
Introduction

Deborah E. Reed-Danahay

The chapters in this book result from ethnographic work in contemporary literate societies, in which important cultural production occurs in the realm of written texts. This book responds to two major developments in cultural studies: debates about representation (by whom and about whom), and the increasing trend toward self-reflexivity in all realms of writing. The common thread linking the chapters together is that they are about life stories – sometimes our own, sometimes those of others, and sometimes both. The act of self-narrative and the tension between creativity and restraint associated with that act in various political contexts, is a central theme in this book.¹

In 1984, while surveying approaches to life history in various national contexts and disciplines, Daniel Bertaux and Martin Kohli came to the conclusion that, in anthropology, “life stories are no longer fashionable” (1984: 231). They attributed this to an unfortunate trend toward “scientism.” Their observation was made during a period lasting from the 1960s to the mid-1980s when, after earlier years of interest in “native autobiography” in anthropology, the study of individual lives was submerged and marginal to our discipline (see also Brandes 1982). It is difficult to see how anyone could make such a statement now, over a decade later. We are in the midst of a renewed interest in personal narrative, in life history, and in autobiography among anthropologists. The changing nature of fieldwork in a post-colonial and postmodern world, in tandem with new theoretical trends in anthropology since the 1980s, have, however, meant that studies of life stories and personal narratives are informed by different questions than were earlier approaches (Cole 1992; Watson and Watson-Franke 1985).

The concept of autoethnography, which guides this volume, reflects a changing conception of both the self and society in the late twentieth century (Cohen 1994; Giddens 1991). It synthesizes both a postmodern ethnography,² in which the realist conventions and objective observer position of standard ethnography have been called into question, and a postmodern autobiography,³ in which the notion of the coherent, individual self has been similarly called into question. The term has a double sense – referring either to the ethnography of one's own group or to autobiographical writing that has ethnographic interest. Thus, either a self (auto) ethnography or an autobiographical (auto) ethnography can be signaled by "autoethnography." This book seeks to transcend this dichotomy, however, and to point to the ways in which the two senses of the term are related. The discussions in the chapters break down the distinction between autobiography and ethnography. When the dual nature of the meaning of autoethnography is apprehended, it is a useful term with which to question the binary conventions of a self/society split, as well as the boundary between the objective and the subjective. The postmodern/postcolonial conception of self and society is one of a multiplicity of identities, of cultural displacement, and of shifting axes of power. These are all reflected in the move toward new forms of theory and writing discussed in this book.

Autoethnography stands at the intersection of three genres of writing which are becoming increasingly visible: (1) "native anthropology," in which people who were formerly the subjects of ethnography become the authors of studies of their own group; (2) "ethnic autobiography," personal narratives written by members of ethnic minority groups; and (3) "autobiographical ethnography," in which anthropologists interject personal experience into ethnographic writing. Anthropologists are increasingly explicit in their exploration of links between their own autobiographies and their ethnographic practices (Okely and Callaway 1992). This trend is mirrored in other disciplines, such as literary criticism (Freedman et al. 1993). At the same time, "natives" are increasingly telling their own stories and have become ethnographers of their own cultures.⁴ Practitioners of ethnography have become increasingly aware of the politics of representation and of the power relations inherent in traditional ethnographic accounts (i.e., Behar and Gordon 1995; Fischer 1994; Moore 1994; Strathern 1987b). Such issues are also reflected in

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recent work on “autohistory” (Sioui 1992); “ethnocriticism” (Krupat 1992); and personal testaments to political violence (Heyck 1990; see also Warren, this volume).

Anthropological Selves, Ethnographic Texts

This book does not represent a definitive statement of what autoethnography is or can be, nor does it have that task as its ambition. Rather, the aim here is to explore various intersections, various blendings of genres and voices (Brettell, this volume), in order to rethink several assumptions about the relationship between ethnography and autobiography. A variety of genres of self-representation is addressed in this volume, through which both the politics and poetics of representation are questioned. Several key concerns emerge. These are questions of identity and selfhood, of voice and authenticity, and of cultural displacement and exile. One of the main characteristics of an autoethnographic perspective is that the autoethnographer is a boundary-crosser, and the role can be characterized as that of a dual identity. While recently enjoying much currency in anthropology, literary criticism, and post-colonial studies more generally, this notion of double identity is not new. It is associated with late nineteenth-century ideas of “double consciousness” and has been central to African-American thought as articulated by W.E.B. Du Bois (Zamir 1995). The notion of autoethnography foregrounds the multiple nature of selfhood and opens up new ways of writing about social life. A dualistic view of the autoethnographer may be better substituted with one stressing multiple, shifting identities. The limitations of dichotomizing identities are usefully discussed by K. Anthony Appiah (1995) in a recent essay on his own European and African identities and the dilemmas of forging an “African Identity” within contemporary forms of discourse.

A second question raised by the concept of autoethnography is that of voice and its authenticity. Who speaks and on behalf of whom are vital questions to ask of all ethnographic and autobiographical writing. Who represents whose life, and how, are also central topics of concern in our current age of bureaucratization. For the most part, autoethnography has been assumed to be more “authentic” than straight ethnography. The voice of the insider is assumed to be more true than that of the outsider in much current

debate. However, as the essays in this volume show, this issue is more complicated, partly because of the multiple, shifting identities which characterize our lives. Double identity and insider/outsider are constructs too simplistic for an adequate understanding of the processes of representation and power.

The most cogent aspect to the study of autoethnography is that of the cultural displacement or situation of exile characteristic of the themes expressed by autoethnographers. This phenomenon of displacement – so linked to issues of rapid sociocultural change, of globalization and transculturation, as well as to the extremes of violence occurring in many parts of the world – breaks down dualisms of identity and insider/outsider status. Whether the autoethnographer is the anthropologist studying his or her own kind, the native telling his or her life story, or the native anthropologist, this figure is not completely “at home.” The ability to transcend everyday conceptions of selfhood and social life is related to the ability to write or do autoethnography. This is a postmodern condition. It involves a rewriting of the self and the social.

What is Autoethnography? A Short History of the Term

The word “autoethnography” has been used for at least two decades by literary critics as well as by anthropologists and sociologists, and can have multiple meanings. A review of key attempts to characterize autoethnography (as method, text, and/or concept) is given below. This history can be traced through two veins – that concerned primarily with ethnography and that with life history. One of the earliest references to the term is in a short article by Karl Heider published in the *Journal of Anthropological Research* in 1975. Heider reports on Dani concepts of “what Dani do,” based upon his questioning of 60 schoolchildren, and labels this “Dani auto-ethnography.” He explains his use of this term: “‘auto’ for autochthonous, since it is the Dani’s own account of ‘what people do,’ and ‘auto’ for automatic, since it is the simplest routine-eliciting technique imaginable (1975: 3). David Hayano published another early piece on autoethnography, which has a different meaning for him than it does for Heider, in *Human Organization* in 1979. Hayano defines “auto-ethnography” as a set of issues relating to studies by anthropologists of their “own

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used for at least two decades by anthropologists and other scholars. A review of key works as method, text, and theory can be traced through two decades of autoethnography and that with the term is in a short history. *Journal of Anthropological Research* concepts of "what Dani children, and labels" and his use of this term: "Dani's own account of life since it is the simplest" (1955: 3). David Hayano on autoethnography, which has a long history. Heider, in *Human Ethnography* as a set of methods of their "own

people" (1979: 99). In his essay, he traces the term to a seminar with Raymond Firth which he attended in 1966 at which an anecdote was told about an argument between L.S.B. Leakey and Jomo Kenyatta concerning the Kikuyu. This raised, Hayano writes, issues of the validity of anthropological data depending upon the characteristics of the fieldworker. For Hayano, it is "insider" status which marks the autoethnography, so that any research conducted by an anthropologist "among a distinctly different group than their own" is excluded from the category. However, Hayano does not restrict the term to the "native." He allows that a researcher may acquire, through socialization or other intimate familiarity with a group, the perspective of the "insider." The important measure, according to Hayano, is that autoethnographers "possess the qualities of often permanent self-identification with a group and full internal membership, as recognized both by themselves and the people of whom they are a part" (1979: 100). With such a broad definition of autoethnography, Hayano concedes that the term refers to "a mixture of diverse researchers investigating different problems" (1979: 103). Hayano distinguishes between "autoethnography" as he defines it and autobiographical writing, and is dismissive of what he calls "self-ethnographic" texts, due to their limited applicability to other cultural members.

In a more recent review of new approaches to the writing of ethnography, John Van Maanen (1995: 8–9) suggests four types of what he calls "alternatives to ethnographic realism." These are 1) "confessional ethnographies", where the attention is on the ethnographer (the signifier) rather than on the "natives" (the signified); 2) "dramatic ethnography"; 3) critical ethnographies, like Willis' *Learning to Labor*; and 4) self- or auto-ethnographies, where the culture of one's own group is textualized, as in the work of Hayano (whom Van Maanen cites). Here, autoethnography becomes a form of writing wherein the ethnographer is the native.

Marilyn Strathern (1987: 17) defines "auto-anthropology" as "anthropology carried out in the social context which produced it." Here, as in the approaches of Hayano and Van Maanen, the emphasis is not on a life story but on an ethnography of one's own culture. By carefully distinguishing the autoanthropologist from the indigenous anthropologist, however, Strathern is skeptical of many claims about the "insider" view developed by a professional anthropologist. Because an anthropologist is part of

an anthropological culture, the "home" culture or "inside" that constitutes the "insider" view in autoanthropology is not necessarily that of the "natives." Strathern usefully questions claims of authenticity and calls into question the entire insider/outsider dichotomy (see also Herzfeld, Motzafi-Haller, and Brettell, this volume).

Other approaches to autoethnographic writing stress the autobiographical meanings of the term. While not using the term autoethnography, Stanley Brandes' (1982) discussion of forms of life history used by anthropologists in the early 1980s, captured the burgeoning trend which has led to more recent theories of autoethnography. Brandes characterized "ethnographic autobiography," on one hand, as a strictly first-person narrative told by "a commoner, an ordinary member of his or her society" (1982: 188-189). On the other hand, he identified an important new genre, which he labeled "anthropological autobiography," in which "the anthropologist himself or herself is the autobiographical subject" (1982: 202). Both of these forms of life history could be labeled "autoethnography" in the dual sense of the term mentioned above. As Brandes describes these genres of life writing, each has an ethnographic interest and tells about a culture at the same time that it tells about a life. He writes that "both types are, in their own ways, ethnographic, and from both we have much to learn." While Brandes sees many advantages for social science in the humanistic approach of life history, he remains committed to the project of describing social life through ethnographic methods. Life history, in his view, is of interest for what it tells about cultural phenomenon and does not have intrinsic interest.

Norman Denzin has more recently distinguished several different forms of writing in what he calls the "biographical method": autobiography, ethnography, autoethnography, biography, ethnography story, oral history, case history, case study, life history, life story, self story, and personal experience story (1989: 27). Denzin characterizes "auto-ethnography" as a text which blends ethnography and autobiography, and he cites Crapanzano's *Tuhami* as an example of this genre. The important characteristic of autoethnography for Denzin is that the writer does not adopt the "objective outsider" convention of writing common to traditional ethnography. For Denzin, autoethnography entails the incorporation of elements of one's own life experience when writing about others through biography or ethnography. There-

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In a different typology, literary critic Alice Deck posits a distinction between what she calls the "self-reflexive field account" (such as Shostak's *Nisa* or Crapanzano's *Tuhami*) and the "auto-ethnography" (such as Hurston's *Dust Tracks on a Road*). In the first genre, which is close to what Denzin would call auto-ethnography, the author/anthropologist employs a "hierarchy of voices" (1990: 246), relying upon reference to outside anthropological and historical sources to verify the indigenous voice. This is not necessary in the case of autoethnography as defined by Deck. The author of an autoethnography, according to Deck, is the indigenous ethnographer, the native expert, whose authentic first-hand knowledge of the culture is sufficient to lend authority to the text.

Philippe Lejeune, like Deck, is highly critical of outsider ethnography in his discussion of autoethnography. Lejeune (1989) uses the concepts of both "auto-ethnology" and "ethnobiographer" in his chapter on "Those Who Do Not Write" in *On Autobiography* (see also Reed-Danahay, this volume). Viewing the non-native ethnographer as highly suspect, Lejeune encourages the development of ethnobiography and autoethnology as a way to avoid what he sees as the gap, or screen, of ethnology. For Lejeune, authenticity is masked by ethnology and these other forms represent more directly the voices of peasants and the working classes. Lejeune's position is diametrically opposed to that of Strathern.

A third literary critic, Mary Louise Pratt (1992; 1994), links the concept of autoethnography to relations between colonized and colonizer, and to modes of resistance to dominant discourses offered by the native account. For her, however, autoethnography is a form of ethnography of one's own culture, rather than a piece of autobiography. In an analysis of a seventeenth-century Andean text and contemporary forms of Andean cultural production, Pratt defines autoethnography as:

... a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them ... Autoethnographic texts are not, then, what are usually thought of as autochthonous or 'authentic' forms of self-representation ... Rather they involve a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or conqueror. These are merged or

infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idioms to create self-representations intended to intervene in metropolitan modes of understanding (1994: 28).

Pratt describes autoethnographies as forms of writing that address both the writer's own group and a wider, more dominant one. Texts or works of art that are autoethnographic assert alternative forms of meaning and power from those associated with the dominant, metropolitan culture, and, while Pratt is careful not to romanticize their use as forms of resistance, she does suggest that they serve as such. The bicultural nature of the autoethnographer is a theme in Pratt's work as in that of such scholars as Alice Deck.

A very different use of "autoethnography," although similar to that of Pratt and Lejeune in that it represents a critique of ethnography from a non-anthropologist, can be found in John Dorst's book *The Written Suburb* (1989). Dorst applies this term not to written texts but rather to materials and objects produced by suburbanites in regional arts and crafts fairs in semirural Chester County, Pennsylvania. He argues that these social and cultural artifacts constitute a form of autoethnography, in the sense of self-inscription and self-referentiality for the people of that region.⁵ Dorst views autoethnography as a form of postethnography. He writes: "If the task of ethnography can be described as the inscription and interpretation of culture, then postmodernity seems to render the professional ethnographer superfluous" (1989: 2) and that "... the impulse for self-documentation and the reproduction of images of the self pervade our everyday practice" (1989: 3). These provocative statements call into question the relationship between ethnographic representations of others and self-representations. As anthropologists increasingly engage in their own "self-documentations" through autobiographical writing, the line between ethnography and autoethnography becomes increasingly faint.

One of the main distinctions in these uses of autoethnography is whether or not the accent is on autobiography or ethnography. For Pratt, Van Maanen, Hayano, Dorst, and Strathern, the concept relates to a form of "native ethnography," a study of one's own group. Here, issues of authenticity of voice and of counternarrative come into play when the autoethnographer is not a professional anthropologist. When the autoethnographer is an anthropologist, issues are raised about the methodological issues of doing an

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ethnography "at home," given the long-standing tradition in this discipline of studying "others."

When autoethnography is tied to autobiography, as in the case of Lejeune, Brandes, Denzin, and Deck, the concept relates more closely to ethnographic autobiography or to native autobiography, rather than to native ethnography. The life story has ethnographic interest. The multiple perspectives on autoethnography reviewed above articulate the difficulties encountered when trying to distinguish between an ethnographic or an autobiographical perspective. Increasingly, ethnography is autobiographical and autobiography reflects cultural and social frames of reference. Much recent work in the study of personal narrative done by anthropologists has already pointed in this direction. The concept of a "social poetics" as used by Michael Herzfeld (1985 and 1996) reflects this duality of self-reference and cultural reference that is integral to the notion of autoethnography (see also Herzfeld this volume).

In this volume, autoethnography is defined as a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context. It is both a method and a text, as in the case of ethnography. Autoethnography can be done by either an anthropologist who is doing "home" or "native" ethnography or by a non-anthropologist/ethnographer. It can also be done by an autobiographer who places the story of his or her life within a story of the social context in which it occurs. This type of autobiography is quite different from the more standard approach criticized by Bourdieu (1986), in which the autobiographer divorces the life trajectory from any social constraints. In the chapters of this book, the authors combine several of these meanings of the term and develop its implications more fully than I can do in this brief introduction.

The Chapters

The chapters in Part One – Power, Documentation, and Resistance – deal with contexts of state repression and the possibilities for resistance inherent in life stories and autoethnography. The documentation of lives can become a source of resistance or a source of repression, depending upon the context. The connections between ethnography and other forms of documentation are contrasted in these chapters. This book begins with Kay Warren's consideration of witness narratives (*testimonios*) of state violence

in Guatemala produced as part of the Pan-Mayan movement of the 1980s. Having rejected both traditional ethnography and autobiography, this movement has sought to transcend the binary split between the self and the social through genres of writing that provide "collective representations." The *testimonio* genre, Warren writes, mediates individual experience and wider structures of violence and repression. The main focus of the chapter is a set of *testimonios* collected and edited by Victor Montejo, a Mayan intellectual/anthropologist living in exile in the United States. Montejo has produced autobiographical and collective works in order to circulate more widely the insider voice of Mayans and raise consciousness about violence and repression among outsiders (particularly in the United States). Warren describes Montejo's *Brevísima Relación* as an "autoethnography of a contact zone." More open-ended than the expository works generally produced by anthropologists, this work is a "collage" of voices. Montejo links it to ancient Mayan texts in order to lend authenticity and authority to the messages it conveys. Warren compares Montejo's work to the interpretive ethnography she has, herself, produced based on fieldwork in rural Mayan Guatemala among those whose silences about violence (connected to continued fears) provide a rich contrast to the voices published by Montejo. The ways in which silence, voice, and violence inhabit the work of the outsider anthropologist (Warren) and the insider anthropologist (Montejo) are drawn by Warren as complementary forms of witness to the operation of a repressive state. Now, well in the 1990s, the silences are giving way to increasing modes of public discourse about the past violence, and Montejo's works can now be openly published in Guatemala.

In chapter two, we are transposed to socialist Romania, and to the autoethnographic writings of a village "folk ethnographer." Aurel Relu Bălan, a key informant and friend of David Kideckel's during his fieldwork, meticulously recorded both his own autobiography and ethnographic details of the households, social practices, and individuals in his community. This testimony to daily life under socialism was of necessity kept secret during Ceaușescu's repressive regime and was hidden in secret cavities built in Bălan's house. Kideckel argues for the importance of expanding "the ethnographic genre to incorporate work created to purposefully elude official authority." Bălan's work, which Kideckel labels "private folk ethnography," differs from professional ethnography

in that it can more use its secretive nature. At the seeming silence of voice of resistance to the of poetry, essays, how and autobiography at the downfall of social stands as a statement challenged the dominant ethnographic information of social science research by Bălan. Kideckel's silence can be resisted. When official ethnography in Romania, Bălan was official gaze.

In chapter three, the narrative, representative context of Swedish insights, including formation of modern biographical selves, in our own lives and the Svensson suggests the ourselves as "good selves" the mostly male prisoners construct narratives of individualism." The prisoners, with other demands for recording extremes in the institutional lives becomes an in contrast to cases discarding of lives is testament to cultural of her interviews with which they have controlled degree to which the prison and prison system identity. In this case, seems to almost erase

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in that it can more usefully challenge conditions of oppression due its secretive nature. An important paradox in Bălan's case is that the seeming silence of his activities ultimately provide a powerful voice of resistance to the official regime. Bălan's impressive corpus of poetry, essays, household censuses, ethnographic observations, and autobiography are now being released to public view since the downfall of socialism. Kideckel suggests that his work stands as a statement of resistance, of an underground voice that challenged the dominant regime, and as a powerful source of ethnographic information recorded at a time when state censorship of social science research prohibited much of the work carried out by Bălan. Kideckel's chapter points to the ways in which enforced silence can be resisted through alternative forms of representation. When official ethnographers were monitored and silenced within Romania, Bălan was able to do much recording that escaped the official gaze.

In chapter three, Birgitta Svensson considers themes of life narrative, representation, and power within the explicitly coercive context of Swedish prisons. She uses a variety of theoretical insights, including those of Foucault and Giddens, on the formation of modern subjectivities and on the construction of biographical selves, in order to argue that the necessity to narrate our own lives and those of others is a mark of the modern self. Svensson suggests that, in the modern world, we must construct ourselves as "good selves" or be constructed as "bad selves." For the mostly male prisoners in Swedish prisons, record-keepers construct narratives of their lives associated with a "bad individualism." The prisoner's life becomes distilled to a litany of past crimes, with other details of identity silenced. The welfare state's mania for recording and cataloguing individuals is taken to extremes in the institutionalized context of the prison. Recording lives becomes an instrument of repression. This is a striking contrast to cases discussed by Warren and Kideckel, where the recording of lives is used to resist repression and to stand as a testament to cultural and physical violence. When Svensson writes of her interviews with several prisoners and relates the ways in which they have come to tell their own life stories, we see the degree to which the power of the biographical project of the state and prison system has colored their own understandings of identity. In this case, one sees a form of symbolic violence that seems to almost erase the possibilities for autoethnography.

In Part Two – Exile, Memory, and Identity – the themes of cultural and geographical dislocation, of multiple identities, and of a search for origins come to the fore. Each of these three chapters is connected to France, with Paris standing as the metropole/diaspora for French peasants as well as for Algerians and Corsicans. Autobiography in each case becomes a vehicle for the exploration of wider issues of cultural identity. In chapter four, Henk Driessen takes us to both Algeria and France, in his analysis of the “ethno-autobiographical” production of two figures in Kabyle popular culture. The Kabyle are a Berber-speaking peoples in Algeria who differ from the Arab-speaking majority culture. Both figures discussed by Driessen are singers: Lounes Matoub, a male based in Algeria who strongly identifies with, and champions, traditional Kabyle values and the Berber Cultural Movement; and Djura, a female who, while born in Kabylia, moved to Paris as a girl and claims a more multicultural identity which champions the cause of female immigrants in France. Both Matoub and Djura published life stories at midlife prompted by violence. Matoub wrote his life story, entitled *Rebel*, after being attacked by Islamic activists. *The Veil of Silence*, Djura’s book, was written after an attack by family members connected to a feud in which she became involved. Driessen shows how these two life stories are selectively autobiographical, and deal mostly with issues of cultural identity – issues that both singers struggle with and try to express through their art and political activities. Given their different positionings as Kabyles situated in Algeria and in France, male and female, Matoub and Djura express different relations to their homeland and to the French diaspora. As a male, Matoub can unflinchingly identify with traditional codes of Kabyle values, while for Djura, female liberation and life in the metropole entails some rejection of aspects of this value system. Through Driessen’s analysis and comparison, these two stories, written by figures who “bridge the Mediterranean divide,” provide insights into the blurring of political and cultural boundaries and classifications in contemporary times, and to the ways in which individuals respond to such processes.

In chapter five, Deborah Reed-Danahay takes a different set of two writers (male and female) who have origins in rural France, in order to examine issues of cultural identity and displacement that result not from a colonial and postcolonial system, as in the case of Algeria, but from what might be viewed as a process of

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Identity – the themes of multiple identities, and each of these three chapters ending as the metropole/ for Algerians and Corsicans becomes a vehicle for the identity. In chapter four, and France, in his analysis of two figures in a Berber-speaking peoples speaking majority culture. singers: Lounes Matoub, gly identifies with, and and the Berber Cultural ile born in Kabylia, moved lticultural identity which ts in France. Both Matoub ife prompted by violence. el, after being attacked by t's book, was written after d to a feud in which she these two life stories are il mostly with issues of ers struggle with and try cal activities. Given their d in Algeria and in France, press different relations to pora. As a male, Matoub al codes of Kabyle values, e in the metropole entails stem. Through Dreissen's es, written by figures who rovide insights into the ries and classifications in hich individuals respond

ay takes a different set of e origins in rural France, ntity and displacement olonial system, as in the e viewed as a process of

internal colonization by the French state of its many distinct regions. The autoethnographers Pierre-Jakéz Hélias and Emilie Carles published, late in life, texts that combine aspects of autobiography, memoirs of peasant childhood, and ethnography. Each became educated through French schools. My primary focus in this chapter is the ways in which stories of education entail stories of leaving home, and I connect this to issues of home vs. away ethnography as well as the geographic dislocation associated with modern-day academic employment. Our fascination with self-reflective accounts and autobiography in current anthropology, I suggest, are connected to our own experiences of the type of multi-identity and cultural displacement expressed in such narratives as those written by Hélias and Carles. Their texts, which have enjoyed popular success in France and abroad, differ from each other in significant ways, based upon regional and gender differences of the writers. They have in common, however, their presentation of an either/or choice about staying or leaving home associated with becoming an educated person. Like the stories of Matoub and Djura, as Driessen suggests, quoting Geertz, these two books provide "a kind of commentary on one another's character." The life stories of Hélias and Carles also illustrate the perspective of selves who bridge or transcend different cultural systems – and, thus, point toward a questioning the native vs. outsider dichotomy often associated with such texts.

In chapter six, Alexandra Jaffe analyzes life histories and issues of identity and representation in yet another context of French cultural domination – Corsica. Here, the interesting dilemma is that pressures to produce "authentic" texts by Corsican writers, to truly represent Corsicanness, can come into conflict with other experiences of the self that are more complex and multivocal. As with the Pan-Mayan movement described by Warren, the desire in Corsica is to produce collective representations in order to reinforce cultural distinction and resistance to dominant culture, rather than individual accounts that stress creativity and difference among Corsicans. Through a series of vignettes of discussions regarding Corsican language use and an analysis of several Corsican texts, Jaffe shows the tension between the "I" and the "Isle" in forms of self-representation and forms of representation of Corsican identity. The experience of exile is key to issues of Corsican identity in the texts examined by Jaffe. As in the cases of Algerians and of French mainlanders who have strong regional

attachments, cultural identity for the Corsican writers discussed by Jaffe is always expressed in relationship to a dominant French culture which stigmatizes and marginalizes Corsica. These contexts come together in Delaville's autobiographical novel, which chronicles a childhood spent in Algeria, and in which Corsican identity is composed in a complicated triangle of Algeria, France, and Corsica. The dilemma for the novel's main character, Jaffe writes, is that "he has a polyvocal life, but access only to a univocal text to tell and understand that life." As Jaffe's analysis usefully reminds us, autoethnography can be as subject to the politics of representation as can outsider ethnography.

Part Three – Voice, Self-Representation, and Genre – ends the volume with the three most self-reflective of the chapters. In these essays, the authors reflect upon their own previous ethnographic work and discuss their relationship to newer textual (auto-ethnographic) projects with which they have become involved. In chapter seven, Michael Herzfeld weaves a complicated analysis of his encounters with three versions of Greek culture and selfhood – that of sheep-thieves, of bureaucrats, and of the novelist Andreas Nenedakis. Herzfeld has been writing the biography of Nenedakis, who, he suggests, stands as a mediating figure between the Cretan shepherds (in whose villages he has his own origins) and the urban world of the bureaucrats. For Herzfeld, the seeming contradictions between the order and classification associated with the state and the disorderly citizens who confront and challenge its regime, lies at the heart of an understanding of the modern nation-state. Drawing upon Greenwood's *The Taming of Evolution*, Herzfeld suggests that "the taming of revolution," through which all nation-states are constructed, encapsulates this contradiction. The contradictions of the nation-state are linked to those experienced by the anthropologist himself, who is both attracted to and repelled by certain characteristics of his Greek "acquaintances." In a move toward self-reflection, which Herzfeld argues is necessary, following Okely (1992) and Callaway (1992), to a politically engaged consciousness of our own actions and forms of knowledge, Herzfeld considers these contradictions in terms of his own personal trajectory. In particular, he cites an experience that serves as an epiphany in his life: his first attendance, as a youth, at a performance of Verdi's *Nabucco* in 1961. Herzfeld's intense enjoyment of this opera, which celebrates nationalist ideologies of romanticism and patriotism, stands in conflict with his

professional underestimation of nationalism as a social construct. Herzfeld's inconsistencies, Herzfeld's standings shared by her, he has encountered difficulties of accountability and discrepancies so proper to the tension between subjects of modern nation-state. Herzfeld's "social realization of analysis undermines outsider in the context of cultural terrain produced shared meanings.

In chapter eight, Patricia the authenticity of the biographical journey of identity. The impetus for collaboration with about Misrahi ethnic question of whether collaboration prompts Motzafi-Hal trajectory. After describing "marked" Misrahi children and her increasing confrontation with the self, Motzafi-Hal anthropology at Brandeis her own identity and for fieldwork in Botswana as both "white," due to when trying to swim against apartheid, as "black," to the privileges of an her dissertation on Africa discomfort with her identity. When she was to live in Israel after she to again confront issues this chapter, Motzafi-Hal coming from her own a

writers discussed dominant French Cypriot. These contexts novel, which chronicle Corsican identity in Algeria, France, and character, Jaffe writes, to a univocal text analysis usefully to the politics of

Genre – ends the chapters. In these various ethnographic over textual (auto-) come involved. In complicated analysis of culture and self- and of the novelist of the biography of a living figure between his own origins) Herzfeld, the seeming on associated with ont and challenge ing of the modern *Imaging of Evolution, n*," through which this contradiction. ed to those exper- both attracted to Greek "acquaint- in Herzfeld argues away (1992), to a actions and forms adictions in terms ites an experience t attendance, as a 1961. Herzfeld's s nationalist ideo- n conflict with his

professional understanding, as a social anthropologist, of nationalism as a social construct. As a way of explaining these various inconsistencies, Herzfeld proposes that common cultural understandings shared by both himself and the diverse Greek characters he has encountered during fieldwork, which are based on concepts of accountability and self-regard (*eghoismos*), underlie the apparent discrepancies so prone to inspire classifications of distinction. It is the tension between selfhood and authority, understood by all subjects of modern nation-states, which informs the genesis of the nation-state. Herzfeld suggests that autoethnography is a form of "social realization of the self" which signifies these tensions. His analysis undermines such dichotomies as native or insider vs. outsider in the context of European ethnology, where a common cultural terrain produces mutually intelligible, if not completely shared, meanings.

In chapter eight, Pnina Motzafi-Haller confronts and questions the authenticity of the native anthropologist through an autobiographical journey of professional development and ambivalent identity. The impetus for this story is Motzafi-Haller's recent collaboration with another author in composing a manuscript about Misrahi ethnic identity in Israel, entitled *Birthright*. The question of whether or not she lends a "native voice" to *Birthright* prompts Motzafi-Haller to come to terms with her own personal trajectory. After describing details of her early schooling as a "marked" Misrahi child in an Israel dominated by Ashkenazim, and her increasing command over a scholarly discourse that erases the self, Motzafi-Haller writes of her graduate education in anthropology at Brandeis University. Trained, she asserts, to forget her own identity and search for the "other," Motzafi-Haller set off for fieldwork in Botswana. There, she faced an ambivalent status as both "white," due to her national identity and education, and, when trying to swim in a public pool in South Africa under apartheid, as "black," due to her dark skin and hair. Returning to the privileges of an affiliation and office at Harvard, finishing her dissertation on Africa, Motzafi-Haller experienced a growing discomfort with her own position and professional/personal identity. When she was hired by an Israeli university and returned to live in Israel after several years in the United States, she had to again confront issues of the native vs. outsider position. In this chapter, Motzafi-Haller raises several important questions coming from her own ambivalent status and struggles as, following

Abu-Lughod, "halfie anthropologist." She rejects the claim that a native voice is necessarily more "authentic" or "true" in order to argue, instead, for a greater awareness of the ways in which the positioning of the anthropologist will influence his or her scholarship. It is the politically engaged scholarship of recent "native" anthropologists that is important, Motzafi-Haller argues, rather than their indigenous origins.

The final chapter of this volume continues the themes of the mixing of genres and of the blurring of insider vs. outsider. Caroline Brettell, like Michael Herzfeld and Prina Motzafi-Haller, reflects upon the meanings of a new piece of writing that diverges from her previous ethnographic work. Here, the personal is taken to the farthest point in the volume, because Brettell has written a biography of her own mother. In this chapter, Brettell describes this endeavor and compares it to her previous work on the life histories of three Portuguese migrant women. She also considers other works produced by daughters about their mother's lives. The essay is doubly autoethnographic because Brettell is analyzing the corpus of writing produced by her mother, a former journalist for a Montreal newspaper whose columns combined ethnographic interest with personal narrative, and because Brettell is doing a form of autoethnography herself, looking inward toward her own family origins. This analysis is framed by an overall interest in women's lives and by the importance of allowing the voices of women to speak for themselves. As Brettell suggests, however, there are a variety of ways in which this can, and has been, accomplished in the growing literature on women's lives. Brettell traces changes in genre associated with life history that have made her more self-conscious of her own role as author since first writing the book *We Have Already Cried Many Tears*. She does not consider the stories told in that text by the Portuguese women to be autoethnographic, because she played such a strong authorial role in composing the text. But her book about her mother, and her mother's own writings, can be, she suggests, considered autoethnographic. Brettell is aware that in composing the biography of her mother, she is transgressing many ethnographic conventions and blurring the boundaries of a variety of genres. In giving details from her mother's life and including passages from the columns she wrote about the lives of Canadian women at mid-century, Brettell shows how her own life is intertwined with that of her mother. Does this, she asks, give her an authentic insider voice when composing her mother's life? In writing this biography of

her mother, Brettell by other autoethnographic boundary-crossing the journalist. At the beginning of this volume, the drawing from a self and the social

Notes

1. The growing literature cannot be sufficient. Eduardo P. Archetti, *Anthropological and Literature* (recent collection of anthropological field. Two recent examples of this in *Autobiography* (1996). On the personal narrative, (1996) *True Confessions*.
2. There are so many in recent times discussions of r Fischer (1994), 5.
3. See, in particular Watson (1996), 1.
4. Since I grew up in constitutes the c my own cultur "autoethnographic".
5. Examples of this 1992.

he rejects the claim that a "true" or "true" in order to of the ways in which the influence his or her scholarship of recent "native" Motzafi-Haller argues, rather

continues the themes of insider vs. outsider. and Pnina Motzafi-Haller, of writing that diverges here, the personal is taken use Brettell has written a chapter, Brettell describes previous work on the life women. She also considers out their mother's lives. cause Brettell is analyzing other, a former journalist combined ethnographic cause Brettell is doing a inward toward her own by an overall interest in allowing the voices of Brettell suggests, however, his can, and has been, women's lives. Brettell the history that have made author since first writing s. She does not consider Portuguese women to be with a strong authorial role out her mother, and her gestures, considered auto-mposing the biography ethnographic conventions genres. In giving details sages from the columns women at mid-century, winned with that of her authentic insider voice riting this biography of

her mother, Brettell experiences some of the same dilemmas faced by other autoethnographers or native anthropologists. She is a boundary-crosser, both insider and outsider, as was her mother the journalist. At the close of Brettell's chapter, which is at the close of this volume, the reader is left with incertitude about the issues of genre and representation raised here. The open-ended nature of this volume, like the *testimonios* discussed by Kay Warren at the beginning of this text, is intended to provoke further dialogue, drawing from a multiplicity of voices, about ways to write the self and the social.

Notes

1. The growing literature on the ethnography of written texts cannot be sufficiently addressed here. Key examples include Eduardo P. Archetti's *Exploring the Written* (1994), Ivan Brady's *Anthropological Poetics* (1991), and Paul Benson's *Anthropology and Literature* (1993). Also of relevance to this volume is the recent collection *Creativity/Anthropology* (Lavie et al. 1993). The anthropological study of written life histories is also a growing field. Two recent volumes by Marianne Gullestad provide examples of this literature: *Imagined Childhoods: Self and Society in Autobiographical Accounts* (1996) and *Everyday Life Philosophers* (1996). On the recent, more general, growth of interest in personal narrative, see the *New York Times' Magazine* special issue (1996) *True Confessions: The Age of the Literary Memoir*.
2. There are so many references to "postmodern" anthropology in recent times that it is impossible to cite all sources. Key discussions of relevance here include that by Atkinson (1992), Fischer (1994), Strathern (1987a), and Van Maanen (1995).
3. See, in particular, the recent edited volumes by Smith and Watson (1996), Folkenflik (1993), and Ashley et al. (1995).
4. Since I grew up near to the region described by Dorst, his study constitutes the closest thing to an ethnographic description of my own culture that I have ever encountered, making it "autoethnographic" for me.
5. Examples of this include Bernard 1989, Hammel 1982, and Sioui 1992.

