

NADJA GERNALZICK

# Temporality in American Filmic Autobiography

Cinema, **Autobiography**  
Automediality and Grammatology  
with *Film Portrait* and *Joyce at 34*

American Studies ★ A Monograph Series

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HEIKE PAUL





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*je suis un positiviste heureux* – Michel Foucault

This is also the motto on a research paper on discourse analysis I wrote as a graduate student for a seminar titled *Historische Semantik*. The course at the Linguistics Section of the Department of German Studies at Johannes-Gutenberg University in Mainz around 1992 was based on Dietrich Busse's book by the same title that quotes the self-description by which Foucault sets a counterpoint to idealism. Busse develops:

By 'positivity,' Foucault means [...] the particular 'materiality,' the particular power which discursive formations exert over the speech, thinking and actions of individuals. Again and again he refuses to view discourse analysis as the uncovering of a hidden entity, of 'another discourse below' the one investigated. (1987, 235, my translation)

Discursive formations after Foucault are not restricted to linguistic signification, but include objects, media and performances like everyday gestures or rituals, for example. Ever since reading Foucault's works in the early 1990s I have assumed *Praxis* and materiality to be properties of discourse as much as of life. In my study, automediality and transmediality are also considered to be material practices. Moreover, complementing Foucauldian discourse theory, the concepts of the sign and of semiosis as well as of temporality and of living temporally and temporarily are drawn from semiotics and grammatology as by the works of Jacques Derrida. I was introduced to discourse theory and to grammatology in the United States while studying as an undergraduate at San Jose State University, California, in the late 1980s. I thank Timothy Paul Barnes and the people of *Cow in the Road* and *Upstairs at Eulipia's* in San Jose for opening horizons.

The beginning of my research into ~~time~~, film, and autobiography dates from the late 1990s. I thank Jim Lane, Emerson College, Los Angeles, for encouraging my interest in cinematic autobiography when he learned of my project and also for giving me feedback on the manuscript of the first version of this publication. Reading his dissertation "The Autobiographical Documentary Film in America: A Critical Analysis of

Modes of Self-Inscription” (1991) in a printout from microfilm during a stay at Columbia University in New York in 2001–2002 opened the research field for me, next to Paul Adams Sitney’s “Autobiography and Avant-Garde Film” and his study *Visionary Film* of the 1970s. Also important for my introduction to the field of cinematic auto/biography and to questions of collaboration and relationality was in the summer of 2000 the filming of several dozens of hours of interviews and on-location footage for an oral history project about the conversion to civilian use of former United States military facilities in Rhineland-Palatinate in Germany, including local residents’ memories of the United States Army. I am grateful to Heiko Arendt for accompanying me with the camera and great professionalism to wherever the project led, to Natascha Gikas for her help with the recording of sound and to Micha Edlich for transcription of interviews.

This book is the thorough revision, expansion and updated version of the archived manuscript of my Mainz University habilitation thesis on temporality in filmic autobiography. I am grateful to Dr. Andreas Barth of Universitätsverlag C. Winter in Heidelberg for his continuing support in the preparation of the manuscript for publication. Many stimulating studies relating to film and ~~time~~ and to first-person film have been published in the past decade, among them Malin Wahlberg’s *Documentary Time: Film and Phenomenology* (2008), Laura Rascaroli’s *The Personal Camera: Subjective Cinema and the Essay Film* (2009), Alisa Lebow’s *The Cinema of Me: Self and Subjectivity in First-Person Documentary Film* (2012) and Robin Curtis and Angelica Fenner’s *The Autobiographical Turn in Germanophone Documentary and Experimental Film* (2014). I thank these colleagues for advancing the field and gratefully acknowledge the benefit my work derives from their publications.

My original plan was to include a larger number of filmic autobiographies since the 1940s into the in-depth analyses in the third chapter of my study and to create a panorama, or, rather, kaleidoscope of temporalities in cinematic autobiography across several decades of its history. I had to abandon this project and chose to reduce my analysis to two film classics from the United States from the early 1970s, Jerome Hill’s *Film Portrait* and Joyce Chopra and Claudia Weill’s *Joyce at 34*. When they had learned of my research, Jim Lane, Alfred Guzzetti and Ed Pincus sent me copies of their filmic autobiographies, to my great delight. I very much regret that I have not been able to write on Ed Pincus’s *Dia-*

ries before his death in 2013. I hope that Alfred Guzzetti and Jim Lane will forgive me for not treating their films – *Family Portrait Sitzings* (1975) and the serial filmic autobiography consisting of *Long Time No See* (1982), *East Meets West* (1986), *I Am Not an Anthropologist* (1995) and *Background Action* (1999) – in depth. Their works have much helped clarify my thinking. Thank you for your trust and films. I also warmly thank my former student Violeta Braña-Lafourcade for offering and organizing for me a copy of her aunt Marilú Mallet's *Double Portrait* (2000). Many heartfelt thanks also go to Sarah Cole for encouraging my work on a variety of occasions. When we were sharing an office at Mainz University in the early 2000s, it surprised us greatly and pleasantly to notice that I was writing on a film with images of her as an infant who was sitting across from me as a grown woman.

I thank Alfred Hornung, who more than anyone else has helped and seen me grow as an academic. He has allowed me to enjoy academic freedom and thereby enabled my thinking. He has shown me the way into autobiography studies and shared and passed on to me and to many others his enthusiasm for auto/biography and life narrative. He has significantly developed the research field, particularly on occasion of conferences of the International Auto/Biography Association (IABA) which he co-founded in 1999. Sharing research results and discussions with colleagues from around the world and participating in the growth of the field has been for me a recurrent reminder of the purposes of research, for which I am deeply grateful. Thank you very much, Alfred. My thinking and my living have been much enriched by our exchange.

I thank my parents for their manifold loving support, also in the practicalities of everyday life around child and profession, as well as my brother and his family for generous humor. Their examples have been decisive for my being moved by life stories.

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I thank my son Maarten for his love for a mother who since his birth in 2003 he has had to share with *Wissenschaft*. He points out to me that the image of Jerome Hill shaving before the mirror in *Film Portrait* is not a mirror image since the filmmaker holds the razor in his right hand and his right arm is on the left of the image. *Ist doch klar*.

Mainz, July 2017

Nadja Gernalzick

## Preface

In his seminal article on filmic autobiography, Paul Adams Sitney asserts that “it is the autobiographical cinema *per se* that confronts fully the rupture between the time of cinema and the time of experience and invents forms to contain what it finds there” (Sitney 1977–1978, 105). My study, as a first monograph on temporality in cinematic and, specifically, filmic autobiography and a response to Sitney’s statement, focuses on social-conventional, narrative as well as poetical and rhetorical temporalities and on temporalities and temporalization created by specifically cinematic semiosis and technology. ‘Time itself,’ in contemporary philosophical discourses and according to grammatology is beyond access as beyond signification, and so I conceive the term ‘time,’ used in established terminology and discourse, as ~~time~~.

Today, cinematic autobiography is widespread, also in digital and social-media versions. Cinematic autobiography – cinematic after Greek *kinema*, motion – refers to motion-picture autobiography in general, and comprises autobiography in filmic, video, animation, digital, non-photographic and computer-generated moving images, with or without sound. Filmic autobiography refers to cinematic autobiography that involves a photographic process of image production, as it pertains to earliest film since the invention of cinema, to celluloid film, to photographic image production with storage on magnetic tape as well as to digitally rendered film drawn from principally photographic – light-sensitive and light-generated – processes. ‘Film’ means the involvement of photography. The distinction between film and video is popularly often elided; videos as well as films are frequently referred to equally as movies, or as films, or as videos when online in digitalized versions. “Although this is technically inaccurate, popular parlance ignores the inaccuracy. The reader will encounter this [...] with terms like cinematic and filmic to refer to [...] works] that were shot and edited on video“ (Lane 2002, 197 n. 1). I use filmic to refer to autobiography on film as well as on videotape since both technologies store photographic images.



Visuals resulting from photographic image production, if most widespread, are but one variant of cinema – motion pictures – besides non-photographic moving pictures or emerging postfilmic formats with computer-generated imaging. Non-photographic cinematic autobiography, especially with computer-generated images and computer-generated animation, may be expected to become more widespread, and its conceptualization is relevant for critical distinction of filmic cinema and for critiques of theory of indexicality and of the frame, for example, in semiotics and in a grammatology of cinema. Cinema may be computer-generated without involvement of photography, or may result from manipulation of and projection from a tape or strip of whatever material consistency, so that motion pictures may be without photographic processing. Such is the case, for example, with a movie by Stan Brakhage derived from a moth or its wings glued to a celluloid strip – “cinema without film” (Stewart 2007, 241) – or from scratching or coloring on a celluloid strip or other material. Such modes of production of non-photographic motion pictures are called – more or less felicitously regarding implication of historiographic chronology – postfilmic cinema and are mostly found in computer-generated imagery and sound. Animation, in turn, is a complex matter when considering distinctions between filmic and postfilmic cinema. Since animation cinema usually does not result from photographic image production but from drawings, it is non-photographic; however, the images drawn are usually photographically transferred onto a film strip or videotape, so that the animated motion pictures are in effect both, non-photographic as well as filmic. I prefer to count animation as postfilmic because the figuration and visual signification of the images does not derive from photographs, but merely their being set into motion is bound to photography. Digital, computer-generated animation and storage on electronic devices, in turn, overcomes such distinctions and is strictly postfilmic.

Other definitions of cinema, film and the postfilmic distinguish between filmic cinema as denoting all predigital motion pictures, and postfilmic cinema as denoting digital motion pictures (Stewart 2007) independent of questions of photographic procedure. The argument is that the digital is not filmic because binary code no longer separates into frames whereas the frame is held to be the basic characteristic of film. Video on tape or chip that selectively stores frame information then receives an awkward position between filmic and postfilmic. Yet further

approaches distinguish between digital cinema and digital new media (Rodowick 2007). Since the turn of the twenty-first century, cinema has been reinterpreted as painterly rather than photographic in reference to the “manual construction of images in digital cinema,” and “cinema’s identity” as the filmic “art of the index” and “record [of] reality” (Manovich 2000 [1999], 175, 173, 174) has been criticized. My preference, developed from and modifying some earlier study (Gernalzick 2006; 2014), lies with this critique and retains the distinction based on the criterion of the photographic and on the critique of the historical discourse of the photographic, with the increasing probability of future dissemination of non-photographic digital imaging, that is, postfilmic cinema. In my understanding, digitally stored data may also rely on light-sensitive processes and light-generated semiosis, so that there are photographic digital motion pictures as well as non-photographic, computer-generated digital motion pictures. The transition is fluent, and the debate about such distinctions is ongoing. In my investigation, filmic autobiography refers to films that are produced photographically either on celluloid, or their data are produced light-sensitively and stored on magnetic tape or digitally, comprising film that in postproduction has been digitalized eventually. Since the treatment of cinema as indexical is currently historicized, the discussion on film and filmic autobiography also, retrospectively as it were, is newly evaluated and changes (Part II.2).

Filmic autobiography is a large sector of cinematic autobiography and part of the production in the dominant cinematic technology of the twentieth century. Cinematic autobiography, and, in particular, filmic autobiography, increasingly receive attention in film or cinema studies and in media studies, especially in terms of media-specificity or genre studies and of transmediality. In autobiography studies, cinematic autobiography has been discussed since the 1980s. The discourse of generic specification of what are conventionally considered non-fiction personal and autobiographical forms – in writing and print or in cinema as in other media – has been extended into the concept of ficticity of all semiotic and medial products in the past twenty years and into the concept of automediality since about 2008, with comparability of forms of self-creation across media and with their phenomenological or ontological status variably treated, depending on theoretical premises. My investigation is located among such concerns and concepts, with a preference for and

perspective of grammatology as a deconstructionist semiotics, including historical semantics.

In their course, my observations are restricted to anglophone filmic works from the United States, as they originally were the focus of my research. I hope that my proposition towards a discussion of temporality in filmic autobiography suggests pathways into culturally and linguistically more diverse projects, the need for which is affirmed in the last section of Part I (Part I.3, 121–165). The historiographic determination of specific national and cultural provenances of canons and canonization of cinematic autobiography in scholarship and elsewhere demonstrates how challenging it is to address the transculturality and transnationality of the genre.

Part I, consisting of three sections, is preparatory and provides context and background from auto/biography studies. Part II, also in three sections, reviews the contemporary discussion of ~~time~~ and temporality in philosophy, sociology, narratology, semiotics and cinema studies and generates the methodology and analytical terms for analysis of temporality in cinematic autobiography at large. On this basis, Part III analyzes temporalization, temporality and ~~time~~ vocabulary in and by two filmic autobiographies of 1972, *Film Portrait* by Jerome Hill and *Joyce at 34* by Joyce Chopra and Claudia Weill, with attention to temporalities of social convention including gender, temporalities of narrative, poetical and rhetorical chronofigurations, and specific temporalizations by cinema technology.

In Part I the section “From Autobiography to Automedia” locates my project in automedia and transmedia studies. Automedia is defined as materiality and agency of self-processing, and transmedia is defined as combining processuality and relationality. In the section “Filmic Autobiography,” the twentieth-century emergence of definitions of filmic autobiography from theories of literary autobiography is delineated, and the type of films informing the discussion of filmic autobiography is delimited. Filmic autobiography is treated in relation to the terminological discourse contextually surrounding it, involving personal film, home movie, avant-garde film, diary film, and autobiographical documentary-style film. The conceptual field is sketched between aspects of genre, narratology, and technology of film and of non-photographic and postfilmic cinema. The last section of Part I, on “Canonization and Transnationalization,” selectively reviews anglophone re-

search on mainly filmic autobiography dating from the 1970s, in respect of emergence of scholarly discourse and the canonization of cinematic autobiographies it effected, and sketches the more recent transnationalization of research on and canon of cinematic autobiography. Table 1 (Part I.3, 122–142) and accompanying Table 2, graph and maps (Color Plates, 452–456) provide an overview of works of cinematic autobiography treated in anglophone critical literature and consisting mainly of filmic autobiography.

Part II addresses the theoretical and methodological premises of an analysis of temporality. I propose an approach that combines grammatology and discourse theory with different theories of temporality and temporalization since the second half of the twentieth century mainly. Selected vocabularies for the description of temporalization and temporalities in philosophy, sociology, narratology, semiotics, and film and cinema studies are reviewed in the sections “Sociological and Philosophical ~~Time~~ Vocabularies,” “Cinema and ~~Time~~ Vocabularies” and “Narratological ~~Time~~ Vocabularies.” Table 3 (Part II, 173) compiles the ~~time~~ vocabularies for application in the analysis of temporality in cinematic autobiography. The discussion in Part II includes twenty-first-century positions on contingency, semiosis across media, grammatology of cinema and the image, non-photographic and postfilmic cinema, the trace in studies of documentary-style film and the historicization of the debate on indexicality of photography and film. Patterns of temporalization by life narrative and cinema technology such as narrative chronology and its variants, editing, average segment duration or cinematic rhythm are outlined in relation to critical ~~time~~ vocabularies and as criteria for the analysis of temporalities in filmic autobiography.

Part III discusses Jerome Hill’s *Film Portrait* and Joyce Chopra and Claudia Weill’s *Joyce at 34*, both of 1972, in a detailed reading of filmic autobiography, as one variant of automediality, and focuses on temporality according to an application of selected criteria developed in Parts I and II, including narrative temporal patterns, PROPER TIME, temporalization by relationality, and poetical and rhetorical chronofigurations of, for example, reversibility, automobility or rhythmicization. The sections of Part III are “Temporalities of Social Convention,” “Narrative Temporalities” and “Poetical and Rhetorical Chronofigurations.” In part, analysis is based on data derived from segmentation of the films into smallest uncut units as summarized in Tables 5 and 6 (Part III.3, 414–

417). Selected film stills in the appended section “Color Plates” allow for a concrete consideration of the argument regarding characteristics of figuration, even if the images as stills are kinetically altered and without sound, compared to the figuration in the films.

All translations from texts in languages other than English are mine except when noted otherwise. A slightly modified Chicago-style author-date referencing system is used: Date of first publication, including first publication in first language, is given in square brackets after the date of publication in English translation or after the date of the re-publication or further edition I quote from. Internal cross-references are given in parentheses with chapter and page numbers. Numbers of figures given in parentheses refer the reader to the appendix with tables and figures in color (Color Plates, 441–457).

## Tables and Figures

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## I Automediality, Transmediality, Transnationality

The terms automediality, transmediality and transnationality organize auto/biography studies according to recently prominent fields of interest between studies of life narrative, media studies, and cultural studies. The study of cinematic autobiography crosses these fields and disciplines. Extending current uses of the term auto/biography, I develop and define automediality, by which cinematic autobiography is subsumed, in a wide sense as materiality and agency of self-processing. As also explicated in the section “From Autobiography to Automediality,” transmediality is understood in an immanent sense as processuality and relationality – of media, of human and non-human agents, of themes and of semiotic systems, for example – rather than in a transcending sense of genres, narrative or other entities absolved from materiality, as is frequently associated with the term. In the section “Cinematic Autobiography,” approaches to cinematic autobiography – particularly in the form of filmic autobiography since film is the medial technology prevalent in cinematic autobiography early on and to this day – are outlined and the type of films paradigmatically informing the definition of filmic autobiography is delimited by narratological and technological arguments. The terminological and taxonomic discourse of autobiography and filmic autobiography of the past forty years is reviewed for the purpose also of establishing the use of the term cinematic autobiography as hyperonym, rather than personal film, first-person film, home movie, autobiographical documentary, or filmic autobiography. This conceptual field is sketched through aspects of genre, narratology, and technology of filmic and postfilmic cinema. In the last section of Part I, on “Canonization and Transnationalization,” I selectively address anglophone research on filmic autobiography since it was first conducted in the 1970s, review the research in respect of the canonization of filmic autobiographies it effected and suggest tasks for transnationalization of research on cinematic autobiography. The analysis of temporality in filmic autobiography of the 1970s from the United States in Part III concerns various

terminological and methodological intersections outlined in Part I and is based on ~~the~~ vocabularies which I introduce and discuss in Part II.

### I.1 From Autobiography to Automediality

Taxonomies and generic classifications in studies of written and print autobiography in the second half of the twentieth century were extended by transfer into studies of autobiography in other media – film, graphic book, performance, photography, new media arts – and by investigations of generic hybridity. Along with orientation of autobiography theory to reception studies and to ethics since the 1970s, the study of different media of autobiographical creation from pragmatist viewpoints has led to recognition of participatory, relational and interactive modes and technologies of self-making. The traditional concept of the autonomous self as subject has been criticized and replaced by views on processual selfhood and self-making, terms not central to the subject-object dichotomy paradigmatic in idealist and identitarian logics and legacies. Media studies, with their emphasis on materialities and technologies, have underscored the pragmatist understanding of the dependence of the self on engagement of materials and technological tools for its creation, and semiotics and grammatology have drawn attention to the irreducibility of signs and coded sign systems for self-processing and for the communication of models of self.<sup>1</sup> More recently elaborated, the concepts of automediality and transmediality today are useful in accounting for recent developments: automediality denotes the general media-dependence, materiality and

<sup>1</sup> General historiography of mainly anglophone autobiography studies and theory including classical and canonical texts in Olney 1980a; S. Smith and Watson 2011 [2001]; Jolly 2001; Chansky and Hipchen 2016. Further overview of the history of autobiography theory and studies across languages in Finck 1999; Wagner-Egelhaaf 2000; Holdenried 2000; Kley 2002; Rügge-meier 2014. Wagner-Egelhaaf (forthcoming) promises to provide a comprehensive and comparative, transnational history of the theory of autobiography and autobiography studies including scholarship in languages other than English.

agency of self-making, and transmediality denotes processuality and relationality of and between media and selves in the world.

### Automedia

In the terminology I apply, autobiography – works of autobiography as well as discourse of autobiography in works of theory and its history – is subsumed by automedia. Automedia means any engagement in the materiality of media by agents, including respective relational components and processes. Automedia also denotes non-human agency and activity since “self-other relationships [...] do not stop at the species boundary” (Herman 2014, 141). Automedia pertains to an extensive concept of the medium and of media(liza)-tion, as applied in mediologies by Marshall McLuhan (1964) or Régis Debray (2001 [1991]), for example. Automedia may be other than autobiography; for example, literary fiction, news writing, photography, game playing, driving a car, or eating are automedial. Automedia studies subsume theories and discussions of autobiography in literature or film as well as the emergence of definitions of cinematic autobiography from theories of literary autobiography. Jörg Dünne and Christian Moser introduce the concept of automedia with a narrower scope, restricted to autobiography across media, as found in its adoption by Carsten Heinze, who considers automedia to “focus [...] in a strict sense on specific medial forms of the (auto-)biographical and on the question which medial transformations are observable in the choice of specific media” (Heinze 2013, 26). Julie Rak’s application of the term automedia (2015), in turn, is restricted to new media. Dünne and Moser, however, also suggest a theory of “generalized ‘automedia’” (2008, 11), which is the point of departure for my proposal of a wider elaboration of automedia.

### Materiality and Mediality

Dünne and Moser’s primary rationale for introducing automedia is the historical disregard of critics but also of autobiographers themselves for the materiality and technology of the medium with which the person narrating a life works. Concerning Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s approach to writing as the medium of his *Confessions* (1995

[1782]), Dünne and Moser, referring to Jean Starobinski's study of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's life and works (1957), argue that Rousseau believed an individual writer's style to strip writing of its opaque materiality, so that writing was conceived as a transparent and neutral medium of expression for a subject's inner life (Dünne and Moser 2008, 7). In a like way, much of autobiography research ever since Wilhelm Dilthey and Georg Misch, Dünne and Moser argue, takes the medium merely as a tool for the depiction of a pre-existing subject with a coherent narrative of a given life (Dünne and Moser 2008, 7–8). Even though more recent theory of autobiography has intensely considered the narrative constructedness and ficticity – made-ness, fabricatedness – of a life story, the participation, or even determining influence, of the medium in the way the life is displayed, performed, or constructed is often still ignored (Dünne and Moser 2008, 8). Contemporary theories and treatments of autobiography frequently consider the medium transparent, or, by contrast and at another end of the spectrum of positions, even if they attend to the medium of self-inscription, the *autos* is ignored by reducing its subjectivity or agency to a mere effect of the medial apparatus (Dünne and Moser 2008, 9–10). Dünne and Moser propose the term automediality as a means of avoiding such opposition of, on the one hand, a determination of the medium through the self-expression of the user and, on the other hand, a determination of subjectivity through mediality (Dünne and Moser 2008, 11). They advocate, in other words, a relational understanding of self and medium that does not displace but integrates agency. The term automediality is meant to affirm a concern for materiality of the medium and for its being integrated in constellations of agency, power and technology in autobiography studies. For this purpose, Dünne and Moser also assert the continuing relevance of Foucauldian concepts of media dispositives, of self-practices and of technologies of self (Dünne and Moser 2008, 12).

As a continuation of such consideration of automediality and materiality, Moser also advanced the concept of “material autobiography” (Moser 2013, 122–123). Moser applies it to refer to collections of objects as tokens of autobiographical memory – to the “thing as medium of memory” (Moser 2013, 127). However, according to this logic of distinction between thing and text, autobiography as text or semiotic product does not share in the materiality of things, so that

Moser's term "material autobiography" does not denote semiotic and medial materiality in the way it is considered in my investigation or as it is considered in media studies, for example by recent interest in "intermateriality" (Seier 2017; Schröter 2008 qtd. in Rajewsky 2013, 19). Even though digital media are under discussion as moving beyond mediality as materiality and as dematerializing signification (Rajewsky 2005, 63; Doane 2008 [2007], 9–10, 13; Marks 2002, chapter 11), I consider digital media, as electronic, to have a materiality, also. After all, as the energy required to 'mine' crypto-currencies demonstrates, digital data as semiosis and medialization are not only energetic electronic markers but also inextricably linked to other varieties of materiality on the planet and thereby to its material and energetic economy. Laura Marks' questioning of the "material basis of electronic imaging" (Marks 2002, 161), for example, points to a similar field of investigation, as does Doane's challenge to media theories of the immaterial by a call for "making it matter once more," even if this cannot happen, in my view, by "returning [...] to representation" (Doane 2008 [2007], 13). I take materiality to adhere to signs also in filmic, or electronic, or neural versions even though this materiality is of a different haptic or aesthetic experience than a book or a painting, for example. The materiality of the electronic requires consideration in terms of energy and semiosis.

By the early 2000s, the self as interdependent process between a human agent and a medium with its semiotic code has become a standard conception, implying critiques of the concept of the universal subject and of monolithic concepts of subjectivity, critiques taken on from deconstruction and discourse theory. The autobiographical text or film is neither any longer considered representational of or secondary to reality of other materialities nor to be affording autonomous expression and externalization to the pre-figurations in the mind of an authorial subject, but is instead considered a flexible mark of a person's relational self-processing and part of a general materiality of signs and their communal processing. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf consequently concludes her review of autobiography theory with a note on the materiality of life writing: "Autobiography is not life described but life scripted" (Wagner-Egelhaaf 2000, 16). In a general automedial semiotics, material semiotic productivity – semiosis – encompasses