Introduction*

Why Autoethnography?

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In 2013, Karina Douglas and David Carless told a story about the origins and development of autoethnography. Part of this story focused on the responses this method has evoked in the academy and the different challenges facing researchers who want to use it. A central point of their story is that these responses are hard to generalize: "Thus, each person's initial encounter with autoethnography—which might be through a range of different channels—is especially significant in terms of the uptake, development, and influence of autoethnography within the academy."[1]

This was certainly true for me. If someone had asked me "Why autoethnography?" five years ago, I would have given a very different answer than I will give today. On one level, that seems obvious. Five years ago I barely knew what autoethnography was, but that is not what I mean. Two years ago, right around the start of this project, I happened to be at a moment where I was particularly open to learning new things. That moment provided a context for my encounter, and in a different context I would have responded in a very different way.

My encounter with autoethnography—the one that mattered— happened when my husband started working with a new thesis student. Shaun's field is cultural geography, which has a lot of natural alliances with anthropology and the interpretive social sciences and which borrows liberally from methods and theories in those fields. His student, Hope Sneddon, has an invisible disability and wanted to explore that lived experience in her thesis.[2] One evening, he told me that he had suggested she try autoethnography.

"What's that?"

"Exactly what it sounds like."

On one level, autoethnography is exactly what it sounds like. It is a qualitative, reflexive, ethnographic method where the researcher is also the subject of inquiry. And just at that level, there were many things about autoethnography that made me uncomfortable. The idea of self as subject was strange. I was a little bit intrigued, a little bit alienated, and a little bit suspicious.

I am a person who has always done well in traditional academic contexts. I am really good at reading (and performing to) the rules of the academic game, and at the same time I also get genuine pleasure out of the ideas, forms, and modes of expression that can be explored in traditional scholarship. Both of these things mean that I have been rewarded, repeatedly, for staying in my comfort zones as a student. And they mean that I have also been well rewarded for staying in my comfort zones as an academic librarian, as a researcher, and as a writer.

Right around this same time, I was reading a book about creativity and reflective learning. Fairly early on, I came across this passage—"The most memorable critical incidents students experience in their learning are those when they are required to 'come at' their learning in a new way, when they are 'jerked out' of the humdrum by some unexpected challenge or unanticipated task."[3]—and realized with a start that my extensive, established comfort zone was likely holding me back as a teacher and as a learner. This realization didn't fade; my thoughts returned to it for days. I made a promise to myself: for at least a year I would stay open to discomfort in learning. I wouldn't shy away from (and would even seek out) unfamiliar ideas and experiences. When I encountered autoethnography I was discomfited, but I remembered this promise. I put my discomfort aside, but not my skepticism. My inner voice raised a lot of questions.

How Can This Be Research?

I have always enjoyed thinking about epistemological questions— how we know what we know—and this method is a rich source of

those. Thinking about how a researcher can use deep reflection and rigorous analysis to create knowledge that is meaningful and useful to others is interesting. Thinking about a method where the researcher is a visible and subjective participant in the research process speaks to values I feel strongly about. And yet, my inner voice is still there asking questions of epistemology—Can a method like this be research? What is research? Why do we do it? Why do I ask these questions? Why do I answer them the way I do?

So before I get into the reasons why I find autoethnography interesting, and the values that I think it aligns with, I think I need to spend a little bit of time uncovering the assumptions that I am bringing to this discussion. I trained as an historian before I was a librarian, and that lens is still important to me. However, at this point I probably identify most strongly as a qualitative social scientist. My socialization as a researcher happened in two communities: history and librarianship, and both of these contexts matter. The epistemological assumptions I bring to autoethnography are grounded in all of these experiences.

I think we do research in community and that how we do it—the questions we ask, the methods we use, the evidence we interpret—should depend on what the community needs. There's a practical edge to this view of research, and a social component as well: we do research to help ourselves, and our community, do the work. What we do is determined (at least in part) by what the community needs to get things done. In the disciplines, *work* usually means doing more research (though it could also mean teaching, or setting policy). In librarianship, the picture is more complicated. Doing more research is only one part of our work, but many parts of our work are about research—about preserving, organizing, describing, and using it. This is especially true in academic librarianship. To do our work we need to understand and think critically about research, and sometimes that means thinking creatively about doing research differently.

I think that the choices that we make to use (or appreciate) a research method are not neutral, natural, obvious, or inevitable. They are choices that are situated, contextual, and also social; we make our choices as individuals and also as members of communities. There

is not an objectively "right" way to do research. When we choose a research method, that choice reflects something about our training, our values, and the constraints (encoded or enacted) placed on us by others.[4] To do the work we need to critically examine the work itself. All researchers should rigorously and carefully consider their methodological choices, and all researchers should make the reasons for their choices visible. That is probably not a controversial statement. I would expect most researchers (and readers of research) to accept that basic premise. But in practice, some methods are more closely scrutinized than others.

Since World War II, research across the social sciences has been shaped by positivism, even as positivist methods have been the subject of significant critique.[5] This is important because positivist methods, like all methods, reflect certain values and also reflect epistemological assumptions about what real research or real rigor is. While there are not a lot of researchers who would describe themselves as uncritical positivists anymore, these assumptions persist. This matters. It matters when we do not critique research that aligns with those assumptions and when we do not engage in the critical reflection needed to understand what these values and assumptions are doing to our research practice.

So what are these assumptions, and how do they intersect with autoethnography? Positivist research emphasizes objective, depersonalized observation. It valorizes the researcher as a dispassionate observer, capable of keeping their subjective understanding out of the research process. It defines *knowledge* as that which can be traced back to a reality that the researcher directly perceived. Value judgments cannot be tested and are not knowledge. Positivist methods reflect the assumption that the methods and practices of the natural sciences can (and should) be applied to the social world and that the results of research can (and should) be formulated as the type of models and universal laws associated with those fields. The goal is instrumental knowledge, describing the world as it is, not as it could be.[6]

Today, many people will question some or all of these ideas, but the underlying assumptions live on—we can see them whenever

we reify quantitative methods and statistical analysis or import our research practice from the natural sciences, when we reach for generalizability and universal laws as we interpret the results of qualitative studies, or when we hold up replicability as the gold standard for research.[7] I think this is especially challenging for academic librarians as we navigate our (sometimes uncertain) identity as researchers.

Shulamit Reinharz identifies four factors that shape our research choices: formal training, personal values, community values, and the constraints placed upon us by our institutions.[8] It is my theory—though it is an untested one—that when researchers or communities feel that their authority or status is uncertain, then the last of these, "institutional constraints," will dominate. If we do not have shared training or values around research to draw upon, and we don't have the experience to translate our personal or shared values into a research agenda, then this stands to reason.

And most academic librarians don't have this training or those shared values to draw upon. When we have had formal research training, it usually comes from prior experience in another field. Most MLIS degrees do not require a methods course, and most librarians do not write a thesis for the MLIS. There are many librarians working in contexts where they are not expected to do research and where research activities are neither supported nor valued.

I would take this even further and say that we also lack a shared understanding of why we do research in academic librarianship. Talking about his own field, Stanley Witkin said something that has stuck with me: "Although social work identifies with socially progressive values and ideals, I find it to be an intellectually conservative profession."[9] I think librarianship is too. The connections between research and practice (and research practice and values) are unclear; many librarians are never taught how to use research or theory to inform practice, and many librarians never see this modeled. Yet, at the same time, there is a significant subset of librarians working in academic settings who are expected to do research or produce scholarship as part of their jobs. Without shared training or values to turn to, the constraints laid out by the institutions demanding that practice become paramount.

If my untested theory is true, this also shapes how we think about research. If institutional requirements are the primary factor we use to make research choices, then that starts to shape what we think research is for. It becomes about navigating those expectations, getting tenure or a positive performance review. Safety is a powerful motivator. We try to predict what the institution wants, and we deliver it. With some very, very notable exceptions, our research is not animated by a strong sense of its value or by a belief that it is the kind of research that informs the work we want to do. For many of us, this means mimicking the methods of traditional research, even if our personal epistemology or values would point us elsewhere. Bob Schroeder's essay in chapter 15 of this volume shows how entrenched positivist assumptions are in our field. Without shared values or training that helps us frame and justify the choice to use nontraditional or risky methods, we do not use them. Positivist methods represent a conservative—and safe—choice.

Is It Worth the Risk?

In the summer of 2015, a group of thirty academic librarians, including the authors of the chapters in this book, came together in a learning community to explore autoethnography as a method. We brought varied histories and experiences with us, and different assumptions about research and knowledge. Learning in community provided an important and supportive structure for doing the critical exploration this method required of us, surfacing and analyzing our own lingering positivist assumptions.

I came of age as a researcher in the 1990s, in an interdisciplinary field that was part of a school of social sciences, and some of the assumptions I brought to the community were formed in that context, where thirty years of challenges to positivism coexisted side-by-side with research practices that overtly referenced the natural sciences. By the 1990s, the positivist ideal of the researcher as neutral observer had been so thoroughly challenged throughout the social sciences that, to quote Linda Alcoff, it could "no longer, can never again, be sustained, even for a moment."[10] These challenges came from many directions, and many of them contribute to the theoretical justification for autoethnography:

> (1) new and changing ideas about ideals for research, a recognition of the limits of scientific knowledge, and an emerging appreciation for personal narrative, story, the literary and the aesthetic, emotions and the body; (2) a heightened concern about the ethics and politics of research practices and representations and (3) the increased importance of social identities and identity politics.[11]

Most of the members of the learning community had some experience with these lines of critique, but most of us had not followed these threads far enough to arrive at autoethnography until we came together to do so. I couldn't possibly analyze all of these themes within the scope of this introduction, but I am going to spend a little bit of time on one: Alcoff's "problem of speaking for others."

This was part of a broader set of critiques described by the umbrella term *crisis of representation*. Some of these critiques focused on troubling the positivist ideal of the objective, neutral observer, arguing that a researcher's subjectivities could never be really separated from the work. Others were ethical and political in nature, pointing to the potentially exploitative nature of the researcher/subject relationship. These things are connected. If all representations are subjective, mediated, and filtered, the researcher's agenda matters, and we have to question whether the researcher's agenda will always conflict with (and overwhelm) the needs and desires of the research subject.[12] From here, it is just a small step to autoethnography. If the researcher's subjective perspective is inherently visible in the research, a method that lays that influence bare has value. If the researcher/researched relationship is inherently problematic, then turning the research lens on the self is a way to resolve those ethical dilemmas.

These thoughts matter, because as a method, autoethnography is difficult to nail down. Doing autoethnography is not a matter of adhering to methodological orthodoxy or conventions of genre. I don't think it is an accident that many of the best descriptions of autoethnography focus not on what the method *is*, but on what the autoethnographer *does*:

- Examines culture—what people do and believe—through the lens of their own experience.

- Positions themselves as a social being, interacting with the world and with others.

- Reflexively examines their experience(s), moving back and forth between the unique and particular to the social, political, and cultural.

- Uses creative and evocative expression to show (as opposed to tell) the meanings that are attached to experience.

- Balances rigorous analysis with honest emotion and creativity.

- Contributes to making the world a better place.[13]

And what the researcher does is not neutral. There are epistemological assumptions embedded in autoethnography, as there are in all research methods, and these methods can align, or clash, with personal and professional values.

Reinharz shows that part of becoming socialized as a researcher is internalizing the values of the discipline or community. When these values conflict with lived experiences, that conflict can lead to disillusionment, alienation, or burnout. Librarianship has a longstanding commitment to the particular, the local, and the specific. As a profession, we clearly value stories—preserving, sharing, and discovering them—and we are committed to helping people create their own. We believe that every book has its reader and every reader their book.[14] We believe that we need diverse books, and we need more stories to understand our world.[15] Personal, reflexive, story-based methods like autoethnography align with these values and also build on a culture of reflective learning and reflective practice that is already strongly influential within academic librarianship.[16] Autoethnography's focus on the narrative and reflective, on the particular and subjective, allows voices and perspectives that are lost in aggregations of data to be heard. Librarianship, especially academic librarianship, lacks diversity in some important ways.[17] Surveys and other data collection methods that rely on numbers to achieve statistical significance will never be able to honor the experiences of librarians who are part of the few instead of the many.

I think autoethnography represents a way that academic librarians can get at, share, and build on types of knowledge—embodied knowledge based on lived experience and the things we learn from and about our practice—that will be excluded from our research conversations so long as we make safe, traditional choices. I want to take a minute to dig into this idea because I am talking about practice knowledge as something distinct from theoretical knowledge, and that can get messy. Theory and practice are usually described as a binary, and as is the case with binaries generally, this one is problematic. Historically, in the United States, the relationship between theory and practice in fields like librarianship (and teaching, and social work) has been described as a mutually beneficial relationship between professionals, who work in a practice environment (like the library, or the classroom), and experts, who serve on the faculty of professional schools in the university. Experts do research and generate theory, and practitioners apply it.[18]

This is complicated because I don't think this is a binary that reflects something essential or inherent about knowledge or expertise, but I do think that it reflects some of the social realities of the context where many of us do our work. Experts in the university and practitioners in the field are usually embedded in different social structures and subject to different rewards systems. This creates differences between theory and practice that are socially constructed, not inherent or essential.[19] Experts who rely on their peers in the university to deliver rewards like tenure have no reason to write or research "for" the practice community.

This matters for many reasons, but one of them is this: in this context, the rewards system of the university determines what "counts" as research and what "counts" as knowledge. In a situation where the practice and expert communities are socially and structurally distinct, this might not matter. In a situation where a community within the university has the confidence, status, and power to define its own standards for rewards, this might not matter. But for many academic librarians, it does matter. Faculty librarians teach and do research, and also do a number of things related to the practice of librarianship that faculty in the disciplines do not do. We do this

work in the university, and we are subject to the rewards systems and social structures of the university even when those systems and structures were not built for us. This is a problem; this leads to research that doesn't help anyone. This leads to work that is shoehorned into forms and conventions that are traditional and safe even when those methods aren't right for the questions being asked or the populations being studied.

To truly build knowledge about practice, that knowledge needs to be situated, personalized, and rigorous. In *Situating Composition*, Lisa Ede points a way forward. She describes a similar divide between research faculty in her field, composition studies, and the instructors and adjuncts who teach the bulk of composition courses on most campuses. She argues that critiques of teachers that are built on a theory/practice binary will always fall short. Using theory as a lens to examine teaching (or librarianship, or social work) from the outside, without understanding the deeply situated nature of the work, will inevitably lead to analysis that is incomplete. She criticizes academia's tendency to distinguish knowledge from lived experience and makes a strong case for theorizing practice—a case that is equally compelling for academic librarians. When we situate theory within practice, we can look at knowledge holistically, integrating abstract knowledge and lived experience into a coherent whole. We can understand knowledge in terms of relationships, in context, and not abstracted through the lens of borrowed theory.[20] In other words, to develop meaningful practice knowledge and to theorize from practice, we need to do localized, personal, embodied, affective, deeply situated, critical, reflective research. Autoethnography is a method that allows the researcher to do all of those things.

We Know How to Learn

I keep coming back to this thought, expressed by one of the members of the learning community at the start of our process: "As librarians, we usually don't learn how to do social science research in library school, but as librarians we know how to learn, and we can use that." As librarians, we read, and thought about, and discussed autoethnography for a summer. Then the real work of learning began.

Every author engaged in their own process of learning by doing, and in community we learned more by reading, sharing, editing, and revising with others. Ultimately, this is the way that most people learn how to do autoethnography; no one really knows how to do it until they try.[21]

Here are some of my major takeaways from this experience:

1. There Is No Right Way to Do Autoethnography

All of the pieces in this volume share some characteristics: each one is the result of a rigorous examination of the self and lived experience, and each one moves between the subjective and the cultural in its analysis. *How* the authors do this, however, varies widely. Anderson and Glass-Coffin describe the average autoethnographer as an "eclectic bricoleur" picking and choosing from all of the qualitative methods.[22] To create these narratives, these authors used familiar methods like interviews, journals, field notes, and surveys. Some systematically reviewed and re-reviewed their memories, others borrowed methods from fields like usability testing and archival research.

The forms the narratives take are equally varied. It may be hard to see the common threads between David Michels's academic analysis and Sarah Hartman-Caverly's speculative fiction, yet both of these pieces are based on conventional social science methods, analysis, and reviews of the literature. Autoethnographies have been written as plays, poems, essays, articles, short stories, dialogues, comics, novels, and more. Authors featured in this book used dialogue and conversation, theoretical vocabulary and scholarly conventions, footnotes and artist notes, vernacular and verse to craft their narratives. Some narratives are thick with citations, and others are richly described. Some tell about the past, others speculate about the future. Some force deep thought, and others evoke strong emotion. Some do all of these things.

Each of these narratives connects experience to the broader culture, but they also do this in many ways. Some of these essays use "Big *T*" Theories like feminism or critical race theory to analyze experience. Others use research, historical artifacts, data, and "small *t*" grounded theories to connect to culture. Theory is connected to story,

it can be generated from story, and it works together with story: "Theory asks about and explains the nuances of an experience and the happenings of a culture; story is the mechanism for illustrating and embodying those nuances and happenings."[23] The presence of culture in the narrative is not an afterthought—it should be there from the start, "reciprocal" and "interanimating."[24]

These narratives might push you to reflect upon your own experience. It is likely that you will find that some grab your attention and others leave you cold. You should expect to relate to some more than others, like some more than others, and find some more useful than others.

2. Autoethnography Demands a Lot of the Reader

Autoethnography requires the reader to actively participate in the process of creating meaning from experience. You cannot bring the skills you have developed skimming lit reviews or discussion sections to these narratives. The use and value of autoethnography does not lie in representative samples, objective analysis, or broadly generalizable conclusions: autoethnography must be approached on its own terms.[25] These narratives do not describe what is generally true about experience; they interpret the meaning in the specific and the particular. You should reflect as you read them, develop your own interpretations and your own meaning, and bring them into dialogue with your own experience.

Autoethnography can also be challenging because the material and topics it covers can be difficult. At one point in our conversations in the learning community, I raised the question, "Is there any room for joy in this method?" (Heidi Jacobs's essay shows that the answer to that question is a blissful "yes.") However, just as there is room for joy, there is also room to examine experiences and emotions that are difficult and even disturbing. Some of these essays will be difficult to read because they raise challenging questions. Some describe painful experiences. Some may reflect assumptions or ideas that push you to reexamine your own. Some may offer interpretations you dislike or with which you disagree.

3. Autoethnography Is Very, Very Social

While the deeply reflexive and experiential aspects of autoethnography may suggest a solo author and a solitary process, that would not be accurate. The autoethnographer is constantly negotiating relationships with others. This can be a part of the research design, as seen in "Carving Out a Space" (chapter 8), a collaboratively authored essay created by a group of teaching librarians from George Mason University. However, even when an autoethnography is not written collaboratively, the process is still social. Researchers will gather data from others, or check their memories with people who shared their experiences. They will ask for additional details or perspectives on events.

Story is at the heart of autoethnography, and most authors find that their stories did not happen in a vacuum. The autoethnographer has to balance desires that may conflict: the desire to give an honest account; the desire to paint friends or loved ones in a positive light; the desire to treat the people who appear in their stories confidentially and with respect; and the desire to raise the stakes of the narrative with drama and conflict.

The presence of other people can also create complex ethical dilemmas. Ethics for the autoethnographer are "highly contextual, contingent, and primarily relational."[26] When the people in a story are marginalized, and when there are uneven power relationships to negotiate, the author must decide if they can ethically tell the story in an honest way. A story may resurface details or events that some would prefer to keep buried, while others may feel those same details must be shared. Sometimes, characters or events can be substituted or anonymized. In other cases, changing the details would be dishonest or obscure the meaning.

Whether or not a project is considered suitable for review by institutional review boards, there is a responsibility to tell our stories ethically. Some autoethnographers will use techniques like "process consent," where they check in with participants during every stage of the project to reevaluate consent to ensure that participants have a voice. They will weigh the risks and benefits to other people implicated in their study and do what is possible to mitigate the harm and protect confidentiality and anonymity.[27]

4. Autoethnography Is Not an Easy Way Out

There are things that are difficult about ethnography that seem like they would be easier with the self as a subject. In practice, however, most are not. It might seem easier to get inside your own head than someone else's or to understand your own biases, representations, and emotions. Sometimes it is. It might seem easier to figure out what symbols, events, or structures mean to you than to figure out what they mean to other people. Sometimes it is. It might seem easier to know that you are sufficiently informed to consent to being a research subject than to be 100 percent sure that someone else is. Sometimes it is. But in all of these cases, sometimes it is not.

When it is not, the barriers in the way can be much, much harder to overcome. These are edited, public, performative pieces. Susanne Gannon describes the process of writing an autoethnography as the process of "writing the self into being." We don't discover or uncover that self; we create it deliberately.[28] The desire to manage how we present ourselves in our stories—what version of ourselves we want the world to see—is very powerful. The autoethnographer has to fight against the desire to create an idealized version of their self. In the learning community discussions, we struggled with questions about the desire to be liked and to show our best selves. Some of us continued to grapple with these questions as these narratives developed.

This isn't new for social scientists and ethnographers, but it is an inherent, constant thing for autoethnographers to manage. Reflexivity, at the level that autoethnography demands, is hard. The autoethnographer has to face the possibility that they may learn things about themselves (or about other people) in the process of doing this research that they did not expect and that they do not like.[29] To do this research ethically, the researcher must take self-care seriously. People will frequently push themselves to do things they would not ask of others. It is very possible that without care, the autoethnographer will not honestly evaluate the risks to their selves and their identities in advance.

5. Autoethnographic Rigor Exists and Is Challenging

Once the researcher becomes comfortable with all of the issues surrounding subjectivity, reflexivity, and narrative, new challenges emerge. It can be very easy to decide that if everything is subjective, nothing can be accurately represented and there is no objective truth to discover. If any format is fair game, then the accuracy, truth, or honesty of what we write does not matter. At this point, the researcher can embrace an uncritical relativism and cynicism or hang on to their optimism and empathy. Ellis displays the kind of dogged optimism that is necessary: "I want to retain a distinction between saying our work is selective, partial, and contestable and saying that the impossibility of telling the whole truth means you can lie."[30]

The autoethnographer needs to recognize the challenges that subjectivity brings and do what they can to understand and communicate how their assumptions, biases, and experiences affect the research. They need to do what they can to predict how their research will affect others and to mitigate any harm. At several points in this essay, I have used the word *situated* to describe autoethnography. This is important here. In "Situated Knowledges," Donna Haraway faces these tensions head-on. She articulates a feminist objectivity that sits in between the relativism of postmodernism and the reductionism of positivism. She does not wholly reject the idea of the "real world," even as she agrees it is impossible to pin an objective reality down. In this view, the researcher earns credibility not by proclaiming an objective, positivist, universal truth. Instead, it is the researcher who acknowledges their partiality, location, and positioning—and is transparent about what those things mean to the analysis—who should be heard.[31]

Linda Alcoff takes a similar path through the problem of writing for others. She shows that writing from a personal and subjective position is not an easy way around the ethical and political challenges researchers face once they understand their own power and subjectivity. "Speaking for myself" does not mean I am not responsible for the impact of what I say, on others and on the discourse. Nor does it mean that my experiences can be meaningfully decontextualized and analyzed separately from the rest of my world. Others will be a part of my story, even when I speak for myself. And yet, she believes we must

still try to do the work of research by creating "wherever possible the conditions for dialogue and the practice of speaking with and to rather than speaking for others."[32]

6. Revision Is Essential

In traditional research, the writing stage is frequently described as "writing up the results." This implies that the real work of making meaning from data is complete before writing starts, and the researcher need only transcribe those findings. In practice, things are rarely so straightforward, but that image still remains.

Any writer knows that the process of writing and revising is a learning process. This seems to be particularly true, and particularly important, in autoethnography. The questions and the focus of the research both emerge as the researcher writes and revises. Writing can generate new connections and ideas. Writing through an experience can help us make sense of that experience. Writing can clarify our memories and help us generate new ones. Rewriting can bring new details and juxtapositions forward.

During revision, the author can start from a new point, try a different format, use new metaphors or symbols, write from a different character's perspective—any or all of these can jump-start new ideas and new insights. Several of the authors in this collection used well-thought-out, formal processes to collect and analyze data about their experiences and still found that the bulk of the analysis happened as they wrote and revised. And once the focus of the piece is identified and clarified, then the author has yet another type of revision to do. They decide how to structure the story and how to describe the characters and events. They figure out the literary and storytelling techniques to communicate that meaning clearly and evocatively.

7. Autoethnographies Are Never Really Finished

Autoethnographic narratives strive for truth and honesty, but they do not tell the whole truth about any experience, person, or event. They are written for an audience. While they are grounded in reflection and introspection, they are deliberately public-facing

pieces. To finish and share them, the author needs to remember that they are never really finished: "As an autoethnographer, I tell a situated story, constructed from my current position, one that is always partial, incomplete, and full of silences, and told at a particular time, for a particular purpose to a particular audience."[33]

Memories shift, and perspectives change. New experiences shed new light on past events. And the same holds true for the reader, who may bring new and different insight to the piece every time they read it.

The essays in this book should be read as specific, grounded, theorized interpretations of moments in place and time. As much work and revision that went into each one, they are not finished and will never be complete. They changed as they were being written, revised, read, and reread. And they will likely change for you too, as you read and revisit them.

I would like to thank Wendy Holliday and Maura Smale, who rearranged their lives to give me brilliant, kind, and thoughtful critiques of early versions of this introduction on an unreasonably short time line. This piece would not be the same without their help, or without Shaun Huston's insight, expertise, and unwavering support. Finally, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of the members of this learning community for one of the best experiences of my life.

Notes

1. Karina Douglas and David Carless, "A History of Autoethnographic Inquiry," in *Handbook of Autoethnography*, ed. Stacy Holman Jones, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 91.

2. Hope Sneddon, "The Experiences and Spatial Interactions of Individuals with 'Invisible Disabilities'" (undergraduate capstone, Western Oregon University, 2014), http://www.wou.edu/geography/files/2015/05/Sneddon2014CapstoneFinal.pdf.

3. Alison James and Stephen D. Brookfield, *Engaging Imagination* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014), 6–7.

4. I strongly recommend Shulamit Reinharz's 1979 book, *On Becoming a Social Scientist* (see chapter 1 for a discussion of these factors). Reinharz makes a compelling case for the importance of critical reflection on research practice and also models the practice, showing how theoretical critique can be effectively and rigorously grounded in personal experience. Shulamit Reinharz, *On Becoming a Social Scientist*, Jossey-Bass Social and Behavioral Science Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979).

5. George Steinmetz is very helpful here. His 2005 book not only examines the social sciences as a whole but also digs into how positivist assumptions persist and affect research within disciplinary communities. George Steinmetz, *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

6. I relied on the "positivistic attitude" Anthony Giddens describes in the first pages of his *Positivism and Sociology* for this summary. Anthony Giddens, *Positivism and Sociology* (London: Heinemann, 1974).

7. Steinmetz, *Politics of Method*, 29–30.

8. Reinharz, *On Becoming a Social Scientist*, 9.

9. Stanley L. Witkin, "Autoethnography: The Opening Act," in *Narrating Social Work through Autoethnography,* ed. Stanley L. Witkin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 3.

10. Linda Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others," *Cultural Critique* 20 (Winter 1991–1992): 12.

11. Tony E. Adams, Stacy Holman Jones, and Carolyn Ellis, *Autoethnography*, Understanding Qualitative Research (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 8.

12. Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others," 9. Many of these critiques focus on the practice of ethnography in anthropology and sociology. Given the power differential that usually exists between researcher and researched with this method, and the frequently intimate nature of the data gathered, this is not surprising: "The only thing that is clear is that the conventional standards, embodied in federal regulations regarding protection of data and human subjects, is [*sic*] inadequate to the deep investigation of social life and lived experience in which the ethnographer and qualitative researcher engage." Yvonna S. Lincoln and Norman K. Denzin, introduction to part 4, "The Ethical Revolution," in *Turning Points in Qualitative Research*, ed. Yvonna S. Lincoln and Norman K. Denzin (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), 217.

13. Adams, Jones, and Ellis, *Autoethnography*, 1–2 (paraphrased).

14. S. R. (Shiyali Ramamrita) Ranganathan, *The Five Laws of Library Science*, 2nd ed., reprinted with minor amendments, Ranganathan Series in Library Science, No. 12 (Bombay; New York: Asia PubHouse, 1963).

15. Diane Patrick, "Libraries, We Need Diverse Books Share Common Goal: Changing the Conversation around Books—and Changing the World," *Publishers Weekly*, March 21, 2016, 36-37.

16. Char Booth, *Reflective Teaching, Effective Learning* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2011); Judith Greenall and Barbara Anne Sen, "Reflective Practice in the Library and Information Sector," *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 48, no. 2 (2016): 137–50, doi:10.1177/0961000614551450.

17. Chris Bourg, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Librarianship," *Feral Librarian* (blog), March 3, 2014, https://chrisbourg.wordpress.com/2014/03/03/the-unbearable-whiteness-of-librarianship.

18. Donald A. Schon, *The Reflective Practitioner* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 35–36.

19. Ivor Goodson, *Professional Knowledge, Professional Lives*, Professional Learning (Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill Education, 2007).

20. Lisa S. Ede, *Situating Composition* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), 118–19; Deborah P. Britzman, *Practice Makes Practice*, Teacher Empowerment and School Reform (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 64–65; D. Jean Clandinin, "Personal Practical Knowledge: A Study of Teachers' Classroom Images," *Curriculum Inquiry* 15, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 361, doi:10.2307/1179683.

21. Leon Anderson and Bonnie Glass-Coffin, "I Learn by Going," in *Handbook of Autoethnography*, ed. Stacy Holman Jones, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 57–83.

22. Ibid., 64–65.

23. Stacy Holman Jones, "Living Bodies of Thought: The 'Critical' in Critical Autoethnography," *Qualitative Inquiry* 22, no. 4 (2016): 229, doi:10.1177/1077800415622509.

24. Ibid.

25. Witkin, *Narrating Social Work through Autoethnography*, 3.

26. Jillian A. Tullis, "Self and Others: Ethics in Autoethnographic Research," in *Handbook of Autoethnography*, ed. Stacy Holman Jones, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 245.

27. Adams, Jones, and Ellis, *Autoethnography*.

28. Susanne Gannon, "Sketching Subjectivities," in *Handbook of Autoethnography*, ed. Stacy Holman Jones, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 230.

29. Keith Berry, "Spinning Autoethnographic Reflexivity, Cultural Critique and Negotiating Selves," in *Handbook of Autoethnography*, ed. Stacy Holman Jones, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 223.

30. Carolyn Ellis, in Arthur P. Bochner and Carolyn Ellis, "Taking Over Ethnography," in *Composing Ethnography*, ed. Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner, Ethnographic Alternatives Book Series, vol. 1 (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996), 21.

31. Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1988): 575–99, doi:10.2307/3178066.

32. Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others," 9.

33. Carolyn Ellis, *Revision*, Writing Lives—Ethnographic Narratives (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2009), 13.

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