily aesthetic, namely the expression of spiritual reality wherein the symbol transcended its model; the other, purely psychological, namely the duplication of the world outside" (Bazin, 1980, p. 239).

How do we use photography to overcome the division of the spiritual and the real? How can we re-conceive reality so that the real isn't that which stems from the ultimate other, death? How is narrative related to belief, values?

How do we utilize moving images without being bound by them? How do we construct narrative while within it?

But Grandma, an avid still photographer, sticks to the story as shown. "That just pretty much told the tale I think." Or at least she attempts to use this as cover for any embellishments. "I think it was mostly what way I remember." She takes a different tactic, locating her self within the reality of the photograph. Her position is one of transparency. She is one with the photographic real. To question her role would require questioning the image itself. She locates the spiritual within the real. She makes the real spiritual.

Also, the movie is re-membered through the addition of narrative extensions presumably "lost" (not included). If the movie is the body trunk, the narrations extend as members added. Reality is re-constructed.

Each narrator constructs their relation as members to the events, place, and family featured in the movie. Each person again becomes a member. The terms of this membership to reality are sketched out.

EDITING AND MISUSE

Separately record each family member narrating a (silent) home movie. Using the silent movie as the key, overlay all the narrations so they will play simultaneously.

Sometimes we are all talking about the same thing at the same time using many of the same words.

Sometimes a silence falls between all of us.

Sometimes we diverge, setting off on a separate reminiscence.

Each watching is an act of (re-)creation.

Simultaneous narration of a scene:

Grandpa	Grandma	Mom	Aunt Deb	Me
There they got a big blanket stretched between us, and uh letting the wind blow us down across the lake. Uh, it really sent us, sent ya. You had to, sometimes you had to drop the blanket to keep from going too fast. (Laughs) We weren't that good of skaters. But that's, it would take you-us about as fast as you wanted to go.	*We used to put the blanket between us and, uh, let the wind blow us with the ice skates on. Sometimes you'd get to goin', be goin' pretty fast.*	*There's the blanket! Where they were playin', in the wind. And lettin' em pull em, on the ice. Cause it was a windy day.*	*Ah, the blanket, yes. They would hold the blanket and the wind would pull us across the ice. I remember seeing that before and hearing them talk about it. It's like having your own sailboat, only we were on skates.* *Got a bunch of them on the blanket there.*	*There they are using a sheet as a sail.*

> Each telling is a composition of selves, of times, of places, fashioned in conjunction with memory, image, and family stories.
>
> Again we become members of family, of self, of there, of biography, of then, of a shared moment, an event.
>
> The movie as prop-agenda lets us see the overlaps and differences within our re-memberings, and thus within our desires.

Thus, by overlapping the images and voices in to a new video, in some ways I re-articulated this home movie to foreground the displacement, the overlaps, the schisms. In another way, it could be said that I have further delimited the movie by adding sound (narration). But through the overlap and ambiguity (making it so that the listener is not able to understand just an individual's story) perhaps we have increased the potential extensions that can be made. If nothing else, the extensions are modified and point in somewhat different directions than previously. Just as shooting a home movie, acting in a home movie cause selections and changes, so does producing and writing about one.

But something is lost-gained in translation from this video to text.

How does photography intersect with text? Should video be the medium and product of research in video?

BELIEF AND TOOLS

It seems our first step to making a real-we-can-believe-in is to believe that the tool-for-making is real. The camera is one of many such tools. It is a mechanism to sort out belief; it automatically divides the world into real and not real. We believe too much to see our belief, which is wrapped up neatly in something so "real" we never doubt it: the object itself. We use our cameras to covertly refashion our beliefs. To change reality we must change belief, and vice versa. Tools are a means to do this slowly, deliberately, in intentional ways. To build a box is to build the belief in the box, and vice versa. They go hand in hand - mutual genesis.

The camera then, like any tool, is an object we use to facilitate a mode change in ourselves. But the camera is a particular mode, a particular belief set. It does not encompass all. There is no point beyond belief, no place beyond the real where we can reconfigure the world at will. Instead, there are small adjustments we make to our belief-world while within it.

How do I show that the contradictions of the present moment include myself, or am I attempting to escape them through transcendence? What public self am I constructing/projecting with video/text?

If the division of reality that the camera produces is questioned, then the division of reality that produces the camera (as object, etc) must also be questioned. We would expect then to see a modification of the camera. We can't expect to produce real photographs of the spiritual if we don't see the spiritual in the real. Saying that makes it almost sound easy - no kidding, right? But actually reconfiguring our belief in the real is much harder, hence the proliferation of tools (belief-objects) that let us chip away at it. We invest the tool with a certain spirituality; it becomes the prop whereby we enter a different mode of belief. It is a bootstrap.

Instead of conceiving the movie as a singular shared reality, we conceive the movie as a prop that allows us to enter certain modes of self, a device that allows us to construct identities and landscapes.

But knowing this might change everything. If reality is a representation, and representation therefore a reality, what happens to the schism that used to guarantee the real? Where are the real tools we can believe in? Where are the limits of our belief? Latour (1993) explains how the network of vacuums created a community with a foundation that was solid, to the degree people believed in it. He seems to end asking,

> How can we create if we no longer truly believe?
>
> But that is overstated. Of course we still believe. There is an excess of reals. Of course we never truly believe. We smile for the camera.

To carve out light, to capture emanations, to freeze the shadows of wavelengths (even into increments that we put together to mimic movement) is to divide up and staticize, to multiply and displace. That isn't a side effect. It is too easy to blame the camera, the photograph, the prop, for the belief schism it produces.

We may have said we wanted to capture a real, but what we really wanted was to improve a real.

Perhaps we collect small scraps and souvenirs in order to create options that leverage attributes of real, of representation, of particular mediums and categories and tools, in order to take us places that just one or the other cannot. We hedge consciously and unconsciously, and we do so continuously.

> We are hypocrites.
>
> We don't believe, but we have to.
>
> The belief schism is exactly what allows us to learn, to change, to forsake who we were with who we are with who we are becoming.
>
> Yes, there I am, here I was, all of those together now and then. I sneak out between. I am between. I am not yet.

What if I use moving images to locate me here, as well as there?

> When I was watching the videos of my children today I felt the slow low hums of summer days, and I didn't wish that I could step back but rather, that next time, I make sure to step *in*. If I have a hope for video, surely it is that: not that I can restore life passed, but that looking at life passed startles me back to the realization that life is passing. What if I use moving images to locate me here, as well as there? By "here" I do not mean a present devoid of history, but rather, the present moment that contains history within it, and is therefore, to some degree, capable of opening those stories, of layering on top of them, of multiplying connections within and through a rigidly controlled frame regulated by seconds. Life as a continual process of selection and re-selection where the cuts are as important as the keeps, because that is where the growth can occur.

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i   Some of the inconsistencies are not to be attributed to video, of course. Oral storytelling does not require strict grammatical sense, and changes in point of view might be made for emphasis or audience. For instance, many of us would switch to second person (you), indicating that if "you" had been there. Still, many of the conjunctions listed here seem unique to being presented with an image of self. For further discussion on oral storytelling see Portelli (1991).