

The synergy of creativity and scholarship: Flexibility in crafting Autoethnographic Fiction

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ABSTRACT

This methodological article trailed my journey in the conduct of my autoethnographic study. I commenced by grounding on my stances from existing naturalistic assumptions that were deliberately amalgamated with social constructivism and interpretivism. The process allowed me to appreciate the beauty of the different philosophical positions learned inside the four walls of the classroom. This exposé additionally demonstrated my experiential learning activity that confirmed formally learned concepts in practice. Furthermore, it allowed me to appreciate new knowledge that my formal classroom setting failed to instill. With the domain of inquiry that is crafted in a general form, my own journey was scrutinized. The domain of inquiry prompted me to fathom that my own experiences were not solely owned by myself, but shared with others. This realization provoked me with ethical concerns that were addressed. I was able to hoax these concerns utilizing narrative fiction strategies - masking the real with the imagined while maintaining contextual truth, substance and subjective-reality logically. My fortuitous appreciation of fiction as a form of expressive humanities brought me to awareness that the art can be a medium of voicing subjective truth and reality. The article established the beauty of flexibility and emergent design expressed in my compliance with reflexivity and positioning. My unpredictable methodological decisions were pushed by the need for change - and this change caused me to learn and appreciate.

Keywords/phrases: *autoethnography, emergent design, flexibility, method, narrative fiction reflexivity*

I. INTRODUCTION

Behind each qualitative research is a story on the involved processes in the actual course of the investigation. In each undertaken process, there are reasons behind each decision. Documenting the procedures of one's study is not enough. This also calls for reflexivity. Gilgun (2010) defined it as the idea of awareness. He further claimed that qualitative researchers are reflexive when they are conscious of the numerous influences they have on research processes and on how research processes affect them. It has a significant role in the many and varied qualitative methodologies (Dowling, 2006). It consequently conceptualizes a particular relevance with a fundamental

utility in the inquiry. In addition, it is associated with the concept of objectivity in a positivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Therefore, a qualitative researcher's attempts to make a naturally subjective form of inquiry ostensibly objective.

I documented the utilized methods in my autoethnographic study. I enumerated and described the research designs and procedures with its corresponding philosophical grounding. I tracked the emergence of a new design during data collection and analysis. I also explained the rationale behind its modification.

Reflexivity is trailed to warrant the choices

I made. Furthermore, it provides an avenue for readers to comprehend the processes and its influences. It includes the difficulties and dilemmas I experienced (Colbourne & Sque, 2004; Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Freshwater & Rolfe, 2001). Continuous self-critique was engaged to explain how my own experiences persuaded the stages of the research process (Koch & Harrington, 1998; Gouldner, 1971). It is my effort in demonstrating the importance of revealing what truly had truly transpired and resisted the temptation to look righteous and all-knowing (Furman, 2004).

II. OBJECTIVES OF THIS METHODOLOGICAL ARTICLE

This article enunciated my personal philosophical stances and the design and methods that I utilized in my autoethnographic fiction. It documented the: (1) involved processes; and (2) rationale behind each decision made throughout the progression of the study. It further documented my awareness of the multiple influences on the research processes and how each route affects the crafting of my design and methods (Gilgun, 2010).

III. MY PHILOSOPHICAL STANCE

I commenced with the philosophical assumptions that structured my procedural decisions. It was integrated with my personal worldviews that shaped my study. Thus, assumptions influenced the conduct of my study.

The following are my assumptions (based on Creswell, 2007 and Polit & Beck, 2008):

1. Reality is multiple and subjective as viewed by each actor;
2. The researcher needs to lessen the distance between the self and the object of inquiry;
3. Values are inevitable and desirable, and prejudices are always present;
4. Literary artistry is an expression of relative truth and reality; and
5. Reality is determined with inductive logic and emergent design observing the flexibility and

context based processes.

Furthermore, I subscribed to the worldviews of social constructivism that is naturally interwoven with interpretivism. I sought to develop inductively subjective meanings to the world where I live and work. These were formed through my interactions with others; thus, social constructivism. These worldviews allowed me to draft a broad and general domain of inquiry that allowed me to construct the meaning and process of the situation. I fully recognize that my background helps in shaping my interpretation (positioning the self).

IV. METHODOLOGICAL PROCESSES

Identifying the Domain of Inquiry

Reconnoitering my journey as a researcher was pursued via autoethnography as a research tradition and reported through autoethnographic fiction, poetry and monologue. It acknowledged and dissected: (1) my lived-in experiences from formal, informal and non-formal trainings to practice; and (2) personal, professional, and social challenges; confronted in my journey.

If you notice, my domain of inquiry was crafted in general terms. It disallowed me to put the situation inside the box. I believe that stringent research questions would have greatly limited my exploration.

Reasons in Using an Autoethnography

“... a self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with other in social contexts.”

Spry, 2001, p. 710

“... texts democratize the representational sphere of culture by locating the particular experiences of individuals in a tension with dominant expressions of discursive power ...”

Neumann, 1996, p. 189

Since we are required to produce a theory in our dissertation, I decided to ground it from my

personal experience. I employed autoethnography (Maréchal, 2010) as a commencing point and continued in theory development in the later part. However, this paper discusses only the autoethnographic part.

This stratagem allowed me to document my experiences as a qualitative researcher being scrutinized by quantitative researchers. Pratt (1995) writes, "We cannot move theory into actions unless we can find it in the eccentric and wandering ways of our daily life." This statement activated my advocacy by putting "flesh and breath (Pratt, 1995)." My personal research experience was turned to an explicit cultural site towards clarification and criticism of the self and other actors (Alexander, 2002, 2008). It is yearned in driving and charging non-qualitative critics in gaining insights, clarity, connection and change (Holman Jones, 2008 in Denzin & Lincoln).

What is an Autoethnography?

According to Anderson (2006), autoethnography has recently become an accepted method, although Duncan (2004) believed that it still did not enjoy its popularity and respect compared to its predecessors. I attempted to document my personal journey and challenges in my search for inquiry: from a positivist-prepared to naturalistic investigator. I analyzed my personal experiences in the research-cultural context. According to Ellis (2004), this method connects the autobiographical and personal to the cultural and social milieu.

"This scholarship has been linked, explicitly and implicitly by different authors, to various 'turns' in the social sciences and humanities: the turn toward blurred genres of writing, a heightened self-reflexivity in ethnographic research, an increased focus on emotion in the social sciences, and the postmodern skepticism regarding generalization of knowledge claims."

Anderson, 2006

Autoethnography is used in a wide-range of disciplines (McIlveen, 2008; Anderson, 2006; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Etherington, 2004; Reed Danahay, 1997; Roth, 2005). According to McIlveen (2008), it involves executing personal account analysis relevant to a particular phenomenon. It is not identical with autobiography since it is not just modestly expressing a life story, but it is a definite form of critical investigation entrenched in theory and practice.

Autoethnography as a Movement

As a confrontation to my personal narrative accounts, the report was crafted to disclose the inter-relativity of entities in the struggle to cuddle campaigns for both knowing and showing (Jackson, 1993; Kemp, 1998). It emphasized my personal sentiments and how I used the impervious form of privileged communication (Conquergood, 2002; Daly & Rogers, 2001; Jones, 1997; Stewart, 1996) that is inseparable from my thought (Alexander, 2000; Gingrich-Philbrook, 1997; Jackson, 1998; Pineau, 2002; Stoller, 1997). It emphasized my emotions with the hope of stressing the importance of understanding and positing the relationship of myself, power of critics or adjudicators, and life-ways of the practices (Bochner, 2001; Ellis, 1995; 1997; Jago, 2002; Spry, 2001). The construction, disclosure and implication of my revelation are hoped (Becker, 2000) to enable movement and change (Gornick, 2001; Bochner, 2001; Ellis, 2002; Garrick, 2001; Hartnett, 1999; Lockford, 2002; Neumann, 1996; Pelias, 2002; Richardson, 1997). My story is utilized as a means of interpreting the past, translating and transforming context and envisioning the future (Holman Jones, 2008 in Lincoln & Danzin).

Emergent Design: Flexibility

Flexibility simply means that the design is neither fixed nor prescriptive. In qualitative research design, it is often referred to as emergent: a design that unfolds throughout the progression of data assemblage as researchers make ongoing design decisions based on their reflections on what has already been learned (Polit & Beck, 2008). Merriam (1998) defined emergent design as an operation with the data side-by-side with the collection that allows opportunity to cultivate

emerging insights, hunches, and tentative hypotheses that signals for the refinement or reformulation of questions, gathering procedures and analyses. Deductivists often criticize this as a get away from comprehensive literature review. Lincoln & Guba (1985), however, argued that it is not a product of disorderly or slothful behavior, but contemplation - an attempt to describe reality from the objects of inquiry that is not known and understood in the beginning.

They say that experience is the best teacher, and I believe I have provided enough evidence to support this. I had been discussing the concepts of flexibility and emergent design with my undergraduate and graduate students. I had even applied both concepts during my master's degree thesis. However, I did not appreciate it much - probably these experiences failed to enlighten me with the philosophy behind the practice. During this time, I was able to appreciate its relevance. I had to experience certain confusion before appreciating its practical value. Sometimes a preplanned strategy just does not work and most of the time we have the tendency of forcing things. The process of forcing something inapplicable allowed us to rethink and ponder—puzzlement then leads to education.

Honestly, I dumped most of the things specified in my proposal paper considering the issues I encountered during my journey (entries in the research questions and methodology). Preplanned measures just did not work. Truly, the methods and the specific questions in qualitative research are neither fixed nor prescriptive.

Inductive Process: Atheoretical Stance towards a Substantive Theory

Most of the institutions throughout the world prescribe students to draft structured concept papers and propose them in a panel. I appreciate its intention, but I notice that this practice is engineered for deductive process. Naturalistic paradigms usually commence with a very general domain of inquiry (Willis, Jost & Nilakanta, 2007), which can be modified as data come in (Creswell, 2007). It is similar to Lincoln & Guba's (1985) suggestion that the research question in a qualitative inquiry is preferred to be with general boundaries that are not casted on stone - "can be

altered and ... will be."

In this research, searching for a substantive theory or theoretical framework was done after data collection. The framework was identified: (1) vis-à-vis the result; (2) after data collection; and (3) along with analysis. The identified framework to anchor on was chosen to fit in the data and not the other way around. Initially, one can think that it is totally impossible to have an atheoretical stance considering the analyzed data were based on personal experiences. It is true that no researcher commences a study in a *tabula rasa* state. However, an atheoretical position does not mean an empty mind, which is the usual misconception. It is simply an observance of dismissing theoretical predilections that may bias and narrow outlooks and what is being looked for (Rubin & Babbie, 2001).

Suspending *a priori* conceptualization means bracketing what is already theoretically known and suspending literature review after data collection. When I looked into my experiences, I intentionally see them as the basic unit of analysis. The involved processes in the different research traditions that I am already informed were bracketed temporarily in my consciousness yearning that they will not taint my initial procedures and analyses. They were only placed into consciousness when I analyze the data by putting it side-by-side with alternative perspectives and weighing the gravity of their features. This process is termed "theoretical naiveté", which is unequivocally exasperating to hold preconceived opinions of the phenomenon being observed.

Reading frameworks to ground the method is another thing. Inherently, research traditions provide central frameworks that provide a bricoleur with theoretic foundation. However, its concern is not to explain the phenomenon of interest but only to chaperone the researcher on how to congregate and dissect the information. It is not the same with the substantive theory that deductivists use vis-à-vis the objects of interest. Its role is to provide direction on how to proceed and analyze the study. It is not also fixed and prescriptive. It is only a starting point. Along the way in data collection, I changed and modified some strategies depending on how data come.

Reasons in Using an Autoethnographic Fiction

Initially, the design was simply autoethnography. However, when I started scribbling my drafts, I arrived into an awareness that distorted the equilibrium of my scholarship. I realized that my personal experience is communal. People were involved and they have rights. Upon recognition of possible ethical problems, I explored different options in counteracting such potential issues. Narrative fiction based on autoethnography is the finest remedy.

Though fiction, I utilized this method in the conviction that it is a (Paley & Eva, 2005): (1) naïve description of incidents; (2) foundation of idiosyncratic truth and/or reality; and (3) system of enlightenment. Overcash (2004) writes, “[it] is the ear of the intimate accounts and personal thoughts.” It provides information that underpins practice (Frid, Ohlen & Bergdom, 2000) highlighting its relevance for remedial implications in response to confronted issues (Williams & Keady, 2008).

For the tenacity of the study, I am personally defining autoethnographic fiction report as a fusion of truth from experience and creativity of imagination. Creativity of imagination treats the ethical concern as consideration for involved parties in the real world - known or unknown by the writer. Real personalities are masked in a fictional character, setting or environment with similar features to the original.

Sampling Utilized in an Autoethnography

I am sampling my personal experiences in the study. I utilized autosampling technique which I personally coined in my previous autoethnographic research (Vasquez, 2012). I orientationally (Leininger & McFarland, 2005) define it as “purposively culling (sampling) personal experiences of the researcher himself that is substantial to the domain of inquiry.”

When I presented this topic to a renowned research expert in the Philippines, he told me to get rid of the word sampling. He claimed that the word is highly affiliated with statistics, which is highly quantitative. He proposed to use the word culling. Autosampling or autoculling, whatever you prefer to call it, either of the two mean the same thing to me. Furthermore, seven

ancillary informants were interviewed, two written documents, one thesis, one dissertation, two textbooks, written communications, and 49 articles were culled to confirm my claims and to provide parallel evidence to my experiences, observations, and assertions.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

I am the main instrument on the study (Jackson, Daly & Davidson, 2008; Polit & Beck, 2008; Creswell, 2007, Tollefson, Usher, Francis & Owens, 2001; Britten, 1995). This concept is frequently used to describe the researchers' significant role in analyzing and interpreting cases, texts and phenomena.

For data collection strategies, I followed the recommendations suggested by Chang (2008):

1. Compiling Personal Memory

a. Chronicling the Past - I selected and listed in chronological order of events or experiences from my life which are relevant to the domain of inquiry. From the timeline, I selected events of significant cultural self-discovery, that I identified descriptions and explanations of its importance.

b. Inventorying the Self - I listed important personalities that have made significant influence in my life, which are relevant to the domain of inquiry.

c. Visualizing Self - I utilized this technique to facilitate the retrieval of data from memory.

2. Self-observational and Self-reflective

Data. Participant observation was the primal characteristic for this autoethnography because of the value of my personal experience that is relevant to the domain of inquiry. It was the core practice through which reflections were developed, and all other data collection activities were organized (Duncan, 2004). My challenge involved conquering the art of self-reflection.

3. External Data: Interview, Documents, and other Artifacts.

Duncan (2004) claimed that although autoethnographic reports are presented in the form of personal narratives, this research tradition does more than just telling stories. It provides academic and reasonable elucidations

grounded on numerous sources of evidence. It means that they are not solely based on my opinion. It is reinforced by other data that confirmed or triangulated my outlook. I had also undertaken the following data collection methods: (1) participant observation; (2) self-reflections; (3) multiple semi-structured interviews; and (4) collecting documents and artifacts.

“Through writing exercises of chronicling, inventorying, and visualizing self, you are encouraged to unravel your memory, write down fragments of your past, and build the database for your cultural analysis and interpretation.”

Chang, 2008

Rigor and Quality

To facilitate rigor and trustworthiness of the study, I observed the following criteria (Duncun, 2004; Ellis, 2004; Bochner, 2002, 2001; Richardson, 1997; Lather, 1993; Olesen, 2000; Eisner, 1991; Plummer, 2001a, 2001b):

1. Describing the Environment and Setting.

I consciously narrate the background of the sampled incident. I demarcated the descriptions in terms of period, setting, situation and point of view to clarify the issues of transferability. The data were my recollection from 2000 to present. It covered my experience with research-related activities from formal, informal, and non-formal trainings to practice - enclosing my personal, professional, and social challenges. I intended to demonstrate the appropriateness of applying the lucid methodology. As an insider to the domain of inquiry, I had the opportunity to reflect on the task and recorded the influences from which conceptualization transpired. However, for ethical considerations, events were repackaged to avert inobservance of the right to privacy and confidentiality. It was previously discussed and supplemented in the ethical consideration part of this paper.

2. Instrumental Utility. The presented results in an autoethnographic fiction helps readers to: (1) understand the situation that is both

inexplicable and complicated; (2) anticipate future possibilities and scenarios; and (3) utilize the results as guidelines for practice. I am not claiming full accuracy of the reality or truth in all the entries, considering that results of the study were presented in an autoethnographic fiction format. Furthermore, personal conceptions are highly personal processes - each concept relatively interprets reality and truth. Ellis (2004) suggested that the manuscript should be judged based on its expediency rather than merely on accuracy. As a form of art, with rhetoric freedom and aesthetic liberty, it is also argued that it should be scrutinized based on: (1) application; (2) significance; and (3) utility.

3. Triangulation. Multiple triangulation techniques were employed on the data sources and the content to increase the credibility and quality of this paper. Manifold sources of verification were laterally expended with my personal account. As described previously, these sources of evidence included personal communications, memos, journals, interviews, and printed related materials. A manacle of evidence was established wherein data were assembled, and developing conceptualizations were noted to expedite reviewing. My adviser reviewed my drafts; thus, backing-up authentication on how I depicted both process and content.

4. Narrative Truth. I endeavored my best to construct the narration as close to the real experience. Analysis of each experience facilitated the revelation of meaning and purpose. It is not so imperative for narratives to represent accuracy (Bochner, 2002, 2001). It is possible magistrating one narrative interpretation of events against another, but it is impossible to gauge a narrative with the events themselves since its unblemished essence emanates only in their narrative expression. My concern is to document the essence expressed via the narratives that are narrative truth. This statement brings me to a safer ground in presenting the results utilizing autoethnographic fiction.

5. Reflexivity. Though fictional in nature, the emotions, presuppositions, and personal

biases raised in the context were my actual documentation of my personhood. I scrutinized myself with partiality and interpersonal transactions to the real world actors. My reflective posture is my continuous reply to how my erstwhile involvements, ideals, background, and predispositions fashioned my analysis and interpretation.

I added another criterion which I think contributed to the rigor and quality of the study. I personally call it Readers' Insight Induction. There are some points in the results wherein I intentionally ask questions rather than giving information. The intention is to resist personal analysis leaving the reader to conceptualize personal insights and interpretation (Hilbert, 1990). Passing the buck to the audience is aimed towards conceptual induction. I presented these questions in confessional-emotive monologue format. It is my integration of performance autoethnography (Alexander, 2008; Madison, 2008; Holman Jones, 2008) within narrative fiction. By showing rather than telling (Denzin, 2003) the scenarios and instigating the issues towards social awakening disrupt the traditional forms of representation and orientation (Chase, 2008).

Ethical Considerations

I conducted this research following the principles announced in the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2008).

In autoethnographic research, gaining permission to characters in the narratives is often challenged. However, since autoethnographers are already fully immersed in the focus situation, issues of accessibility, permissibility, and unobtrusiveness do not present such obstacles. However, when narratives are reported and published, researchers face a dilemma on whether there is a need to take permission from the characters or not. Though most ethnographic studies do not follow these procedures, I felt the need to observe the following practices:

Process Consent Taking. Process consents were taken to all interviews and observations. It was constantly renewed in all sessions. Consents were completed by the participants at will after they

understood its contents. The participants were given ample time to review the written document. I signed the consent and both parties retained a copy.

However, there are some characters of the narratives that: (1) were not interviewed; (2) consent taking is impossible; (3) I have no access; (4) some issues are sensitive that may catechize their credibility; and (5) I do not know them personally - only that, I have access to the context of the scenario. I instigated some favorable measures to counteract these ethical issues:

1. For accessible characters, permission was sought after the finalization of the draft. They were asked for an opinion regarding specific entries even after employing autoethnographic fiction as a strategy. If they opt to delete some entries, I can only compromise repackaging of the characters, portrayals and scenes while retaining the context. It is my argument that the context of the phenomenon was sampled and not the personhood. Though the actual actors share ownership of the context with me in the real experience, isolating the personhood to the context is a more honorable action. Deletion of an important scene also violates the readers and consumers to their right to be informed. Weighing the risks and benefits, I am convinced that the benefits supersede the probability of risks.

2. Since some events were sensitive that may question some actors' credibility, what I did was simply to abstract the context of the situation isolating the individual and assigning a character that would symbolize the personhood. The identified assigned character is counterpart in terms of description with minimal repackaging to quarantine privacy issues. Reissman (1993 as cited by Williams & Keady, 2008) argued that the coverage of narratives as a system has been stretched afar representation. It means that they are now identified as partaking not solely a personal but public dimension, neither they commence nor terminate with the investigation setting, and they share with the material of the societal realm (Lawler, 2003 as cited by Williams & Keady, 2008). Using autoethnographic fiction to present the result increases the power in the observance of anonymity and confidentiality.

Privacy. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly observed. Data from the participants and uniterviewed characters were not linked to them in the report. All audio recordings were destroyed after being transcribed. Written memos were kept safely and were not linked to any of the characters. Characters were given fictional names and designations in the report. Fictitious names of setting were also given; however, the context and essence of the phenomenon were preserved. Reporting the results as an autoethnographic fiction is the safest and ethical form of presentation for the study.

Data Analysis

Initially, I planned to utilize Spradley's (1979) developmental research sequence as a method in analyzing my autoethnography. It is centered on the premise that language is the principal contrivance that recounts cultural significance (Polit & Beck, 2008). However, after forcing the four levels of data analysis, I suddenly realized that it was not working well. The planned method does just not fit. The following are the stages with its description and my personal explanation of my quandary:

1. Domain Analysis: Identification of relational patterns among terms in the domains that are used in the culture focusing on the communal meaning of the terms and symbols (objects and events) and their interrelationships.

2. Taxonomic Analysis: Deciding how many domains the data analysis needs to encompass by classifying, organizing the developed terms and illustrating the internal organization, and the relationship among the subcategories of the domain.

3. Componential Analysis: Examining the multiple relationships, similarities or differences, among the terms in the domains.

4. Theme Analysis: Uncovering cultural themes. Domains are linked in cultural themes that aid to deliver a holistic outlook of the culture being studied. The discovery of cultural meaning is the outcome.

I find Spradley's (1979) recommendation relevant only for a classical ethnographic design. When I tried it on my own personal experience, I could not see the track. It is just like running in an extremely impenetrable jungle and not in the marathon oval. It seems that I am lost, and it calls for flexibility. My story is chronological and thus favors an analysis and presentation strategy that follows the same linear and sequential logic (Denzin, 1989). A new method needs to emerge. So, I was left with no choice but to read the literature and to look for a more applicable approach.

Then I arrived into a decision of picking narrative analysis as a strategy. Denzin (1989), echoed by Lawler (2003), postulated an ingenuous structure that guides the researcher or narrator on how to properly analyze the data. The narration: (1) must have a beginning, middle and end; (2) is both linear and sequential; (3) must have a plot; (4) is past-oriented; and (5) makes sense to the storyteller.

As narrative beings, we have a distinctive feature to consume language in the construction of personal experiences (Goncalves, Henriques & Machado, 2004). Osatuke and colleagues (2004) argued that narratives provide "meaning bridges." The focus of my analysis is both form and content. Form which asks, "How do I approach the narrative?" and content, which asks, "What is the focus of analysis?" (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Ziber, 1998):

1. Holistic-content approach - I approached an all-encompassing case study of myself illustrating the general themes and emerging emphases of the narratives. It involved me to read the materials several times from written memos, timelines, observation and reflection notes, and external data sources. I started to draft the storyline aiming to appreciate an emerging pattern. A pattern then emerged that became the contextual highlight of the entire story. The emergent overview was drafted and served as the initial impression. I reread the draft and improved it by featuring some contradictions. I made sure that the focus must dominate the text from beginning to end. I enhanced it by constant reading and rereading.

2. Holistic-form approach - In addition to the emphasis on context, I deliberately embraced the importance for form. I carefully focused on the formal aspects of the structure as an expression of my personal perspectives. I drafted the storyline by identifying the beginning, middle and end, then, efficiently progressed using this linear and sequential chronology. To expurgate the boredom of linearity, I utilized a progressive narrative approach, which allowed me to build up my personal tension through the accumulation of my experiences that highlighted my counteractions, hilarities, regrets, passion, frustrations and advocacies to build up the storyline with elements of tragedy, comic, heroic, romantic and satire. These elements allowed further analysis and aimed to be felt by the reader.

Behar (2003), Frank (2000) and Shostak (2000) emphasized the explicitness about the inter-subjectivity of the researcher and the domain of inquiry to gain understanding in the cultural context. Furthermore, I turned the spotlight or the analytic lens more to myself in terms of how I interacted with others and the phenomena. I then analyzed, interpreted and presented the data as a culturally significant experience.

“Cultural data analysis and interpretation... this process transforms bits of autobiographical data into a culturally meaningful and sensible text. Instead of merely describing what happened in your life, you try to explain how fragments of memories may be strung together to explain your cultural tenets and relationship with others in society. In this sense, autoethnographic data analysis and interpretation distinguish their final product from other self-narrative, autobiographical writings that concentrate on storytelling. Analysis and interpretation enable researchers to shift their focus from merely ‘scavenging’ or ‘quilting’ information bits to actively ‘transforming’ them into a text with culturally meaningful explanations...

You are expected to review, fracture, categorize, rearrange, probe, select, deselect, and sometimes simply gaze at collected data in order to comprehend how ideas, behaviors, material objects, and experiences from the data interrelate and what they really mean to actors and their environments.”

Chang, 2008

Rhetoric Style

Integrated with the descriptive-confessional-emotive layered accounts (Ellis & Berger, 2002; Ellis & Bochner, 1996), I employed relevant literature as a framework for analysis and interpretation (Chang, 2008). Furthermore, I have integrated creative-imaginative style (Chang, 2008; Chase, 2008) through narrative fiction, poetry and monologue. Rhetoric liberty allowed autoethnographers like me to amalgamate, although one style can be dominant.

VI. SUMMARY

In summary, I trailed the following cyclical and retroductive procedures: (1) commencing in a philosophical stance that positioned the ontology, axiology, methodology and rhetoric assumptions of my study; (2) identifying a general domain of inquiry that guided data collection and analysis without limiting the coverage and implementation of control; (3) identifying the design and method that is continuously visited as data come in - which serves as the basis for decisional activities; (4) observing qualitative, researcher-identified and design-specific rigor and trustworthiness; (5) observing qualitative, researcher-identified and design-specific ethical principles; and (6) exploiting personalistic and artistic rhetoric style.

VII. REFLECTION

Doing qualitative research is an individual process. Its uniqueness is stretched from research: (1) commencement to culmination; and (2) philosophy to rigor. Now, I effusively comprehended why most qualitative researchers from the past avoid suggesting stringent and prescriptive rules, procedures and philosophy. In my journey, it taught me that each study is an

experiential-based and adventure-based learning that is unique to each other. It is highly dynamic; thus, highly structured forms are not or less preferred. Similarities are available in philosophy and method; diversity, within its similarities, is numerous.

VIII. CONCLUSION

How to Describe Personal Reality via Scholarship Artistry?

Autoethnography may be expressed
via narrative fiction

A noble escape to counteract an
ethical question

Masking the actors free the writer
for expressive liberation

Anonymity and confidentiality
adherence towards emancipation

Privacy concerns tricked with
intellectualization

For artistry is scholarship and
subjective truth expression

There is no singular formula in
describing personal reality

Multiple methods can be engaged
with ingenuity

Behind picking a method, reason
and philosophy are involved

Not merely interest makes you say
it is already solved

For shifting and modifying a
method is a rational move

When the predetermined plan is
not the best option to groove

Originality Index:	96 %
Similarity Index:	4 %
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