# Video Essay as a Mode of Nomadic Thought: A Self-Reflective Evaluation of Three Different Experiments[1] [2]

## *Göçebe Düşünce Modu Olarak ViDeo Deneme: Üç Farklı Deneyimin Özdüşünümsel Bir Değerlendirmesi*

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## Abstract

This study explores the academic potential and unique value of video essays, positioning them as an creative form of thought and knowledge production. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "nomadic thought," the paper establishes a framework for an epistemology that sits between creative and academic practices. It argues that video essays can serve as an alternative to traditional methodologies, particularly in media and film studies. As a form, the video essay has the potential to blur the lines between researcher and subject, fostering a more fluid and dynamic approach to academic inquiry. This study discusses how video essays can contribute to new ways of questioning and thinking through their aesthetic, affective, and relational capacities, drawing on the author's experiences and insights gained from three different video essays. By including self-reflective evaluation in these works, the author links the process of creating video essays to the epistemological debates in the study's theoretical part. Additionally, the study examines how post-quantitative methodologies, rooted in Deleuze's philosophy of difference, can provide a framework for video essays. It is essential to discuss new methods in media and film studies that minimize the distance between the researcher and the research object. The primary aim of this study is to evaluate the academic value of video essays within this framework and to understand their epistemological implications. Shifting from representational thinking to a relational thinking practice has the potential to initiate a transformative process, opening up new research avenues in digital media and reshaping our understanding of film studies.

**Keywords:** *Nomadic thought, post-qualitative inquiry, video essay, onto-epistemology, performative research.*

## Öz

Bu çalışma, video denemelerinin akademik potansiyelini ve ayırt edici değerini araştırmakta, onları yaratıcı bir düşünce ve bilgi üretim biçimi olarak konumlandırmaktadır. Deleuze ve Guattari'nin "göçebe düşünce" kavramından yola çıkan çalışma, yaratıcı ve akademik pratiklerin arasında konumlanabilen bir epistemolojinin çerçevesini belirledikten sonra video denemelerin özellikle medya ve film çalışmaları alanında, geleneksel metodolojilerden farklı bir alternatif sunabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Video deneme bir form olarak araştırmacı ve özne gibi ikili ayrımları aşmaya, akademik sorgulamaya daha akışkan ve dinamik bir yaklaşım getirme potansiyelini taşımaktadır. Çalışmada video denemelerin estetik, duygulanımsal ve ilişkisel kapasiteleri aracılığıyla yenilikçi bir sorgulama ve düşünme biçimine nasıl katkı sunabileceği yazarın üç farklı video denemesinden elde ettiği deneyimler ve iç görülerle tartışılmıştır. Üç farklı çalışmaya dönük özdüşünümsel bir sorgulama yürütülmüş video deneme yaratım süreci başta yürütülen epistemolojik tartışma ile ilişkilendirilmiştir. Deleuze'ün fark felsefesinden hareket eden bir onto-epistemolojik temeli sahiplenen post-nitel metodolojilerin, video denemeler için nasıl bir çerçeve sunabileceği de sorgulanmaktadır. Bu noktada medya ve film çalışmaları alanında özellikle araştırmacının, araştırma nesnesi ile mesafesini ortadan kaldırabilecek, yeni yöntemlerin tartışılması önem arz etmektedir. Video denemelerin akademik değerini böyle bir çerçeveden ele almak, epistemolojik çerçevesini anlamak çalışmanın temel gayesidir. Temsili düşünme ve sorgulama pratiklerinden ziyade ilişkisel bir düşünme pratiğini anlamak dijital medyanın yeni araştırma alanlarına ve yeni bir film akademisyenliği anlayışına doğru farklı patikalar açabilecek dönüştürücü bir sürecin başlangıcı olma potansiyelini taşımaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Göçebe düşünce, post-nitel sorgulama, video deneme, onto-epistemoloji, performatif araştırma*

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## Introduction

Encountering the statement "every practice is a form of thought already in action" in the preface of the book "Thought in the Act" (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 7) marked an important starting point for my ongoing exploration of video essays. In the title of my article, I reference this statement and introduce an additional concept. As an academic in film studies, I have been thinking and producing video essays since 2020, making me relatively new to this endeavor. At first, I focused on the experimental process of completely deconstructing and reconstructing films. However, over time, this exploration made me aware of a new form. I became familiar with the work of other academics who create video essays and engage in discussions about the potential of this medium. From this perspective, the role of video essays in academia centers on their relationship with knowledge. Thus, examining video essays from an alternative epistemological standpoint will enrich the discussion.

Therefore, we can pose the following question: What makes a video essay academically valuable? To clarify, when I refer to "academic value," I do not limit it strictly to empirical knowledge. Instead, I include a broad spectrum of elements such as creativity, critical thinking, philosophy, and art. Philosophy is particularly important here since we are examining a question of value. This leads us to consider our inquiry within an epistemological context. Every epistemological approach is grounded in an ontological assumption. Our interpretations of existence and our relationship to it shape what we regard as knowledge about existence and influence how we engage with it. Consequently, answering the question about the academic value of a video essay is deeply connected to our ontological beliefs and epistemological viewpoints. We can refer to this connection as the onto-epistemological paradigm.

The main purpose of this paper is to connect the academic value of video essays with an alternative onto-epistemological paradigm grounded in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "Nomadic Thought". To do this, I will structure my argument around four parts.

In the first part of the paper, I will discuss Deleuze's critique of the dogmatic image of thought within the framework of the philosophy of difference. I will also present the new image of thought he proposes as an alternative. This section will establish the ontological framework for the main claim of the paper.

In the second part, I will examine the unique "in-between" form of the video essay and the "in-between" position of the video essayist, drawing on Adorno's insights regarding the essay form and Deleuze's critique of dogmatic thinking. It is important to note that the critical ideas of these two thinkers converge when discussing an alternative onto-epistemological paradigm.

Moving on to the third part, as a response to the first, I will examine video essays through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the "nomadology". I intend to approach the concept of the "nomadology" as a mode of thinking. I consider "thought in the act" as a nomadic thought process.

Finally, in the fourth part, I will relate my experiences experimenting with video essays to the ideas explored in the first, second and third parts to concretise the discussed concepts. This alternative onto-epistemological paradigm offers a new perspective on the academic value of video essays. In this regard, I integrate the discussion from this study with a self-reflexive

examination of the video essays I have created. Consequently, my study is confined to my personal experiences with video essays.

The place of video in academia is not entirely new. Digital video technology and social surveillance practices have converged to create a new qualitative methodology (Pink, 2001; Shrum et al., 2005). Qualitative research in social and human sciences now utilizes audio-visual recordings to explore daily practices, cultures, and social organizations. Moreover, beyond this, we can argue that there are creative and distinct uses of video as a method across various disciplines, discussing video not merely as a tool for qualitative research but as a novel method of visual inquiry (Harris, 2016; Heath et al., 2011; Mitchell, 2011).

However, it is essential to distinguish the position of the video essay from video as a method in social surveillance practices. The video essay is a unique form of media that goes beyond just being a research tool or data collection method. Due to its "essayistic" quality, it can combine questions, thoughts, research, and expression into a single, cohesive piece. Its historical origins are initially rooted in something other than academic motivations. Video essays have developed in parallel with digital culture and the internet. The initial works were more shaped as videographic film criticism resulting from the interaction of film critique with technology (Grant, 2014; Keathley, 2011; Mcwhirter, 2015; Shambu, 2020). Therefore, in its current state, video essays have primarily found their place in academia within film studies. However, talking about a single form is tough, even within this context. Keathley (2011, p. 180) discusses the variations of video essays based on their positioning between language-centred or poetic ends, while Grant (2021) approaches video essays within the context of different modalities. Keating (2021) categorises video essays in terms of their approach as cumulative and recursive. These examples demonstrate the wide range of variations that video essays can take. These diverse variations also introduce complexities in considering video essays within an academic context (Lavik, 2012). Considering interdisciplinary interactions, defining video essays would become even more challenging.

In this regard, and considering that simplicity can sometimes be more functional, I would like to proceed with a straightforward approach in this study. As mentioned, I borrow from Manning and Massumi's notion of "thought in the act." Building upon this we might discuss video essays, as a "mode of thought" or a "material thinking" as highlighted by Catherine Grant (2014; Grant & Gürkan, 2021). Grant (2014) argues this mode of thought have the capacity to produce knowledge and ideas through performative, material research. Thus, we can question what kind of knowledge this "mode of thought" produces. The answer to this question is neither data-based knowledge nor knowledge that represents any phenomenon. Here we can talk about a knowledge that we need to understand more in "relational" manner. Gürkan (2022) argues that film criticism should focus on engaging with images in a haptic and experiential manner rather than merely interpreting them. Instead of relying on the traditional interpretative approach rooted in structuralism, it is essential to consider thought within a broader experiential context that goes beyond the conventional categories of interpretation, understanding, and analysis. Given the video's aesthetic potential, plasticity, and assemblage-based thinking possibilities, representational thinking might not be sufficient. To discuss the value of the video essay, we also might to draw from a non-representational thinking. Considering the possibilities of video essays today, within the realm of post-qualitative methods, we might suggest that creative methods discussed in the field, such as art-based research, practice-led research, or performative research, hold valuable potential for video essays.

## 1. From the "image of dogmatic thought" to "a new image of thought"

Deleuze's philosophy of difference constitutes a critique of representational ontology, encompassing all forms of dualism and transcendence. For Deleuze (1994, p. 55) "representation fails to capture the affirmed world of difference. Representation has only a single centre, a unique and receding perspective, and in consequence, a false depth. It mediates everything, but mobilizes and moves nothing". Difference is the essence of existence. Existence comprises sets of differences that constitute and unfold themselves rather than being formed by identical entities (May, 2005, p. 151). It is important to note that the concept of difference should not be limited to a mere transition from one state to another. Deleuze attributes a radical role to difference. Through difference, existence is constructed; it ensures the necessity and substantiality of existence (Hardt, 2012, p. 39). Instead of "being" there is a process of expression through the virtual differentiation and becoming of difference a "flow of becoming-life" (Colebrook, 2002, p. 125). There 'is' nothing other than the flow of becoming. Deleuze's notion of "becoming" is against the Cartesian dualism of substance and reality (Er, 2021, p. 220). Spinoza refrained from separating the understanding of existence into substance and representation. Thus, instead of the Cartesian subject-object dichotomy, we have "multiplicities" emerging from the encounters of bodies. For Spinoza, everything is essentially an "expression" of existence. For instance, there is no hierarchical distinction between a subject and a object in an existencial level, let's say a person and a rock. The person and the rock are different modalities of existence and express themselves within their own "bodies". There is no separate essence from existence itself. Continuously diversifying, it expresses itself through new modes. In this sense, the philosophy of difference stands against the philosophy of representation. In the third chapter of Deleuze's "Difference and Repetition", he questions the thought that is sterilized by restrictive assumptions, presumptions, and the concept of the "dogmatic image of thought":

> It has the form of 'Everybody knows …'. Everybody knows, in a pre-philosophical and pre-conceptual manner... everybody knows what it means to think and to be. ... As a result, when the philosopher says 'I think therefore I am', he can assume that the universality of his premisses - namely, what it means to be and to think... - will be implicitly understood, and that no one can deny that to doubt is to think, and to think is to be... Everybody knows, no one can deny, is the form of representation and the discourse of the representative (Deleuze, 1994, pp. 129–130).

The dogmatic image of thought is the set of presuppositions about what thought is and how it operates that precedes the act of thinking. Deleuze highlights that there is a singular and dogmatic image of thought widely accepted in philosophy and science. He also questions the possibility of a new image of thought that encourages difference, creativity, and transformation. The dogmatic image of thought is based on assumptions that thought is natural and continuous, harmonious and good, and that subjects and objects are stable and congruent. The problem with the dogmatic image of thought is that the world has far more possibilities than we can perceive or exceeds the representational categories imposed upon it by the dogmatic image (May, 2005, p. 112).

So what are the hindrances created by the image of dogmatic thought? The dogmatism of representational thought constrains the possibilities of "rhizomatic" thinking that supports creativity and transformation. It neglects what exists beyond representation, the unrepresentable. This predisposition leads to ignoring the unrepresentable, which restricts expression, creativity and ultimately hinders the thought process. It creates a restrictive "bubble" that obstructs the discovery of creative methods of comprehension.

> *There might be representation and truth, but there would be more, much more, to which a commitment to representation and truth would blind us. Conceiving that "more" would require something other than the dogmatic image of thought. It would require another image, another thought. Or, better, it would require a thought that no longer involves images: a thought of difference (May, 2005, p. 76).*

The idea of representation aims to "know". It is about gaining knowledge. The implicit effort behind it is an attempt to territorialize its subject. However, relying solely on logos to understand the world overlooks the unrepresentable and indefinable aspects of reality that cannot be captured by data. Therefore, representation should be seen as just one way of engaging with the world, and there are other possibilities for establishing relationships as well. St. Pierre (2018, p. 608) emphasizes that according to Deleuze and Guattari, thought is not about recognition and representation, but rather about creation. Thought encompasses a vast plane of potentiality, including science, art, and philosophy. From within such a plane, a new image of thought emerges, unfolding in a non-fixed and non-hierarchical manner. This new image of thought displaces the thinking subject from the centre, fostering a decentralized and creative mode of thinking.

## 2. Two layers of in-betweenness

Laura Rascaroli's statement about essay films is provocatively inspiring within the context of the methodological significance of essayistic thinking. In her book "How to Essay Film Thinks", Rascaroli (2017, p. 8) describes the thinking mode of the essay film as an "in-betweenness that calls investigations". This statement is also very close to the experimental nature of the video essay form and its onto-epistemological position. In fact, "in-between" can be interpreted in many ways. Generally, we can define the term "in-between" as not located precisely in one place, between two points, but lacking definite coordinates. I will consider the concept of "in-betweenness" in two layers.

The first layer is the in-betweenness of the video essay as a medium. In-betweennes is a concept that characterizes the form of the work. It can carry a sense of being unclassifiable and amorphous. For Adorno, it is possible to say that the essay stands at the intersection of art, science, and philosophy as a medium. As Rascorali states, in-betweenness of essay films aligns with Adorno's approach to the essay. Adorno (1991, p. 13) likens the essayist to someone living in a foreign country who must speak directly without constructing the language by assembling its fragments according to school-learned rules. This requires probing the limits of language and, thus, thinking creatively. The scepticism and subjectivity in the essayist's style and approach calls not only a creative expression but also a different epistemological position. "If the essay opposes, aesthetically, the mean-spirited method whose sole concern is not to leave anything out, it is following an epistemological impulse" (Adorno, 1991, p. 16). The essayist is not attempting to conceal subjectivity while constructing the representation of truth. The expression doesn't need to pass through the filter of scientific objectivity. But it has three facade in its amorph form. It could both contact with art, science and philosphy. So the essay embodies the thought oscillations among science, art, and philosophy.

The art-sience-philosphy trio and the "thought" concept are highly important in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. They keep the definition of thought much broader. Art, philosophy, and science are the three different forms of grasping the becoming. All these forms are different facades of thought. The action of thinking encompasses the trio of art-philosophy-science (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). Thus, the thinking process doesn't solely have to involve

conceptual processing. Sensuous interactions are also a facet of thinking. The major and minor transitions of music, harmonic modes, montage, and organization of images can become an idea and, therefore, "thought in act" (Manning & Massumi, 2014). Adorno describes the in-between position of an essay as follows:

> *Consciousness of the non-identity of presentation and subject matter forces presentation to unremitting efforts. In this alone, the essay resembles art. In other respects, it is necessarily related to theory by virtue of the concepts that appear in it, bringing with them not only their meanings but also their theoretical contexts (Adorno, 1991, p. 18)*

Therefore, video essay is a kind of thinking in the act, an in-between form of thinking, which waves with its artistic and theoretical forces. While doing this, it doesn't confine itself to any rigid form.

Secondly, "in-betweenness" carries meaning in the methodological context of the video essayist position. From an immanent ontological perspective, we may think the "knowledge" and "researcher" differently. Such a perspective is necessary for practice-led research, art based research, ect., which is based on the researcher's engagement with their subject throughout the experiential process, rather than the problem-led research model that operates through the researcher (subject) - researched (object) duality, aiming not to represent truth but produce a performative and creative outcome (Haseman, 2006; Østern et al., 2023). Thus we could understand knowledge not only as processed data but also a creative act, a creative relation, a new idea and a new affective experience.

Haseman's (2006) performative methodology, mainly directed towards the resistant and entangled forms of reality that resist quantitative and qualitative representation, doesn't solely define the researcher's position from the standpoint of an observer. Rather, from the perspective of an immanent ontology, the researcher cannot exclude their body from the research process. The researcher isn't merely a researcher-mind. The researcher is also a researcher-body. This is because the body is both necessary and a source of understanding. The researcher is entangled with the object of their research in material-discursive intricacies. The researcher's body affected by the process is part of the research (Østern et al., 2023, p. 10). Through "agential realism" concept, Barad (2003) emphasizes that objects aren't independent entities but processes that act agency and engage in interactions:

> *"Humans" do not simply assemble different apparatuses for satisfying particular knowledge projects but are themselves specific local parts of the world's ongoing reconfiguring. To the degree that laboratory manipulations, observational interventions, concepts, or other human practices have a role to play it is as part of the material configuration of the world in its intra-active becoming. "Humans" are part of the worldbody space in its dynamic structuration (Barad, 2003, p. 829).*

In this sense, the in-betwen methodological position of video essayist aligns more closely with a Spinozist understanding of nature and reality, which is intrinsic, entangled, and relational, rather than the assumptions of Cartesian transcendence. Therefore, to understand the video essay as a mode of academic thought, instead of the dualistic subject-object distinction based on the mind-body separation and the epistemological hierarchy it creates, there should move from epistemological parallelism. Deleuze (2011, p. 26) describes this parallelism isn't just the denial of any causal relationship between the mind and body; moreover it doesn't acknowledge the superiority of one over the other either. For the very reason, the researcher's sensing as well as thinking gains importance (Østern et al., 2023, p. 10). From this perspective, we could say that thinking and sensing are not entirely separable processes. The process of

understanding, thinking, and knowing something is an entanglement where thought and sensation, body and mind, are not attributed separately.

From this methodological position, we can assert that the researcher is no longer a subject-researcher trying to isolate a representation of their object (St. Pierre, 2013). The researcher is in an in-between region. This does not mean to reject all practices of classical epistemology and it is not an acceptance of "anything goes". Jackson (Jackson, 2017, p. 666) emphasizes that adopting this attitude may lead us into a dualistic problem, swinging between rigid methodological procedures and an overly permissive approach. Instead, Jackson suggests beginning "outside of the method" by rejecting this duality. The phrase "outside of the method" calls an experimental and improvisational mode of thinking. Adorno (1991, p. 13) argues that the experience is guided by the conceptual organization of the essay; it proceeds in a methodically unmethodical manner. So, beyond the formal possibilities of the method, can we approach the method differently? How can thinking and sensory experience come together in the researcher's inquiry process?

In post-qualitative methodology debates, Deleuze and Guattari's immanent ontology operates a new understanding of thought which is connected with a new understanding of knowledge (Lather, 2013; St. Pierre, 2013, 2018). St. Pierre (2021) describes post-qualitative inquiry as a departure from traditional methodologies, emphasising that it is not an extension of qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. Instead, it rejects pre-existing research designs and procedures, starting from poststructuralist philosophy. Its purpose is not to discover and represent something existing in the empirical world of human experience but to reorient thought towards experimentation and the creation of new forms of thought and life. This new, genuine image of thought offers qualitative researchers a non-conformist approach, freeing thinking from common sense and conventions (Hein, 2017). Thus, in-betweenness involves seeking the surprising and creative rather than representing reality. Such an action inherently carries openness, as it has nothing to preserve. For this very reason, Deleuze asserts that thought is not about applying an existing method found in nature or principle; rather, it is about giving birth to and creating something that doesn't yet exist (Deleuze, 1994, p. 147). Here, Deleuze and Guattari's way of defining philosophy allows us to understand their ideas about their 'thought' concept: "Philosophy does not consist in knowing and is not inspired by truth. Rather, it is categories like Interesting, Remarkable, or Important that determine success or failure" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 82). Seen from such a perspective, thinking can be understood as a creative process open to variations and differences. Therefore, when contemplating video essays, we can actually assert that the functional value of the current representational thought's expressions aiming for a one-dimensional understanding in the form of "this is..." or "what is..." is rendered obsolete. We should approach the problem more through an epistemology that enables relational thinking. For instance, as highlighted by O'Leary (2022), asking "what if..." instead of "what is..." can be considered. Defining the problem solely through solutions is to approach it only through fixed identities. However, a problem can also be viewed as a field of collision or a creative relationship, an astonishing connection.

## 3. Nomadic Thought and Creative Research Methodologies

The concept of nomadism holds promising potential in the discussions of new materialist or posthumanist epistemology. Interpreting nomadism in its original sense would be considered somewhat accurate here. The relationship between the nomad and the permanent settlement

with space is fundamentally different. While the nomad perceives space as a realm of potentialities and becoming upon which they move, the other divides, distributes, regulates, immobilizes, and constrains space. In this study, I intend to interpret the concept of "nomadology" in the context used by Deleuze and Guattari and to approach it as a method of thought within the context of video essays.

At its core, the nomad concept in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy is one of the key elements of their critical approach towards the logocentric tradition. Deleuze's critique of transcendent thought in "Difference and Repetition" (*Différence et répétition*, 1968) takes on a new dimension in collaboration with Guattari in "A Thousand Plateaus" (*Mille plateaux, 1980). As* such, strong connections exist among the concepts that both Deleuze and Guattari have formulated. In the "Treatise on Nomadology: The War Machine" section of "A Thousand Plateaus", they draw various metaphoric comparisons. One of these is the comparison between the games of chess and Go. In both games, movement occurs within space, yet how each deals with space is distinct. For Deleuze and Guattari chess's approach to space demands a more theoretical line, in other words it belongs the State' hierarchical order.

> *In chess, the goal is to create a closed space for oneself, moving from one point to another, occupying the maximum number of squares with the fewest pieces. In Go, it is a question of arraying oneself in an open space, of holding space, of maintaining the possibility of springing up at any point: the movement is not from one point to another, but becomes perpetual, without aim or destination, without departure or arrival (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 353).*

On the other hand, the relationship between Go and space is more problematic. Movement and new variations always carry an underlying power in problem-solving. Moreover, the encounter between black and white in Go is not a coded confrontation as in chess. Deleuze and Guattari (2005, p. 353) emphasize that chess operates by coding and decoding space, while Go functions differently by either territorializing or deterritorializing it. Sedentary life codes its territory as home. This coding is a stabilizing force. On the other hand, for the nomad, there is a homeland rather than a fixed home. There is no fixed point to reach. Within the homeland of the nomad, there are continuous lines of movement, and its territorial efforts resemble the relationship between animals and space in nature. Its relationship with nature determines its territorial inclination: climates, geographical changes, and other factors.

Braidotti (2011, p. 18) defines the movement of the nomadic subject as changing and flowing rather than being rooted, characterized by cartographies that resemble a meteorological map rather than an atlas and undergoing mutations. Braidotti conceptualizes this movement as "zigzagging". For Braidotti (2013, pp. 164–165), zigzagging is indeed the operative term for the next fundamental aspect of posthuman critical theory, which is non-linearity. As a concept, "zigzagging" has highly engaged meaning with nomadic movements.

On the other hand, if we turn back to Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor, chess pieces are encoded; they possess an internal nature and inherent properties from which their movements, situations, and confrontations derive (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 352). This encoded nature refers to each piece's limited and defined potential. The structure of chess is akin to an institutional organization. Each piece gains meaning within the hierarchical structure of the institutional organization to which it belongs. Apart from this, there can be no other potential. "They have qualities; a knight remains a knight, a pawn a pawn, a bishop a bishop. Each is like a subject of the statement endowed with a relative power, and these relative powers combine in a subject of enunciation, that is, the chess player or the game's form of interiority" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 352). The structure of this hierarchical

organization can be attributed, in Deleuze and Guattari's terminology, to the "state" or the "royal." On the other hand, "go pieces, in contrast, are pellets, disks, simple arithmetic units, and have only an anonymous, collective, or third-person function" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 352). Logos and nomos represent two different facets of knowledge epistemologically based on these points. Logocentric thought collects data obtained through measuring and evaluating space and constructs theories. The observing subject processes the data from their perspective to conclude. The theory operates until confronted with a new situation. The theory involves the fixation and structuring of truth or data. Nomadic thinking, on the other hand, undoubtedly represents a different way of grasping life. By its nature, it is intertwined with problems, encompassing a function-oriented towards addressing a problem. Inevitably, accessing knowledge requires a more practice-led approach rather than theory-driven. It creates a field where experimentation and creative potential can become more visible. Braidotti (2011, p. 13) emphasizes that nomadic philosophy challenges the separation of critique from creativity and reason from the imagination. In this context, I see the two facets of understanding and knowledge not as a contradiction where one rejects the other, but rather as two different possibilities of meaning. Knowledge that is not measurable or quantifiable and the disciplines related to it, as noted by Haseman (2006), require a different understanding of methodology. Such a methodology necessitates approaching academic practice in the humanities disciplines with a non-linear, rhizomatic mode of thinking (Braidotti, 2013, p. 165). In this sense, nomadic thought can be considered not only in relation to space but also in relation to time. Against the linear, sequential, spatial understanding of time in logocentric thought and Enlightenment reason, nomadic thought affirms a time perception that is based on becoming, virtual, and dynamic.

> *Linearity is the dominant time of Chronos, as opposed to the dynamic and more cyclical time of becoming or Aion. The former is the keeper of institutional time and practices – 'Royal' science; the latter the prerogative of marginal groups – 'minor' science. Official, Chronosdriven 'Royal science' is opposed to the process of 'becoming minor of science', which is based on a different temporality. One is protocol-bound; the other is curiosity-driven and defines the scientific enterprise in terms of the creation of new concepts. Nomadic theory proposes a critique of the powers that dominant, linear memory-systems exercise over the Humanities and social sciences. Creativity and critique proceed together in the quest for affirmative alternatives which rest on a non-linear vision of memory as imagination, creation as becoming (Braidotti, 2013, p. 165).*

Thus, we can propose that all forms of expression converge and create a new, creative way of thinking, much like a nomadic war machine. I understand Deleuze and Guattari's nomadic war machine idea as a site and condition for possibility. Luttrell and Clark (2018) highlight that combining art-making with research enhances the analytical process, encourages researchers to step outside their methodological comfort zones, and leads to new insights and understandings. When considering a video essay as a form, I contemplate what can be done with film, images, photographs, or sounds and what they can potentially evolve into.

Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of the science-philosophy-art trio as different expressions of thought holds significant value for such a perspective. Each form of expression creates new lines between them. These lines, rather than static positions, develop and transform much like the continuous evolution of thought, forging new paths for themselves. Braidotti (2011, p. 18) describes nomadic thought as an epistemological understanding that rejects separating the mind from imagination. This situation confirms the emergence of new academic thinking, research and expression styles. Nomadic thinking can refer to a combination of diverse expressions or integrating multiple fields of study. Or Braidotti's "zigzagging" between expressions, "zigzagging" between disciplines, seeking lines of flight beyond established

methods, and questioning established methods... Nomadic thinking has the potential to provide creative research methodologies. By this a research functions not only on the representational plane but also on a non-representational plane.

## 4. Self-Reflections of Three Different Experiments

In this section, I will discuss three different experiments of mine to clarify the previously mentioned ideas. My experiences have served as significant thresholds in my understanding of video essays. These thresholds might provide various insights into the epistemological perspective we have discussed thus far. These works have partly distinct characteristics. The video essay genre encompasses a wide range of expressions. Therefore, some works can exhibit significantly different attributes from one another. Here, I often recall Catherine Grant's modal logic developed for video essays. In this sense, Grant's categorization has been quite illuminating for me. Grant (2021) summarizes the modalities of video essays as "audiovisual handling, audiovisual analyzing, audiovisual performance, audiovisual expressing/argumentation, audiovisual interrogating." Some of my works fit precisely into these categories, while others may embody characteristics from one or two categories. This is the most exciting aspect for me: New in-between regions can also exist within an in-between medium's sub-modalities.

The first work I will address, "Employing Video-Essay as a Performative Strategy on Autoethnographic Research" (2020), is also my first video essay. In this work, I examined my impressions of an autobiographical documentary I had previously created about my family within the context of autoethnography. What caught my attention and motivated me to undertake this work was the significant difference in motivation between the footage I shot and the footage my family captured in the 90s. Somehow, I believed that the older footage held a more photographic and archival status, and it was shot for that purpose. On the other hand, the footage I shot was driven by aesthetic concerns. At least, I had captured it with the idea of editing it at some point. The main argument of the work was to discuss the relationship between these two different motivations and technology and to question whether this has any value in an autoethnographic context.



**Figure 1**. Employing Video-Essay as a Performative Strategy on Autoethnographic Research (2020)
https://vimeo.com/1014832761?share=copy

I see this work as closely aligned with the "audiovisual argumentation" modality. The visual material used includes segments from family archive footage, footage I shot myself, typographic animations, and stock footage. Initially, I wrote a text to help solidify my ideas for the project. After that, I revised and narrated this text, treating the narration as a script. I organized the visual elements based on this script. Being my first work, I followed a quite conventional approach.

However, this traditional method was not effective in some instances, prompting me to think about how to integrate the text into the visual composition. In particular, where I wanted to emphasize certain concepts or make direct references, I found it necessary to incorporate the text visually (01:39). At one point, I used a robotic voice to narrate the text (05:15). This choice was made to highlight the relationship between expression and content. Additionally, I overlapped old and new footage at various points, allowing the emotional impact created by the interaction of these visuals to resonate with the viewer (08:24). I am still uncertain about how successful I was in this endeavor. However, through this process, I realized that the layered organization of visuals on the timeline could serve as a form of thinking. I refer to this as "timeline-based thinking," as noted by Grant. In this context, I use "understanding" not in the sense of "solving," but rather in the sense of "connecting with a dimension."

In my works, including this one, I handle the music and sound design as needed. For this particular project, I initially used music to create an atmosphere. Later, as the conceptual discussion deepened, particularly in sections where the text appeared on screen with simple animations, I recorded music synchronized with the letters' appearance, using only percussive instruments (05:37). My aim was for the auditory elements to enhance the overall expression of the work, even if that was more in a design-focused context.

The second work I will discuss is "I and the Other's Face: Ethical Dilemmas In-between The Promise and Between Two Dawns" (Türkgeldi & Yiğit, 2022). I collaborated on this work with my colleague. In this video essay, we interpreted the relationship between Selman Nacar's film "Between Two Dawns" and the Dardenne Brothers' film "The Promise" within the context of Levinasian ethics. My colleague handled the philosophical discussion due to her background in philosophy. Meanwhile, I edited the video essay according to our concepts and talks. This work is between "audiovisual handling" and "audiovisual analyzing." This is because the work encompasses a resonance from juxtaposing scenes from the two films and sections involving cinematographic and philosophical analyses.



**Figure 2**. I and the Other's Face: Ethical Dilemmas In-between The Promise and Between Two Dawns (2022)
https://vimeo.com/913943870?share=copy

In the sections where we compared the narratives and cinematography of the two films, we utilized framing techniques such as split screen (00:25). I believed that split screen would be an effective method because our goal was to establish a relational narrative between the images of the two films. The most surprising aspect of our analysis was the cinematographical and performative similarities between certain scenes in both films. Although we had sensed this connection before starting our work, placing the frames side by side revealed just how much the films resonated with each other (00:25, 03:10, 04:24, 04:53). This effect aligns perfectly with what is described as nomadic thinking.

We initially took thematic similarities between the two films as our starting point. However, when we arranged the footage on the timeline, the two images were juxtaposed

synchronously within the split screen, creating a new inter-image connection. The discovery that arises from the juxtaposition of images in this work comes from a relational thinking process rather than a traditional representational thinking. I also compare this process to the type of thinking that Grant describes as "material thinking" (Grant, 2014). The interesting connections between films often manifest within the same frame or timeline. In a classical sense, thinking about films is inherently sequential and linear. However, experiencing multiple images simultaneously lets us perceive the object/film differently. This perspective reveals that engaging directly with the material can lead to a different kind of knowledge.

To further integrate Levinas' philosophy into the video essay, we included footage from an interview with him (01:00). By combining his voice and image with our interpretation of the films, we added both a conceptual and an emotional dimension to the experience of relationality between them.

Lastly, I experimented with the musical design of this project. I wondered if an aural resonance could be created between the two films. Although the idea may not have been groundbreaking, I introduced alternating keyboard chords, switching between one octave higher and one octave lower, to create a delay-like effect at the beginning and end of the piece. When we observed the film visually, we noticed a similarity between the scenes that created a delay-like effect. This inspired my approach to the music. What's interesting is that these decisions manifest on the timeline and do not align with the typical structural progression of representational thinking. What I am experiencing here is a more affectional and aesthetic way of thinking. What I am experiencing here is a more affectional and aesthetic way of thinking. While I did not find the musical outcome particularly effective, I recognized that musical choices and designs can indeed enhance the argument or concept of a video experiment. In the context of a nomadic thinking process, it becomes clear that both sound and visuals can play various roles and contribute significantly to the work.



Figure 3. Waves and the Old House (2023) https://vimeo.com/1014817633?share=copy

My third work, "Waves and the Old House" (2023), represents a different approach from my previous projects. This piece focuses on "audiovisual argumentation," combining footage with experiments in editing, sound, and music design. I aimed to create a narrative by juxtaposing images recorded in 2021 in my childhood town with those from my childhood in the 1990s.

Initially, I experimented with the images on the timeline, allowing ideas to emerge. I drew from the writings of Heidegger and Bergson to interpret these experiences. Interestingly, theory developed after my practical experience; the images prompted reflections on time, echoing Braidotti's concept of zigzagging thought. As my interpretation evolved into a 10-15 page text, I transformed it into poetic fragments that aligned better with the work's emotional texture. While I initially considered using intertitles, I found that this disrupted the editing's

balance and rhythm. The blend of thoughts expressed in the video essay into a narrative that balances conceptual and emotional elements makes the form unique.

The slow-motion images led me to prefer voice-over as the method of expression. The interplay of images and ideas shaped my narration. To clarify my thoughts, I created a concise voice-over text of one and a half pages, rooted in my personal experiences.

I began with an image of waves played in reverse slow motion (00:22-03:56) to evoke a sense of reverse time travel, reflecting my feelings about the irreversibility of time. This toggling between past and present, represented by the waves, helped convey my memories. After leaving the bay, I forwarded the images since the effect of the waves had ended. Rather than reversing the images from this point onward, which felt pointless and aesthetically undesirable, I decided to focus on the images of our childhood home from the 90s (04:02-04:44). I thought of depicting the passage of time not through movement within the frame, but by altering the frame itself. This approach worked for me in two instances. First, I switched from widescreen to the 4:3 format used in old videos. Second, the dramatic transformation of the town created a sense of constriction, which I wanted to express through dynamic framing. I employed a long dissolve effect between the new and old views of the house (04:45) to convey this feeling. I concluded this section with an image of a lorry driving past the front of the frame (06:57) to evoke a sense of closure. This angular closure was necessary to push the narrative forward and awaken the viewer from the dreamy sequence of the 90s.

The fact that this discussion about time is rooted in my personal experiences makes it more akin to a personal video essay. While the ideas I present are related to philosophical concepts, I don't think this essay as an academic discourse like the second one. Instead, it resembles an essay film. The most significant experience I had during the editing process was the juxtaposition of images taken of the same place at two different times, which evoked a profound sense of nostalgia for the changes in the town. This process feels more like a philosophical experience than a structured philosophical analysis. The essence of defining something as an experience lies in its affectional elements. Therefore, we could propose that a new hybrid form of thought is emerging. The question then becomes: Can creating philosophy through images that reflect our own experiences offer us new opportunities in academic contexts?

Through my experiences with these works, I have come to understand the concept of in-betweenness and the "act" of "nomadic thought". For instance, I aim to engage in an intermediate thinking process across all of my works. In both the first and third works, I establish a connection between theory and my experiences. While doing so, I reflect on Adorno's writing about essays and consider whether this could qualify as in-betweenness. Since thinking is also an affective process, I strive to express my ideas in an emotional form by leveraging the medium's potential—the essay's inherent incompleteness, experimentation, and the exploration of all facets of thought. When I review these works, I notice elements that I utilize for aesthetic and design purposes, as well as to enrich my expression and ideas. Essentially, I am experimenting—sometimes stumbling—through the process. Often, I do not have a clear sense of whether what I am attempting will be successful.

## Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper, I reference Massumi and Manning's concept of "thought in act." While video essays hold academic value, their true significance lies in the process of creation rather than the finished product. Throughout the three experiments discussed, ideas

often emerged during the editing stage and developed in complex ways. These emergent ideas frequently caused me to reevaluate my initial perspectives. Consequently, the creation of video essays follows a non-linear flow that resembles a nomadic movement, rather than a traditional linear writing process. This notion aligns with Braidotti's concept of zigzag, which encompasses both spatial and temporal dimensions.

For instance, when confronted with creative obstacles, I often shift my focus to thinking on music, which can help me overcome mental impasses. Evaluating these experiences should be reflective and exploratory, framed as practice-led research. In the second study, the thematic relationship between the two films only became apparent through the practical process of bringing the film materials together, leading to an exciting discovery. This form of discovery is not merely representational; it arises from thematic intuition and material application, revealing aesthetic similarities where the films converge in one splitted frame.

There exists an inextricable link between myself and the material I research. My materials not only serve as objects of research, but they also significantly influence my thinking. According to Rascaroli (2017, p. 8), an essayistic attitude emphasizes dialogism rather than dialectics, highlighting fluid, non-fixed trajectories that can become improvisational processes. In this context, improvisation is not chaotic; it involves repetitions, contrasts, variations, and shifting tensions surrounding an idea. Beginning a video experiment without a rigid plan can be useful, as the patterns that spontaneously emerge from interacting with the material can yield valuable insights.

When I reflect on how these experiences have influenced my academic journey and the broader field, I find it challenging to articulate definitive answers due to the ongoing nature of this process. However, my engagement with video essays tends to illustrate a rhizomatic map, highlighting interconnected points, gaps, potential pathways, encounters, and what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as "lines of flight"(Greene, 2013, p. 753).

This paper argues that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "nomadic thought" can provide a significant framework for understanding the epistemological basis of video essays. In this way, the academic significance of video essays can be discussed within the context of post-qualitative methodologies. By transcending rigid epistemological structures, video essays open new avenues for knowledge production, challenge representational thinking, and adopt a more fluid, creative, and performative approach to academic inquiry.

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