

# *Paraethnographic Film: Multimodal Participant Observation as Process and Product*

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How can ethnographic knowledge production beyond the written text act as data collection and concept building? To explore this question, I will screen and then discuss the film *Our Digital Selves: My Avatar is Me*, a documentary by Bernhard Drax. This film chronicles my research on disability and virtual worlds, but the filmmaker was given creative control: my collaborator and I appear in the film and helped guide its themes, but made no decisions regarding the film's final content. The filmmaker's extensive work included meeting interlocutors in the physical world that the researchers met only online, as well as crafting a narrative about disability and virtual embodiment that comments on rather than replicates the scholarly narrative. In turn, participation in the film shaped my own substantive conclusions and theoretical interventions. How does this experience differ (or not) from other forms of ethnographic film, which always involve multiple forms of collaboration? How can such work link in new ways the phases of research design, "writing up," and dissemination? What might this mean for anthropological futures, including but not limited to digital anthropology itself?