All Theses and Dissertations

2009-07-13

Standing in the Center of the World: The Ethical Intentionality of Autoethnography

Nicole Wilkes
Brigham Young University - Provo

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Wilkes, Nicole, "Standing in the Center of the World: The Ethical Intentionality of Autoethnography" (2009). *All Theses and Dissertations*. 1874.
https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/1874

STANDING IN THE CENTER OF THE WORLD:

THE ETHICAL INTENTIONALITY OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

by

Nicole Melissa Wilkes

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of English

Brigham Young University

July 2009

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Nicole Melissa Wilkes

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

_____   _____
Date   Suzanne E. Lundquist, Chair

_____   _____
Date   Jill T. Rudy, Reader

_____   _____
Date   Aaron C. Eastley, Reader

_____   _____
Date   Kristin Matthews, Graduate Advisor

_____   _____
Date   Nicholas A. Mason, Associate Chair for
                                     Graduate Studies

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Nicole Wilkes in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

_____   _____
Date   Suzanne E. Lundquist
                                          Chair, Graduate Committee

Accepted for the Department

_____   _____
Date   Phillip A. Snyder
                                          Graduate Coordinator

Accepted for the College

_____   _____
Date   Joseph D. Parry
                                          Associate Dean, College of Humanities

ABSTRACT

STANDING IN THE CENTER OF THE WORLD:

THE ETHICAL INTENTIONALITY OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Nicole Melissa Wilkes

Department of English

Master of Arts

Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy of *ipseity* and *alterity* has permeated Western thought for more than forty years. In the social sciences and the humanities, the recognition of the Other and focus on difference, *alterity*, has influenced the way we ethically approach peoples and arts from different cultures. Because focus on the ego*, ipseity*, limits our ethical obligations, focusing on the Other does, according to Levinas, bring us closer to an ethical life. Furthermore, the self maintains responsibility for the Other and must work within Levinas's ethical system to become truly responsible. Therefore, the *interaction* between self and Other is Levinas's principal concern as we move toward the New Humanism.

The traditional Western autobiography has been centered in the self, the ego, which may prevent the ethical interaction on the part of the writer because the writer often portrays himself or herself as exemplary or unique rather than as an individual within a culture who is responsible for others. Nevertheless, life writing has expanded as writers strive to

represent themselves and their cultures responsibly. One form that has emerged is the literary autoethnography, a memoir that considers ancestry, culture, history, and spiritual inheritance amidst personal reflection.

In particular, Native American conceptions of the self within story have inspired conventions of literary autoethnography. This project explores the way Native American worldviews have influenced the autoethnography by looking at four Native American authors: Janet Campbell Hale, N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Carter Revard. Through research, family stories, interviews, and returns to ancestral spaces, autoethnographers can bring themselves and their readers closer to cultural consciousness. By investigating standards in autoethnographic works, this project will illustrate the ethical intentionality of autoethnography.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy of *ipseity* and *alterity* has permeated Western thought for more than forty years. In the social sciences and the humanities, the recognition of the Other and focus on difference, *alterity*, has influenced the way we ethically approach peoples and arts from different cultures. Because of the world's shared history of violence against difference, the fundamental principle of Levinas's ethics is "Thou shall not kill." Demanding submission or reciprocity from the Other is a fundamental act of violence—murder of thought, spirit, or body. The ethics of the New Humanism lie, essentially, in the individual's acknowledgment of and respect for the Other as wholly separate from the self.

As we discuss Levinasian ethics, however, we often ignore the *ipseity*, the self. Because focus on the ego*, ipseity*, limits our ethical obligations, focusing on the Other does, in fact, bring us closer to an ethical, nonviolent life. Nevertheless, the self maintains responsibility for the Other and must work within Levinas's ethical system to become truly responsible. Therefore, the *interaction* between self and Other is Levinas's principal concern as we move toward the New Humanism.

A number of tensions continually challenge Levinas's project: political unrest, war, violence, and poverty, for example. Some political movements have been successful for groups who suffered oppression, such as colonized peoples, women, people of color, underrepresented minorities, and political refugees. Levinasian ethics, however, do not take place in large-scale revolutions. The responsibility lies in each individual's conviction to see the Other as himself or herself without imposition or value judgment.

In this way, artistic expression can open communication between the self and the Other, allowing the viewer or reader to accept responsibility for the act of witnessing the artist's representation. Levinas discusses face-to-face interaction as the highest ethical

interface because we are kept from committing violence against the Other as we accept him or her as our responsibility. Likewise, seeing, reading, or listening to the Other's art or stories places us in a position where ethical interaction is possible, a public manifestation of face-to-face interaction. We are fundamentally responsible for the choice between usurpation and responsibility while artistic expression moves us into the space of the Other. Life writing, in particular, can be an ethical project for the reader. As a writer reflects upon and composes his or her own life story, the interactive space between reader and writer can be opened.

Some problems, nonetheless, may arise if reader and writer fail to connect through the story. The traditional Western autobiography, for example, is centered in the self, the ego, which may prevent the ethical interaction on the part of the writer because the writer often portrays himself or herself as exemplary or unique rather than as an individual within a culture who is responsible for others. Nevertheless, life writing has expanded from the traditional nationalist or conversion narrative—the most common early forms of autobiography—as writers strive to represent themselves and their cultures responsibly. One form that has emerged is the autoethnography, a memoir that considers ancestry, culture, history, and spiritual inheritance amidst personal reflection. The autoethnographer works as an anthropologist in his or her own life and history, and writes the self as Other, rather than as the ego.

Autoethnography has emerged from more egalitarian communities who see their stories as shared, belonging to all of their people, as well as peoples who have felt displaced because of violence, oppression, or colonization. In particular, Native American conceptions of the self within story (related to land, earth, event, and community, not merely an individual life) have inspired genre conventions. The autoethnographer embarks upon a journey to research his or her people, find the broken pieces of history, and reflect upon a

single area of inquiry. Autoethnography explores the individual in a cultural context. My project will discuss autoethnography as a process and product, as well as some of the characteristics that define and defy the genre. Through research, family stories, interviews, and returns to ancestral spaces, autoethnographers can bring themselves and their readers closer to cultural consciousness. By investigating standards in autoethnographic works, I will illustrate the ethical intentionality of autoethnography.

CHAPTER ONE

"LIKE A ROCK ASSAILED BY WAVES":

MOVING FROM AUTOBIOGRAPHY TO AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

"The ego, the oneself, the ipseity (as it is called in our time), does not remain invariable in

the midst of change like a rock assailed by the waves (which is anything but invariable); the

ego remains the same by making of disparate and diverse events a history – its history."

— Emmanuel Levinas from *The Collected Philosophical Papers*

An Emerging Genre: Autoethnography

During the late 1980s, the term "autoethnography" arose in academic discourse. The

origin of the term is debatable since during the rise of multiculturalism and subjective

ethnography diverse disciplines drifted toward more self-conscious work. Because the Latin

roots of autoethnography mean "self-culture-writing," anthropologists, cultural theorists,

and critics of autobiography have applied the term differently to their respective disciplines

(Wong 4). The ethnographer, for example, who acknowledges his or her own perspective

within anthropological research becomes an *auto*ethnographer. Likewise, the writer who

focuses on individual self and culture rather than a single life story is no longer an

auto*bio*grapher but an auto*ethno*grapher.

This chapter will explore the philosophies that distinguish the ethical intentionality of

literary autoethnography, by searching various uses of the term "autoethnography" and

defining literary autoethnography as a genre, discussing Emmanuel Levinas's ethics in terms

of autoethnographic expression, contrasting the genre with autobiography, and

deconstructing and reaffirming genre constraints. The following chapter will then look into

specific autoethnographic works by contemporary Native American authors and how

differing Native American worldviews have established genre particularities that reinforce

responsibility for the Other.

One of the earliest uses of "autoethnography" in critical discourse appeared in Françoise Lionnet's "Autoethnography: The An-Archic Style of *Dust Tracks on the Road*," which was published in 1989. In her article, Lionnet follows Zora Neale Hurston's convention-defying autobiography *Dust Tracks on the Road*. Although Hurston's work was published as a memoir, Lionnet considers *Dust Tracks* an anthropological study in which Hurston is ethnographer, narrator, and character.

Furthermore, the terms "autoethnography" and "autoethnographic expression" were first introduced to postcolonial studies in Mary Louise Pratt's 1992 book *Imperial Eyes*. She explains, "I use these terms to refer to instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's own terms" (emphasis original 7). The colonized may borrow the language of the colonizer, invert symbols, or express themselves in an artform unique to the colonizer. Pratt labeled this form of self-expression "autoethnography" because oppressed individuals brought themselves into the ethnographic studies of their own peoples. While autoethnographic expression is most prevalent in literature, Pratt does not limit autoethnographic expression to written art. Paintings, sculpture, beadwork, tapestry, music, and other arts can be autoethnographic. According to Pratt, the convergence of the two cultures as represented through art is autoethnographic. She continues, "Autoethnographic texts are not, then, what are usually thought of as 'authentic' or autochthonous forms of self-representation. [. . .] Rather autoethnography involves partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror" (Pratt 7). The fusion of the colonizer's expression with the traditional worldviews of the colonized creates a unique storytelling not owned exclusively by either people.

Pratt and Lionnet's definitions of autoethnography, however, have expanded since the beginning of the twenty-first century—particularly in academics. A common form of

autoethnographic expression is that of a highly personal scholarly work. Kimberly Lau's

2002 article "This Text Which Is Not One" is split into three separate and unbalanced

columns: the story of her family, interpretations of Irigaray and feminist studies, and her

research about autoethnography (243). While the form is unique, Lau's combination of

academic, personal, and ethnological writing has been applied in numerous theses and

dissertations since 2000. Most of these scholars have used autoethnography as a way to

express their research and experience through the subjective and personal voice. In schools

of education, communications, and even social justice—from Illinois, Colorado to Alaska—

scholars are drawn to the way the self interacts with the subject (see Angel; Marx; Paniptuck;

Sabra; Weems; Young). The appeal of autoethnography in such a wide variety of disciplines

is clear: the self is no longer separated from the research.

      In addition, over the past thirty years, anthropologists have contextualized interviews

and included their presence as a variable. Sally Cole believes, "The ethnography reproduces a

style of nineteenth-century natural-history writing and has the appearance of being factual,

authoritative, and 'objective.' However, when we remember the subject-matter – people's

lives – the effect upon the reader is alienating, and the reader questions the validity of the

description" (118). By bringing the self into the text, ethnographers resist imposing their

own cultural biases and worldviews upon the Other. Furthermore, Carolyn Ellis, professor

of communications at the University of South Florida, has authored publications advocating

the inclusion of the self in ethnographic research. *The Ethnographic I* consists entirely of a

fictionalized narrative of classroom interaction to illustrate the utility of personal voice in

sociological and anthropological research. Through autoethnographic expression, the

outsider acknowledges that he or she is part of the cultural interpretation. In addition,

scholars who have incorporated autoethnographic expression in their works have expressed

that they feel a deeper connection to the culture they study.

The autoethnographic impulse is most prevalent in literary autoethnography—more closely related to autobiography—as a literary genre. This type of life writing has emerged in more popular forms, such as memoir and personal essay, and is not limited to the scholarly community. Suzanne Evertsen Lundquist defines literary autoethnography as "the self as possible only within cultural contexts" and as "both a process (an epistemology or way of locating self within multiple ethnic parameters) as well as a product (literary work with genre particularities)" ("Carter Revard" 36; 37). The strength of the genre is its ability to cross boundaries and defy standards of conventional life writing. Rather than focusing on the individual as unique or exemplary, autoethnographic memoirs connect the writers' experiences to their ancestors' and the larger social context. In this way, reader and writer are connected over time and experience. According to Pratt, "Autoethnographic texts are typically heterogeneous on the reception end as well, usually address[ed] both to metropolitan readers and to literate sectors of the speaker's own social group, and bound to be received very differently by each" (7). Literary autoethnography has most often come forth from marginalized cultures, from peoples displaced or searching for a lost ancestry. Because the autoethnographer must depend on the exchange between the culture of his or her people and the larger culture, the form of writing resists individualism. Though the writer is fundamentally responsible for the stories included and the expression of the text, each autoethnography is a communal story.

Literary autoethnography also engages the contextual forces that shape each individual, ancestry, history, belief, place, and worldview, conscientiously moving away from fixed identity toward a continually shifting identity. Through autoethnographic expression we find that "identity is a conception of and feeling about the events which people have lived. It is the meaning of events in which one's ancestors took part, in ways that make one proud, which differentiate people into ethnic groups" (Sawyer qtd. in Schubnell 25). The

autoethnographer knows he or she is influenced by environment and others but continually resists accepting determination and unchangeability. In memoir, academic writing, or research, the autoethnographer reaches out to his or her readers and invites them to come into his or her circle of experience. The autoethnographic impulse develops from the writer's consciousness that the ego is not sufficient without others.

<div align="center">Ethics and Autoethnography</div>

Because the autoethnographer consciously connects himself or herself with others through ancestry, history, and mythos, the autoethnographic project is an experiment of *ipseity* moving toward *alterity*. The self cannot remain singular if one researches his or her cultural inheritance. Likewise, the reader has the opportunity to resist the reductive tendencies of the ego as he or she steps into the artistic space of autoethnography. Emmanuel Levinas believes that if we can look at another without a need for reciprocity, we can obtain ethical responsibility for the Other. Levinas teaches that our responsibility for the Other is limitless:

> Positively, we will say that since the Other looks at me, I am responsible for
> him, without even having *taken* on responsibilities in his regard; his
> responsibility *is incumbent on me*. It is responsibility that goes beyond what I
> do. Usually, one is responsible for what one does oneself.[. . .] This means
> that I am responsible for his very responsibility. (*Ethics* 96)

Levinas allows the speaker/writer and listener/reader the opportunity to regain ethical responsibility for each other as a part of this interchange. As we are responsible for the "very responsibility" of the Other, the role of the subjective interlocutor becomes more valuable. Levinas elaborates, "Responsibility is what is incumbent on me exclusively, and what, *humanly*, I cannot refuse. This charge is a supreme dignity of the unique. I am I in the sole measure that I am responsible, a non-interchangeable I" (*Ethics* 101). Identity and

individualism, according to Levinas, are completely reliant on whether or not we accept

responsibility for the Other. In *Levinas and Theology* Michael Purcell explains, "Levinas, then,

intends a new ethical humanism, a new understanding of subjectivity, which acknowledges

but goes beyond the modern subjectivity" (50). This understanding of subjectivity is not

merely self-indulgent or overtly self-conscious. Levinas explains,

> Freedom, autonomy, the *reduction of the other to the same*, lead to this formula:
> the conquest of being by man over the course of history. This reduction does
> not represent some abstract schema; it's man's ego. The existence of an ego
> takes place as an identification of the diverse. [. . .] The ego, the oneself, the
> ipseity (as it is called in our time), does not remain invariable in the midst of
> change like a rock assailed by the waves (which is anything but invariable);
> the ego remains the same by making of disparate and diverse events a history
> – its history. (emphasis original *Collected* 48).

Because Levinas describes our Western conception of the self to be reductive of the Other,

our responsibility lies in *alterity*. Thus, only through *alterity* can we gain a sense of ethics.

Richard Cohen, English translator for *Ethics and Infinity*, explains, "The responsibility to

respond to the other is, for Levinas, precisely the inordinate responsibility, the infinite

responsibility of being-for-the-other *before* oneself — the ethical relation" (12). The

responsibility we have for the other is how we gain a sense of ethics despite religion or

culture. The problem of ethics, for Levinas, comes in our cultural inheritance; Levinas

believes, "Western philosophy has most often been an ontology: a reduction of the other to

the same by interposition of a middle and neutral term that ensures the comprehension of

being," which keeps both self and other from engaging in an ethical discourse (qtd. in

Lundquist *Trickster* 83).

In a culture devoted to radical individualism, engaging the other through storytelling, face-to-face encounters, and reading life stories becomes paramount in developing ethics in *alterity* that can reshape our perceptions of responsibility. Reading stories of the Other help raise consciousness of the narcissism of our inherited cultural identity. This consciousness moves us from individualism toward communalism, thereby creating an ethical society, according to Levinas's teachings. In the ethical relationship, the writer's responsibility to the reader is increased, just as the reader becomes responsible for the writer's stories. Too often readers consider themselves passive recipients, when readers are fundamentally responsible for the stories writers shared with them. In autoethnography, we can access the ethical space because the author conscientiously moves between history and the self, connecting directly to the reader and community. Because the autoethnographer embarks on a journey toward consciousness, his or her project leans toward Levinasian ethics. This space of consciousness and reflection created by the autoethnographer allows the reader to also step into the reflective space that will move him or her toward a more ethical interaction with the text. The tradition in Western storytelling, however, tends to sway away from this writer/reader contract and toward the individualized personal meaning of the story. As we learn to see ourselves at these ethical intersections, we tend to gravitate toward more ethical storytelling and refocus our responsibility.

Unfortunately, Levinas's ethics of *ipseity* and *alterity* tend to conflict with the prevailing notions of self and individuality we have inherited from Western philosophy. Over the last one hundred years, we have witnessed the movement of identity issues from the psychoanalytical centrality of the ego to the postmodern fragmentary (or, perhaps, nonexistent) self. Philosophical queries over the last sixty years have searched beyond the Cartesian notion of thought presupposing existence, the Freudian reinforcement of the atomized individual, and the Heideggerian "quasi-independent Being" (Wild 11). While our

ideology has reinterpreted the self, we still wrestle with the postmodern uncertainty of the

deconstructed self and continue to search for meaning in our individualistic social structure.

Perhaps this is part of the reason we can accept Levinas's philosophy but struggle to

implement the ethics in our understanding of being. Levinas believes,

> If ontology—the comprehension, the embracing of Being—is impossible, it
>
> is not because every definition of Being already presupposes the knowledge
>
> of Being, as Pascal had said and Heidegger refutes in the first pages of *Being*
>
> *and Time*; it is because the comprehension of Being in general cannot *dominate*
>
> the relationship with the Other. The latter relationship commands the first. I
>
> cannot disentangle myself from society with the Other, even when I consider
>
> the Being of the existent he is. (emphasis original *Totality* 47)

As Levinas explains, the self is determinately connected to others—tied to experiences,

interactions, and inheritances—rupturing the self-portraiture of the singular individual. The

self is not an atomized being; an individual is always defined through relationships. As we

begin to accept that we are connected to others and influenced by our communities, we can

gather fragments of mythologies, histories, and ancestries to piece together a fluid,

changeable sense of the self. The individualistic memoir may not accurately reflect a life lived

amongst others. Because of these ideological tensions, many culturally conscientious writers

are drawn toward autoethnography.

This shift toward autoethnographic expression is significant because over the last

century anthropologists and sociologists have acknowledged that we connect to others as we

are born into communities. Anthropologist and social theorist Tzvetan Todorov states,

"Man is irremediably incomplete; he needs others" (10). Because we are born into

communities, we learn communication, habits, and work from those around us. We retain

communal settings, not only for survival, but also because others' experiences help define

our own. Through social interaction, we discover more about ourselves and our responsibility for others. We are drawn to others: their faces, their imaginations, and their stories. Each life lived reflects our deepest desires and fears, longings and losses, blessings and downfalls. We exchange stories with friends and family, illuminating the meaning of each individual life. Exploring others' stories, lives, and faces is one way to fulfill these fundamental human needs.

This is, perhaps, why Levinas believes that the exchange between one person and the other is more important than the stories actually told. Levinas explains, "In fact, for me, the *said* [*le dit*] does not count as much as the *saying* [*le dire*] itself. The latter is important to me less through its informational contents than by the fact that it is addressed to an interlocutor" (*Ethics* 42). In this way, composing and studying life writing is an ethical exchange between speaker/writer and listener/reader. Cohen elaborates,

> What is said [*le dit*] can always be unsaid, re-said or revised — it is the *saying*
> [*le dire*] of it, the intrusion, its effects, the interruption it inserts into
> continuities, as well as the passivity it calls forth, beneath identity, that
> accomplishes the *priority* and *anteriority* of ethics. The only alterity sufficiently
> other to provoke response, to which for Levinas is subjectivity itself, and the
> meaning of meaning, the event of ethics — is the absolute alterity of the
> other person encountered in the excessive immediacy of the face-to-face.
> (12)

While we perceive the face-to-face interaction as more immediate than text, we can also see that a work invested in the reader/writer contract can access the immediacy of personal contact, creating the ethical space through the interaction of the self and the other through life stories. Each life story can provide a space for the self to step into the space of *alterity*, absolute difference from the self.

Kimberly Lau describes her choice to include personal experiences in an academic work by explaining, "I share a range of personal narratives because I have an emotional attachment to them, but also because they help illustrate some of the cultural hybridities— the transcultural flows between East and West and West and East— that were entirely naturalized as I was growing up" (245). Sharing a personal story, writing an autobiography, or contextualizing an issue within a narrative enriches our sense of the self and Other. In this way, self-disclosure can be an ethical exchange between the reader and writer. Thomas King explains, "I tell the stories not to play on [. . .] sympathies but to suggest how stories can control our lives, or there is a part of me that has never been able to move past these stories, a part of me that will be chained to these stories as long as I live" (9). Whether or not we are chained to our own and others' stories, like King feels, we continually redefine our ethical responsibility because of them.

Storytelling connects us to others socially and ethically: we see their faces, listen to their words, and become entwined in their lives. Levinas believes that personal encounters are what define our perception of ethics, what he defines as the New Humanism. Purcell believes that Levinas's claim is that the ethical relationship is both first philosophy and first theology (50). Before we can think of our relationship with God or the self, we first must gain responsibility for the Other. Levinas explains,

> I think rather that access to the face is straightaway ethical. You turn yourself toward the Other as toward an object when you see a nose, eyes, a forehead, a chin, and you can describe them. The best way of encountering the Other is not even to notice the color of his eyes! When one observes the color of the eyes one is not in social relationship with the Other. The relation with the face can surely be dominated by perception, but what is specifically the face is what cannot be reduced to that. (Levinas *Ethics* 85-86)

According to Levinas's ethics, our position is not to define the Other, but to see the Other as himself or herself, unconstrained by our self-consciousness; then, we can define ourselves through the Other without reducing the Other to our own narrow self-perception. This face-to-face exchange may be why we are drawn to life stories, biographies, autobiographies, and personal essays—life writing as a genre. Through life writing, we connect with each other, creating a community through the pages of a book.

Because we communicate with others through face-to-face contact, email, telephone conversations, letters, and online video chat, life writing is not the only way to interact with others. These various interactions emphasize our commonalities, the spaces we share. Our cultural tendency, unfortunately, is to maintain our personal relationships on a subconscious level, anchoring the individual in the ego. But, if the ego remains the center, can we maintain an ethical position? If autoethnography opens the dialogic space between self and Other, should the genre of life writing adapt to our evolving understanding of responsibility? Perhaps autobiography is constrained by its philosophical conventions; thus, investigating the philosophy of autobiography may demonstrate how autoethnography can function as a complement to the genre. Add in ideas about non-evolutionary move from autoethnography to autobiography. Rework this idea into differing worldviews. Is autoethnography so massively different from autobiography?

<center>Autobiography: The Ego at the Center</center>

Although personal essay, epistolary narratives, and other forms of memoir have been prevalent in the Western canon, autobiography has been the most standard form of life writing. As a genre, autobiography is relatively young: the term and basic characteristics of autobiography emerged in the late eighteenth century, but it was not until "the end of the 1830s the word had become a matter of established usage" though "the pressure to read these texts in conformity with 'dominant notions of a unified self' comes later" (Anderson

7). Initially, autobiographical works were considered self-indulgent or overly personal, but, as Laura Marcus explains, "the nineteenth century saw a gradual alignment of autobiography with the value accorded to authorship. [. . .] [A]utobiography gradually comes to be the site where genius, and in particular literary genius, could be established as 'internally' valuable, without reference to other 'outside' judgements [*sic*]" (qtd. in Anderson 7). The autobiography became a place for writers to prove themselves *writerly*, thus validating their need to share their stories, poems, and idealism. When we turn to the great autobiographers—Jean-Jacques Rousseu, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Adams—we may discover that we rarely see ourselves as unified and whole like these men of letters. "Autobiography," Jay Parini believes, "inherently involves a challenge to social and personal norms; writers put themselves forward as exemplary, with the implication that they are doing something different from their fellow citizens" (qtd. in Lundquist "Carter Revard" 36). No autobiography exemplifies this Romantic ideal more than Rousseau's. In a moment of amplified individualism, he declares,

> I have resolved on an enterprise which has no precedent and which, once complete, will have no imitator. My purpose is to display to my kind a portrait in every way true to nature, and the man I shall portray will be myself. Simply myself. [. . .] I am made unlike any one I have ever met; I will even venture to say that I am like no one in the whole world. (Rousseau qtd. in Anderson 44)

As Rousseau's comment demonstrates, the ego, *ipseity*, is often the philosophical focus of autobiography. Like Rousseau, the autobiographer's need to prove himself or herself exceptional and individual directly conflicts with Levinasian ethics. While not every autobiographer deems himself or herself as "unlike any one," the philosophical center on the ego prevails in the genre. Rousseau's approach, like many autobiographers, is indicative of

Western philosophy, however. Arnold Krupat observes, "[M]odern concepts of the self are so thoroughly committed to notions of interiority and individualism that even anthropologically sophisticated Westerners have a tendency to construct their accounts of the variety of selfhood as an evolutionary narrative" (204). In Krupat's estimation, we see that the traditional autobiography reinforces that the individual persists as the center, moving from an infantile or primitive communal state into the mature egocentric self. As each story is told, our perception of the Other and the self can be fundamentally altered. In examining Levinas's ethics of *ipseity* and *alterity*, autobiography lends itself poorly to the charge of the responsible I. While Rousseau may have embraced this ideal as his own, claiming his uniqueness as that of the Responsible Man, the self-aggrandizing appeal of a book about one's ego contradicts responsibility for the Other.

Likewise, Paul de Man's 1979 essay "Autobiography as De-Facement" challenges autobiography because it relies upon the evolutionary narrative and the notion of the unified self. Shirley Neuman expounds, "The concept of the unified self is completely deconstructed[;] autobiography becomes, in Paul de Man's formulation, impossible, disfiguring that which it figures forth" (215). According to Levinas's ethics, the self depends on the Other, so we cannot justly claim to be complete individuals. Furthermore, de Man insists that the genre of autobiography "always looks slightly disreputable and self-indulgent" and "never quite attain[s] aesthetic dignity nor even provid[es] an empirically useful way of understanding texts since 'each specific instance seems to be an exception to the norm'" (qtd. in Anderson 12). Each life story is intentionally unique; thus, a standard for reading autobiographical texts is difficult to establish. Every telling is an *interpretation* colored by many factors, including race, gender, and historical moment. The moment a story is remembered and retold, it becomes fragmentary. De Man further asserts that autobiography as a form is always questionable:

> We assume that life *produces* the autobiography as an act produces its consequences, but can we not suggest, with equal justice, that the autobiographical project may itself produce and determine the life and that whatever the writer *does* is in fact governed by the technical demands of self-portraiture and thus determined, in all its aspects, by the resources of his medium? (emphasis original 920-1)

The medium seems to demand less authentic portraiture; therefore, as the autobiographer constructs a narrative, he or she begins to construct a coherent and unified identity. Thus, if the telling of one's life story determines the shape of experience, does the philosophy of autobiography determine the self-centered, individualized portrait of the autobiographer? Neuman continues,

> What emerges from this theoretical trajectory is the fact that the study of autobiography, first justified on the grounds that the genre has a canon and a history embodying the humanist ideal of the individuated and unified self, is now often justified on the grounds that the genre is marginal to those same ideals (now discredited as serving hegemonic interests), that it enacts the impossibility of the construction of a unified self, and that it constructs fictions of the self that function discursively rather than referentially. (215)

Whether or not the genre is "marginal to the ideals" of the unified, unencumbered self is still questionable. As de Man shows, living within the story is not the same as writing the story.

Another tension of the deterministic genre constraints of autobiography manifests in multicultural works. The ideal of the "self-made man" that persists in nineteenth-century autobiography has reached into immigrant and slave narratives, as well. In her research Sandra Kumamoto Stanley finds that

Autobiographies modeled on the conventions of Benjamin Franklin's

Autobiography [. . .] inevitably affirm the values of the predominant culture; for

the individual is empowered (transforming her rags to riches) insofar as that

individual can harness cultural authority, aligning her identity with the

dominant culture's identity. In fact, many late nineteenth-century and early

twentieth-century ethnic autobiographies—such as those written by Edward

Bok and Mary Antin and African American Booker T. Washington—

replicate the conventions of Franklin's palimpsestic work, demonstrating that

those people who work hard, become educated and/or "Americanized," and

adapt to a capitalist marketplace [. . .] can succeed in the majority culture—

conquering even the barriers of race, language, class and gender, these—

signifiers of "otherness." (64-65)

Kumamoto's observation reaffirms the resistance to the authenticity of autobiography.

Because many peoples from non-European ancestries in America come from legacies of

oppression, slavery, genocide, or cultural destruction, their stories will differ vastly from the

"rags to riches" tale we have accepted in autobiography. In addition, Neuman believes that

"for women, people of colour, colonial peoples, the poor, non-heterosexuals, various

arguments run, the understanding of the *material* as well as the discursive circumstances of

their oppression is a primary step toward freedom from that oppression through self-

possession" (217). Furthermore, bell hooks describes her own experience of life writing as a

reclamation experience: "The longing to tell one's story and the process of telling is

symbolically a gesture of longing to recover the past in such a way that one experiences both

a sense of reunion and a sense of release" (431). Most people of ethnic minorities living in

the United States have struggled with the double-consciousness of being "American," as well

as their individual ethnicities. Questions of identity intensify when living within a hybrid or

hyphenated existence. The standard conventions of autobiography seem to push out the fragmentary nature of the self, consequently reducing the Other to the same.

Although the ideological constraints of autobiography remain consistent, genre conventions of the final products vary. Because works differ in form (narrative, essay, poetry) and purpose (promotional, political, commercial), autobiography has been difficult to standardize. The uncertainty of the genre may be what led de Man to observe,

> Empirically as well as theoretically, autobiography lends itself poorly to generic definition; each specific instance seems to be an exception to the norm; the works themselves always seem to shade off into neighboring or even incompatible genres and, perhaps most revealing of all, generic discussions, which can have such powerful heuristic value in the case of tragedy or of the novel remain distressingly sterile when autobiography is at stake. [. . .] Autobiography, then, is not a genre or a mode, but a figure of reading or of understanding that occurs, to some degree, in all texts. (920-921)

Autobiography, then, is left in an unusual state of being. While many critics, like de Man, believe autobiography is a way of reading text, which some can argue of autoethnography as well, autobiography has also been a means for individuals to connect with others. Neither autobiography nor autoethnography is merely one mode of seeing a text, but, perhaps, the way an author approaches his or her work. Though the endeavor may not be conscientiously and intentionally ethical, autobiographical expression can allow interaction between the self and Other. The ethical dilemma may lie in authorial intent or genre ideologies. This generic instability leads us to ask, can we define a genre that continually defies its constraints?

The Significance of Genre

Since the philosophical constraints of autobiography—centered on the self, not the Other—have been problematic for writers who are searching for their positions in the world and autobiographical forms can be reductive, writers who are seeking a way to bring together fragments of their existence turn to other forms of life writing. We can accept that autobiography is not the only legitimate genre of life writing; various forms of storytelling have recorded lives, such as letters, paintings, photos, and scrapbooks, in addition to epistolary narratives, memoir, personal essay, and autoethnography. Modern genre theory, however, complicates the suggestion that autoethnography is both a complement to and a resistance against autobiography.

William Beebee argues that "the ideology of genre is all around us"; dismissing generic conventions is futile (3). According to Beebee, a romance novel, an adventure film, and even a grocery list fit neatly into particular genres. In its most basic terms, John Frow presents genre as "a set of conventional and highly organised constraints on the production and interpretation of meaning.[. . .] Its structuring effects are productive of meaning; they shape and guide.[. . .] Generic meaning both enables and restricts meaning, and is a basic condition for meaning to take place" (10). Furthermore, Frow believes that "[F]ar from being merely 'stylistic' devices, genres create effects of reality and truth which are central to the different ways the world is understood in the writing of history or philosophy or science, or in painting, or in everyday talk" (19). We, thus, rely on genre to understand the situations in which we are reading or interacting. Frow continues, "Genre, like formal structures generally, works at a level of semiosis—that is, of meaning-making—which is deeper and more forceful than that of the explicit 'content' of a text" (19).

Although genre appears to be straightforward, those of us who study twenty-first century life writing (and indeed all of literature) are caught in a keenly self-conscious period.

As we strive to break free of the constraints set upon us by generations of formalists, structuralists, poststructuralists, and postmodernists, we continually search for new philosophies of genre. To extricate meaning from the non-categorical works produced since the late 1960s we research philosophy and anthropology, history and linguistics, science and technology. With so much generic instability—boundary crossing in art and literature in forms of graphic novels, poetic painting, and photographic storytelling—we begin to accept that works of art exist outside of the inherent meaning in genre constraints. With all of the poststructural tensions in autobiography as a genre, as well as genre itself, we must step back and ask whether or not texts do, in fact, fit into particular genres. According to Derrida, "a text would not *belong* to any genre. Every text *participates* in one or several genres, there is no genreless text, there is always genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging" (qtd. in Frow 2). In examining works of life writing, like autoethnography, most appear to *participate* in the genre of autobiography. Nevertheless, many contemporary literary expressions of life writing fail to *belong* to autobiography because of ideological differences. For example, autobiographical works could *belong* to autoethnography if the author's intention is ethical, placing responsibility for the Other above the self. Derrida believes,

> In the code of set theories, if I may use it at least figuratively, I would speak of a sort of participation without belonging—a taking part in without being part of, without having membership in a set. With the inevitable dividing of the trait that marks membership, the boundary of the set comes to form, by invagination, an internal pocket larger than the whole; and the outcome of this division and of this abounding remains as singular as it is limitless. (59)

Derrida's argument illustrates that no one genre can sufficiently encapsulate a work, and that even a scholarly paper can include elements of personal essay, just as an autobiography can include poetry or photographs. Likewise, embracing the conscientious research-based

endeavors of autoethnography, other works can also communicate aspects of Levinas's ethical relation.

In addition, some critics have conscientiously sought to obscure genre distinctions through experimental critical theory. In her ambitious text *Genre Fission*, Marleen S. Barr implements her genre-blurring theories into her criticism. She explains, "Genre fission involves both a black hole's convergence and a liberated light's reemergence, both cohesion and explosion. Intact genres burst out of their usual categorical boundaries; critics generate new interpretations by bringing together the resulting scattered shards" (238). As reflected in the Derridian philosophy of *participating* without *belonging*, each text can be seen as a collection of "scattered shards" while our critical position is to gather those pieces together.

Self-reflexivity and the movement away from the objective observer and toward the active, subjective participant have further fissured generic stability. In 1988, Donna Haraway boldly claimed that "only partial perspective promises objective vision. All Western cultural narratives about objectivity are allegories of the ideologies governing the relations of what we call mind and body, distance and responsibility" (583). The perspective of a dominant group (whether racial, economic, or gendered) has demonstrated the limitations of objectivity. Barr also attempts to prove this rupture as she weaves pop culture into critical theory. Dripping with self-reflexivity, Barr explains, "I say that juxtaposing the disparate is a valid critical act. Readers' responses are infinite. Ditto for enabling usually unrelated cultural artifacts to address each other" (ix). According to Barr, subjective, autoethnographic approaches, then, create opportunities to cross generic boundaries. Derrida, however, believes that all texts continually move between generic boundaries. Rather than merely crossing genre constraints, the subjective voice may also open the space for the reader and writer to ethically interact. By utilizing the subjective voice, the scholar or writer can draw together distinctive experiences or observations to create a fragmented, cross-cultural

response. Nevertheless, this movement does not fit within the constraints of the "exemplary" ideology of the autobiography—and moves toward the ethical philosophy of autoethnography.

Because the stories are shared, the autoethnographer is conscious of the modes by which the colonizer has defined his or her people but uses language to tell a different story, show different cultural metaphors, and challenge history, religion, nationalism, and the metanarratives that seem to direct our perceptions of Otherness. Autoethnography, while an ethical pursuit that searches ancestry and mythos, is also an argument against imposed identity. Most importantly, autoethnographic writers do not set themselves as exemplary, but their education in the paradigms of the hegemonic culture determines their ability to ask questions of identity within the hegemony. As an archeologist of his or her own culture and history, the autoethnographer resists the binary of self/Other by creating a third ethical space where the two can meet. Writing an autoethnography does not look to resolve questions of identity, but it does provide a way to discuss our ethical obligations.

Through the autoethnographic journey we are able to leave behind the narcissistic tendency to view the world as a mirror of the self. Autoethnography allows the individual to make the conscious move from the ego to the Other because it displaces the I as the ethical center. Since the autoethnography is not totalized or completed, the autoethnographic journey is always moving forward. Even after the author completes the text, the reader's responsibility for the Other increases. While no one work or genre can provide answers to our unending questions of identity and community, autoethnography increases our consciousness and moves us toward realization of our own responsibility.

CHAPTER TWO

LIVING WITHIN STORY

In the song of Navajo healing ceremonies, the singer calls forth north, east, south,

west, up, and down, unto himself. In his song, he stands in the center of all directions, the

center of the world. N. Scott Momaday explains, "The singer stands at the center of sound,

of motion, of life; nothing within the whole sphere of being is lost upon him. [. . .] He

knows something about himself and about the world—and he knows that he knows. He is at

peace" (*Man*). In this moment of peace, the singer consciously sees the world, the Other, and

himself at the intersection of time and place. This is the space where history converges with

the present, where ancestors speak to their posterity, and where *ipseity* meets *alterity*. Just as

the singer stands at the center of history, the autoethnographer centers himself or herself at

the apex of the historical moment, the convergence of the self and Other. Unlike the

autobiographer who draws from the ego, the autoethnographer draws from his or her

surroundings. Physical place, historical record, memory, ancestry, and mythos guide the

autoethnographer's journey. Autoethnography invites an ethical intersection between writer,

reader, and history as represented in story because the author intentionally considers the

Other as he or she embarks upon the autoethnographic journey. The autoethnographer does

not overpower the past or his or her reader; the autoethnographer gathers histories and

represents cultural stories and personal reflections without imposition of the self on the

Other—reader or ancestor—through responsible representation of the past.

Emmanuel Levinas believes that representation is an actively ethical endeavor. He

states,

> At the very moment of representation the I is not *marked* by the past but
>
> *utilizes* it as a represented and objective element. [. . .] Representation is a

pure present. The positing of a pure present without even tangential ties with

time is the marvel of representation. It is void of time, interpreted as eternity.

To be sure the I who conducts his thoughts *becomes* (or more exactly ages) in

time, in which his successive thoughts, across which he thinks in the present,

are spread forth. But this becoming in time does not appear on the plane of

representation: representation involves no passivity. (emphasis original

Levinas *Totality* 125)

Because we accept the past as representative, only the present can truly be represented.

However, bringing a historical moment into the present recovers the past: this is the infinity

of existence. Levinas explains that representation is "a return in the present thought to the

thought's past, an assuming of this past in the present. [. . .] The I of representation is the

natural passage from the particular to the universal. Universal thought is a thought in the

first person" (*Totality* 126). Understanding that "universal thought is a thought in the first

person" illuminates the project of autoethnography. The I gives access to the whole, without

interruption of the ego, since representation crosses thought over time. Like in Navajo

ceremonial songs, the autoethnographer represents a pure present, a space in which time

collapses.

Autoethnography attempts to bridge the past and present, ancestor and descendent.

Because of the communal, religious, and historical philosophies of Native American peoples,

we see autoethnography emerging as a literary genre from Native American literatures.

Arnold Krupat claims that Native American autobiography is not concerned with "the

nature of the 'self' presented in [Western autobiography.] [. . .] Any immediate orientation

toward the self would inevitably seem ethnocentric, at the least premature" (201). Hertha

Dawn Wong adds, "A Native American concept of self differs from a Western (or Euro-

American) idea of self in that it is more inclusive.[. . .] [They] see themselves first as family, clan, and tribal *members*, and second as discrete individuals" (emphasis original 13). Likewise, according to Forrest Cuch, Director of Indian Affairs in the State of Utah, Native American communities are egalitarian, which has thus created resistance in Native peoples to capitalist and individualist models of survival. Creation stories of most Native peoples are cooperative and continual; land is possessed by the tribe, not by single families; celebration, grief, and prophecy are experienced communally. Carter Revard (Osage) determines,

> I take a major fact to be that in a small, relatively classless society where everyone knows everyone else, it is redundant for anyone to offer an autobiography. [. . .] I take it that in a society where there are many people and most of them have never met or meet only for brief moments, where "privacy" means one can hide everything in the past from anyone else, THERE it is possible to offer autobiography. (emphasis original qtd. in Krupat 208)

Not only would telling one's own story seem "redundant," but it would also negate the shared experience and shared beliefs. When Crazy Horse (Lakota) began his memoir, he did not speak first of his birth but of the creation of the earth. As a Lakota, Crazy Horse did not see himself as emblematic of man or even separate from the history of his people: his identity was closely tied to his people.

Revard also believes, "'In 'Western Civilization' an *identity* is something shaped between birth and death' . [. . .] On the other hand, Native 'autobiography' or identity-formation has a long pre-history in myth, arises within and contends with particular historical events, and is shaped markedly by ethnic inheritance" (qtd. in Lundquist "Carter Revard" 35). This prehistory separates Native American worldviews from traditional Western conceptions of time and community. If one is indeterminately connected to others,

ancestors and the community, the individual is less privileged than the society as a whole. On the contrary, Tzvetan Todorov observes the prevalent denial of the community in Western philosophical traditions of individualism: "As one studies the broad currents of European philosophical thought on the definition of what is human, a curious conclusion stands out. The social dimension, the very fact of life in common, is not generally conceived of as being necessary to human beings" (1). The problem with ignoring the shared narratives whilst clinging to individualism is that the solitary, isolated human being becomes the enlightened ideal. Rather than connecting with others and exchanging ethical responsibility through shared stories, individuals are alienated from each other. Krupat furthers this assertion when explains the Western evolutionary understanding of the self: "[We tell] a story of a progression from the social and public orientation of ancient or 'primitive' self-conception (the self as a social 'person') to the modern, Western, 'civilized,' egocentric/ individualist sense of self" (204). We have seen how traditional autobiography can reassert this notion, setting the individual apart from the Other. However, Wong affirms, "[A] Westerner *writes* an autobiography to set himself or herself *apart from* [. . .] other members of his or her society, whereas a pre-contact native American *speaks* a personal narrative to become more fully *accepted into* [. . .] his or her community" (emphasis original 16). An autoethnographic approach to a life lived amongst a community opens up the dialectic space between reader and writer, creating the opportunity for what Levinas would call an ethical encounter.

Because Native American tribal philosophies can open this ethical dialectic, Native American authors have led innovations in literary autoethnography. N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa) may be credited with the first literary autoethnography, 1969's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Momaday learned Navajo traditions while his parents taught on a Navajo reservation in Arizona and came from both Cherokee and Kiowa backgrounds (*Names* 2). This multi-tribal education inspired Momaday's search for his paternal ancestry. The three-

part construct of *The Way to Rainy Mountain* delineates Momaday's understanding of his own

metaphors through the voice of his ancestors, the voice of anthropology, and his own

voice—mythos (spiritual inheritance), logos (history), ethos (personal reflection),

respectively. Joan Henley describes the structure as a reflection of the "three ways of

experiencing meaning and gaining knowledge" (49). We can accept Henley's observation if

we can also accept a Native American worldview of communal history. Likewise, Revard

elaborates, "'History' and 'Myth' and 'Identity' are not three separate matters [. . .] but three

aspects of one human being" (qtd. in Lundquist "Carter Revard" 35). As authors of Native

American literatures look into their own lives, they do not perceive themselves as the

exemplar: they draw upon history, ancestry, and myth to create an unfixed, changeable

identity. Wong explains, "the lack of an autonomous 'I' suggests a communal self, not an

absence of self" (23). Thus, the individual is not voiceless; the individual speaks

communally—though not for all of his or her people. The individual can only speak because

of others.

Furthermore, the history of Native Americans in the United States illuminates why

so many Native American authors embark upon the autoethnographic journey. After

experiencing severe cultural loss, many Native American artists, writers, and historians have

searched for ways to reconnect to their pasts. Because of inhumane treatment, such as the

genocide of tribes, removal and forced schooling of some Native American children,

slaughter of the buffalo, movement of tribes onto reservations, and the prohibition and

degradation of tribal languages and religions, many native peoples lost their connections to

the land, their language, and their way of worship. Although many tribes remained

connected to their ancestral lands, some Native Americans matured feeling their

"Indianness" without understanding their heritage. Several others fully rejected their ancestry

and assimilated into the larger white American culture. However, interest in family and tribal

heritage increased in the 1960s, and some of the children and grandchildren of

disenfranchised Native Americans began to conscientiously research their peoples' histories.

Wong believes that "With the breakdown of many native communities, the autobiographical

[or autoethnographical] activity of self-construction has become especially important" (153).

Consequently, in the late twentieth century Native American writers became anthropologists

for their own people—researching family stories, tribal mythology, and history. Several

writers and scholars took upon themselves the responsibility to record these stories, sensing

the same urgency anthropologists and folklorists felt more than one hundred years ago: this

history must be recorded, or it will be lost.

While the work of early twentieth century anthropologists and scholars is important,

and is, in fact, used as a resource for Native American researchers, the voice of white scholar

is always that of an outsider, one who is disconnected from the experience of his or her

subject. As Native American writers approach the histories of their tribes, they overtly

dismiss the illusion of objectivity. The colonial anthropologist was obligated to objectivity:

the colonized ethnographer embraces subjectivity. As the ethnographer chooses to

incorporate his or her voice into the cultural study, he or she becomes an *auto*ethnographer.

Mary Louise Pratt believes the subjectivity and "inauthenticity" of the autoethnographer are

central to autoethnographic expression. She believes that creative moments take place in a

"contact zone," or the spaces where two cultures converge. She explains,

> [The autoethnographer's] elaborate inter-cultural text and its tragic history
> exemplify the possibilities and perils of writing in what I like to call "contact
> zones," social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with
> each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and
> subordination — like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are
> lived out across the globe today. (Pratt 4)

These contact zones hold the potential for artistic expression that interplays between the self and other, searching for meaning in a moment of cultural transition.

As Pratt studied postcolonial peoples' artistic expression during this transition, she found that colonized peoples often absorbed the colonizer's artistic media or language to create a new artform. This autoethnographic approach allows colonized people a means of expression that bridges the indigenous experience and the disruption of colonization. They are able to form a collective identity and a new postcolonial worldview without dismissing their inherited history—both pre- and postcolonial, the double-consciousness of the colonized. The unique position of Native American peoples as indeterminately colonized in a postcolonial world has transformed their sense of identity formation, as well as ancient storytelling traditions. While many tribes, particularly nomadic tribes, relied on oral histories, modern reservation life discourages the egalitarian nature of the oral tradition. The ever-decreasing number of Native Americans residing on reservations often work in the capitalist U.S. market (Cuch). While a resurgence of native language and educational programs on reservations have reinstated the importance of native cultures, the rupture of colonization has forever changed the worldviews of every tribe.

Autoethnographic expression allows Native American artists to revisit and reform their sense of identity in a tribal and American context. Although each work is unique to the individual and tribe, each autoethnographer tends to be drawn to particular conventions. Because autoethnography endeavors to research the self as an Other, the autoethnographer begins with an area of inquiry, studies the spiritual inheritance (mythos) of his or her people, delves into research and memory, and bridges past and present through a return to ancestral place. These conventions have developed independently but can be seen in the works of several prominent Native American writers, including Janet Campbell Hale (Coeur d'Alene), Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna), N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa), and Carter Revard (Osage).

While each work merits individual discussion, Janet Campbell Hale's *Bloodlines* will focus the conventions of the literary autoethnography. The other authors' works will be touched upon to reinforce the standards autoethnographers have developed as they use anthropological methods to intersect *ipseity* and *alterity*.

<center>A First Step toward Consciousness: Area of Inquiry</center>

Because Native American writers exist in perpetual double-consciousness, their works engage both tribal and American questions of meaning. Each autoethnographer constructs a narrative around one major question of identity. The autoethnographer does not attempt to tell an entire life story but strives to understand one particular question through research and experience, relying more on research than memory, creating an ethnography of his or her people and self. Hale, Silko, Revard, and Momaday have each focused on a particular area of inquiry, such as dysfunction, story, voice, and the relationship between the past and future.

In *Winning the Dust Bowl* Carter Revard clearly follows his question of voice over a path of poetry. Throughout the work, Revard contrasts the desolation of the Osage Reservation in Oklahoma, his Oxford education, and his travels around the world to find his voice. The double consciousness of Revard's experience, in poverty and prosperity, led him to question his own authenticity. Ultimately, Revard knows himself as Osage, living in a world separated from his own. His voice, then, is not of an American man writing poetry in a classical tradition; it is the voice of the thunder. In "Coyote Tells Why He Sings" the poet describes the moment Coyote "gave this voice" to him. He concludes, "Where the new ripples were, I drank, next morning, Fresh muddy water that set my teeth on edge. I thought how delicate that rock's poise was and how *The storm made music, when it changed my world*" (emphasis original 3). The gift from Coyote travels with him throughout his journey. He feels the responsibility for this gift, and explains, "So Coyote came and gave me my voice,

and maybe the Thunder had come to give him his, and now we try to make from all the sounds of the world a music worth singing to the moon" (7). Revard conjoins his poetry with the song of the world, inviting his readers into the music.

The area of inquiry in Janet Campbell Hale's reflective series of essays on dysfunction vastly differs from Carter Revard's poetic search for voice. In *Bloodlines* Janet Campbell Hale reaches within her cultural, familial, and personal memories to present her fragmented narrative. Hale searches through her people's early conversion to Catholicism, reservation life, and her mother's pointed verbal abuse to understand the inherited dysfunction flowing through her bloodlines. She explains, "This book is in part an effort to understand the pathology of the dysfunction, what made my family the way it was. I examine my own life in part, but reach beyond what I personally know or could know [. . .] back along my bloodlines to imagine the people I came from in the context of their own lives and times" (J. Hale xxii). This retracement is central to Hale's story and serves as a healing ritual for both Hale and her reader. Indeed, recounting stories becomes an act of rejuvenation and regeneration for the storyteller and those who surround her. Momaday expresses, "Man has always tried to represent and even to recreate the world in words" (*Man*). Words, for Hale, have worked as recreation and as a means to understand the fissures in her personal and cultural history. She states, "Writing for me has always been a means of imposing order on experience, making sense of things. [. . .] I wrote poetry, stories, [and] essays because of a deep personal need" (qtd. in F. Hale *Janet Campbell Hale* 8). Through the creative act of storytelling, she learns to accept the "bits of history mingled with [. . .] fragments" of her personal and family stories (Lundquist *Native American* 229). Hale's purpose is not to make her life and ancestry a singular, cohesive story. The work even repeats some stories and ideas more than once. Rather than making herself exemplary, she gathers the fragments of her inheritance and ruminates over the abuse she and her people have suffered. She comes

closer to her ancestors because she no longer sees her pain as singular. In this way, the story is shared amongst her people—and the reader. The ethical interaction of the self and Other manifests as Hale's personal pain moves from the personal to the universal.

Hale also conscientiously commits to representing her story to her readers as honestly as memory allows. While some of the stories are humiliating for herself or her family, she accepts that understanding dysfunction requires the displacement of the ego. Her mother, Margaret Sullivan Campbell, advises her, "Maybe I'm ignorant, but I thought it was a writer's business to write the truth as she sees it. Isn't it? What is the point of writing, why would anyone even want to do it if she's going to write some nonsense to please someone else?" (J. Hale xxii). The confessional nature of the work can be unsettling, especially as Hale discloses fierce bitterness toward family members and attempts to resolve her feelings of betrayal. Despite the visceral, and sometimes acerbic, tone, Dennis Walsh assess that

> *Bloodlines* is written for a general audience and is remarkably gripping for a non-fiction work. Perhaps this is because of the clear language and the oral storytelling style. [. . .] [T]he subtle and sophisticated arrangement of materials belies the simple language. Each of the eight essays stands alone, but together they make—with some repetition—a powerful statement about losing and re-gaining an ancestral Indian heritage, adapting it to new circumstances. (par. 9)

The arrangement of the autoethnographic essays, through occasional repetition, reveals the fragmentation of experience and representation. Hale brings the past into the present through her fragmented family lines, connecting the individual to the universal. She refuses to impose herself upon others' motivations and often speculates the reasons behind the cruelty. The journey toward understanding dysfunction in her life allows her to realize, "None of us knows how anyone else perceives the world, what another person feels or

thinks. We only know what we ourselves feel and think and what others tell us of their experience. In fiction we create the illusion that we can know what someone else knows and feels. We attempt to share our experience with others through our work" (J. Hale 6). Hale rejects the illusion of representation, and brings the responsibility for the Other to herself. She shows her own experience to her reader to converge the individual and universal. As an autoethnographer, Hale connects herself to her readers without imposing her ideas upon them. Levinas believes that representation gives us the opportunity to see the Other as completely separate from the self, that "the structure of representation [is] a non-reciprocal determination" (Levinas *Totality* 126). Through Hale's representation of familial dysfunction, she asserts that "none of us knows how anyone else perceives the world," but we can step into another's story to discover our responsibility for the Other (J. Hale 6).

Both Revard and Hale create a space where their readers can also search their inheritances, that space which is wholly Other. The area of inquiry is not limited to the autoethnographer's experience, however, which allows the reader to become a part of his or her story. Because the story is represented as a series of historical moments, we step into the past and present to inquire of the autoethnographer's question.

<div align="center">Spiritual Inheritance: Mythos</div>

Other questions that guide literary autoethnography are of spiritual inheritance, or mythos. The Christian and/or tribal religious inheritance of the autoethnographer undoubtedly influences the area of inquiry. Because autoethnographers understand that our mythos so deeply affects our moral and ethical behaviors, they often turn to their ancestors' spiritual traditions to gain consciousness of their own moral conceptions. In Native American history, religion has been problematic. Settlers and colonizers banned Native religions, slaughtered the buffalo (a sacred symbol for many tribes), and inundated the people with Christianity. While some tribes were forced to reject their tribal religions and

ceremonies, other tribes willingly embraced Christianity. In "The Old Testament of Native

America," Steve Charleston explains, "Native America believed in the oneness of God; it

saw God as the Creator of all existence; it knew that God was active and alive in the history

of humanity; it remembered that the land had been given to the people in trust from God.

Native People accepted the revelation from God as it was given to them through prophets

and charismatic leaders" (77). In many ways, these deeply rooted beliefs of the Coeur

d'Alene led them directly to Catholicism. Janet Campbell Hale situates her people's mythos

on the first page of the introduction:

> One day in the year 1740, the story goes, a raven circling in the sky above a
>
> Coeur d'Alene village spoke to the head of the village. [. . .] This is what the
>
> raven told [the great chief]: "A great evil is coming. An enemy more powerful
>
> than any of you have ever known will surround you. Even now your enemy
>
> has spied you. There will be much bloodshed. Much sorrow. Gather your
>
> strength. Before the enemy three ravens will come to you. Their teachings
>
> will help you survive the coming onslaught." (J. Hale xv)

When three black robed Jesuit missionaries arrived nearly one hundred years later, the Coeur

d'Alene considered them the fulfillment of this prophecy. The people quickly converted to

Catholicism and rejected their tribal religion as a means to protect themselves from the

"great evil." Within fifty years, Hale tells us, the Church "became a cruel and efficient tool of

assimilation" and failed to protect the people's land and way of life (xvi). For Hale, the

prophecy of the pre-Christian Coeur d'Alene illustrates the spiritual power and faith of her

people. While the people saw these three ravens/missionaries as the means to survive, which

no doubt the rapid conversion to Christianity accommodated, the message of survival was

delivered by the very enemy that had the potential to destroy the Coeur d'Alene. This

prophecy becomes central to Hale's understanding of her mythic inheritance. She refers to

the story of the three ravens again in *Bloodlines* and uses it as a way to explore the spirituality

of the people before Christianity and the Catholic influence on her father's family.

Unfortunately, most tribes and peoples were not protected by their conversion to

Christianity. The Kiowa were targeted primarily because of the Sun Dance, a ritual of

rejuvenation and protection for the people that was banned by the U.S. government in 1891

(Momaday *Way to Rainy* 4). Even those tribes who embraced Christianity were not spared

humiliation. William Baldridge, a professor of pastoral ministries and cross-cultural theology,

explains, "Most missionaries taught us to hate anything Native American and that of

necessity included hating our friends, our families, and ourselves" (85). Despite the self-

hatred perpetuated through Christian missionaries, many tribes converted to Christianity

nonetheless. The move away from the traditional tribal religions has inspired

autoethnographers to dig more deeply into their tribe's spiritual stories.

N. Scott Momaday's concern in *The Way to Rainy Mountain* is not how Christianity

affected the Kiowa, but how the loss of their tribal religion fundamentally destroyed them.

Momaday explains, "In [Native Americans] and in their world there is no separation of

religion and humanity, for the one thing is indispensably the other" (*Way to Rainy* 9).

Momaday's observation reaffirms the severity of the destruction of Native religion and the

need to recover those spiritual inheritances. He engages his mythological journey with his

father and other Kiowa ancestors. By searching Kiowa mythos, Momaday connects himself

to the stories that influence his ethical obligations, including a compassionate approach to

others' beliefs. He also opens a spiritual space for his readers to begin their own

mythological journeys. However, Suzanne Evertsen Lundquist cautions, "If individuals

engage in such reconstruction [of mythological inheritances] without the benefit of a

coherent ethos, mythos, or logos to connect them with others, extreme individualism can

result" ("College Composition" 110). Most importantly, the autoethnographer needs to see

himself or herself as a part of a community, not separate from others. Otherwise, the mythological journey could be destructive. Therefore, the responsibility we feel is also for his or her spiritual inheritances since the two are indispensably connected.

<div align="center">The Archeology of the Self: Research and Memory</div>

Autoethnography is a laborious work, one which requires substantial research. Each author turns to family and archives for interviews, stories, and photographs. Contrasted with autobiography's reliance on memory, autoethnography entwines memory with history. The expression can only be linguistic—a story enfolds. Memory and research attempt to answer the question the autoethnographer asks in his or her area of inquiry, but each writer discovers this knowledge in a different way. Possibility emerges from within this reflective space—between history, education, and recollection. Within possibility, we move toward ethical understanding. Lundquist believes that once an individual begins to "[connect] with one's history, society, and culture through language. [. . .] literacy becomes an ethnographic concern–it involves the mythos, logos, and ethos of a culture and concerns how an individual relates to that culture" ("College Composition" 110). The journey is never solitary. The autoethnographer must always walk with others. On his experience composing *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Momaday states, "It is a whole journey, intricate with motion and meaning; and it is made with the whole memory, that experience of the mind which is legendary as well as historical, personal as well as cultural" (*Way to Rainy* 4). Momaday adds, "The way to Rainy Mountain is preeminently the history of an idea, man's idea of himself, and it has old and essential being in language. [. . .] What remains is fragmentary, mythology, legend, lore, and hearsay–and of course the idea itself as crucial and complete as it ever was. That is the miracle" (*Way to Rainy* 4).

Although Leslie Marmon Silko's area of inquiry is storytelling, she also balances others' stories with her own reflections throughout *Storyteller*. Like Momaday, Silko includes

anthropological research to demonstrate the historical relevance of the story. Because autoethnography is folkloric or anthropological by nature, researching oral stories helps the autoethnographer capture the voices of ancestors or family members as accurately as possible. In *Storyteller* Silko searches the voices of family, friends, and oral traditions of various tribes to discover her place as a storyteller. By capturing each storyteller's voice, Silko presents the memories of others through her own research. She retells a story her Aunt Susie would share of a little girl who wanted her mother to make *yashtoah*. When the little girl does not get her way, she throws herself into the lake in grief. The mother mourns her daughter by throwing her clothes into the lake, as they fall "they all turned into butterflies—all colors of butterflies. *And today they say that acoma has more beautiful butterflies—red ones white ones blue ones, yellow ones. They came from this little girl's clothing*" (15). What makes this story unique in sharing tribal legends, is that Silko describes the way Aunt Susie told the story: "But when Aunt Susie came to the place where the little girl's clothes turned into butterflies then her voice would change and I could hear the excitement and wonder and the story wasn't sad any longer" (15). Aunt Susie's wonder is communicated through Silko's inclusion of Aunt Susie's commentary and her own reflection.

Hale also turns to her family, like Momaday and Silko, to gain knowledge. Her focus is, however, on the source of her family's dysfunction. In "The Only Good Indian," she researches and retells the story of her great-great grandfather John McLoughlin, the Father of Oregon. As a child, Hale was unimpressed with her Irish entrepreneur ancestor. When she was about eight years old, Hale told her classmates that he is her great-great grandfather, but they said nothing and some giggled. Her mother told her to never mention it again because others wouldn't believe it (125-6). Until she began research for her autoethnography, Hale had dismissed her Irish ancestor: "Who was Dr. John McLoughlin, after all, but a big, rich white man who had exploited Indians in the old days?" (125).

Although her mother looks Irish and identifies herself with her Irish ancestry, Hale is deeply

connected with her Coeur d'Alene father: she sees herself as an Indian.

Because Hale and her mother's family identify with two different strains of ancestry,

the tension between her Native and European heritages often clash. As a student, Hale

studies psychology, which helps her come to terms with some of these tensions. In her

autoethnography, she reflects upon the self-hatred voiced by her aunts and grandmother.

Though all of her mother's sisters were of Kootenay and Irish descent, none but Hale's

mother, Margaret, married a Native American. Hale explains that despite their dark, Native

mother, all of her mother's siblings "looked one hundred percent white, just like Mom"

(115). She describes them as "poor, uneducated, working-class," as well as "loud and

aggressive and argumentative," and explains that they "made no effort to disguise the fact

they looked down on us because we were Indian" (J. Hale 115; 116). Aside from the "stupid,

snide remarks about Indians" Hale's aunts made, the legacy of self-hatred permeates even

more deeply into the family roots (116). Hale recalls one particularly emotional visit to her

grandmother's house when she was a small child and she had asked, "Why does Gram hate

me?" Her mother's response was, "She doesn't hate you. Don't think that . . . And . . . you

remind her of someone else . . . someone she does hate" (115). In her five-year-old mind,

Hale thought her Coeur d'Alene father was the cause for her grandmother's hatred. It was

later in life, however, when she returned to her grandmother's house and watched her pale,

blonde cousins boast about being "part Indian," Hale comes to realize: "What did Gram

think of way back then, when she looked at me? At my Indian face, which was rather like her

own? [. . .] [Her] Indian blood. [Her] Indian looks. No escape. Not then. Not yet. Who did I

remind Gram of if not herself?" (140).

The perpetuation of self-hatred across generations is evident when Hale's mother lay

dying, and she wearily describes the abuses put upon her by her mother and sisters and asks

her youngest daughter, "Why were they so mean? Why were they like that?" (59). Initially,

Hale feels resentful, wondering if her mother's ill health confused her own childhood with

her daughter's, especially since most of the essay "Daughter of Winter" relates the abuses

Hale endured as a child at the hands of her mother and sisters. This intergenerational hatred

is realized when she details her sister's refusal to let the adolescent Hale into the house and

her mother's insistence to exclude Hale from a Fourth of July picnic, as well as her mother's

morning ritual of verbal abuse (37; 62; 61). Throughout the essay, Hale attempts to reconcile

her resentment toward her mother. As Hale recounts her stories and seeks to understand the

abuses and confusion inflicted upon her, she moves away from victimage into reconciliation

with the self. In what appears to be a vulnerable moment of self-reflection, Hale states, "I've

tried to be compassionate as I looked back over my troubled childhood [. . .] to believe that

none of it was her fault. I've tried to believe that it wasn't as bad as I remember. But to look

with compassion requires a distance and a feeling of safety [. . .] that you've gone beyond the

reach of all that had harmed you way back when" (42). For her mother, the reaching beyond

harm never occurred. Hale, however, breaks free through her education and writing, which

allows her the opportunity to become more conscious of herself and her dysfunctional

inheritance. Margaret Donaldson writes,

> [T]he point to grasp is how closely the growth of consciousness is related to
>
> the growth of the intellect. The two are not synonymous–but the link with
>
> intellectual growth is none the less intimate and profound. If the intellectual
>
> powers are to develop, the [individual] must gain a measure of control over
>
> his own thinking and he cannot control it while he remains unaware of it.
>
> (qtd. in Lundquist "College Composition" 115)

Though Hale tries to subtly educate her mother on the reasons for Margaret's behaviors,

Hale realizes that her mother had "never had a chance as a child. She'd had a loveless first

marriage to a man who degraded her, who called her denigrating names. [. . .] She abandoned two children to save her own life. She married for love and then became a victim of her second husband, a battered woman. [. . .] The anger was there, and it had to go somewhere" (44-45). After her mother died, Hale is left without an apology, a reconciliation, or any comfort that her mother felt remorse for verbally abusing her youngest daughter. She visits her grave and understands, "My mom is gone. In the end there are no resolutions. Only an end" (86). By boldly stating that she is left without a resolution testifies of the fragmentary nature of Hale's work—and autoethnography as a genre. The end, nevertheless, comes as the abused daughter consciously lets go of her mother's abusive legacy and refuses to perpetuate the hatred in the next generation. Lundquist elaborates, "Hale also marries abusive men. She likewise lives in poverty while attempting to raise children–this time as a single parent, and so forth. And yet, *Bloodlines* is an important work about how Hale breaks the cycle of abuse" (*Native American* 228). The consciousness Hale gains through expression and storytelling supersedes the dysfunction that had been passed for generations. Jeffrey Weeks's explanation of inherited identity illuminates Hale's ability to move forward: "'The purpose of history, guided by genealogy, is not to discover the roots of our identity, but to commit itself to dissipation'–to refuse, in other words, the categories that are imposed upon us as truth" (192). Despite the heritage of hate perpetuated for more than two hundred years, Hale's self-reflective journey helps her heal and refuse her children that inheritance.

Gathering family stories, studying psychology, searching historical records—the research the autoethnographer performs defers the project away from the ego and moves toward *alterity*. The reader can no longer remain ignorant. As we each engage with the text, we are drawn toward the ethical imperative. We gain understanding of our place in relation to the autoethnographer and his or her people. In turn, we are drawn toward the stories that have shaped our lives and communities. An ethical space is opened up as we come to

understand our relationship to and responsibility for the Other. The stories and voices of ancestors that these writers represent bring the past into the perpetual present. The knowledge we gain from their research can also inspire us, the audience, to embark upon our own cultural research. Research coupled with reflection creates a unique historical and present space, a space where the reader can ethically engage past and future.

<center>Connecting the Past and Future: Place</center>

Levinas believes that home is "set back from the anonymity of the earth, the air, the light, the forest, the road, the sea, the river.[. . .] Circulating between visibility and invisibility, one is always bound for the interior of which one's home, one's corner, one's tent, or one's cave is the vestibule" (*Totality* 156). While we long to feel "at home" or "in our place," the disruption of this security can drive an individual to continually search for the place that can be "home." Like other peoples who have experienced displacement and colonization, many Native American tribes were moved from their ancestral lands; thus, physical space is a significant convention for the autoethnographer. The place can be the reservation or the sacred land of the tribe (which even inspires Momaday's title *The Way to Rainy Mountain*). The autoethnographer turns to historically significant or sacred places to understand his or her ancestry.

In *Winning the Dust Bowl* Revard traces his experience through historical tensions and his own place. His family moves from Oklahoma during the Depression, but Revard is further disconnected when he moves to England to study at Oxford. Through his memoir he shows that "for Native American persons, 'the notions of cosmos, country, self, and home are inseparable'" (Revard qtd. in Krupat 210). No matter where he is, Oxford, Yale, or St. Louis, his poetry continually returns to his boyhood home on Osage land. Likewise, Janet Campbell Hale visits the Coeur d'Alene Reservation after her first divorce and photographs the hills, the snow, the trees, and her father. She confesses, "This was the first time I thought

about connections to people who had come before, connections to the land—about

ancestral roots that predated the white society that had superimposed itself onto North

America" (J. Hale 103). Returning to a homeland, like the journey to Rainy Mountain

Momaday embarks upon, brings the autoethnographer to a greater knowledge of his or her

connection to ancestry and space.

In "Return to Bear Paw," Janet Campbell Hale embarks upon an autoethnographic

journey to the historical space her grandmother shared with Chief Joseph and the Nez Percé.

Although Hale had been invited on a speaking tour in Montana, she had not planned on

visiting Bear Paw. She explains, "I did not come to Montana to make a pilgrimage to the

Bear Paw battleground, to close the circle. I hadn't even realized, at first, that the place

where the cavalry finally caught up with the Indians led by Chief Joseph was in Montana.

And I hadn't thought of my grandmother, my father's mother, who had been among those

Indians for many years" (J. Hale 144). Hale details the flight of the Nez Percé and how her

Coeur d'Alene grandmother was caught up with them because of "a case of mistaken

identity" (147). Although she is initially distracted by personal struggles, as Hale travels

through Montana she "recognize[s] these as petty concerns" and begins to connect with the

grandmother she never met: "I saw her, my grandmother, the young girl she had been in

1877, more and more clearly. I drew closer and closer to her" (152). Because Hale weaves

stories of her grandmother with a history of broken treaties and Chief Joseph's refusal to

settle on reservation land, we see linear time collapse and converge into the present. Just

before she leaves Montana, Hale decides to visit the Bear Paw memorial. Standing beside

Chief Joseph's final words engraved on a plaque, "From where the sun now stands I will

fight no more forever," Hale thinks of the possibility of freedom for the Nez Percé and her

grandmother. At Bear Paw, despite the snow, she understands how physical place can hold

the spirit of history:

> The cold reached my bones, yet I stood in the snow and felt myself being in
> that place, that sacred place. [. . .] I was with those people, was part of them.
> I felt the presence of my grandmother there as though two parts of her met
> each other that day: the ghost of the girl she was in 1877 (and part of her will
> remain forever in that place) and the part of her that lives on in me, in
> inherited memories of her, in my blood and in my spirit. (158)

In the sacred space, Hale feels the Otherness of her grandmother within herself. The two
parts of past/ancestry and present/self converge at the crossroads of place and memory.

At the end of *Bloodlines*, Hale embarks upon another return to ancestral place. In a
moment of healing and revelation, she returns with her adult daughter to the Coeur d'Alene
reservation. This experience of return not only brings together past and present, but it can
also connect to the autoethnographer's hope in the future. This postcolonial hope in
futurity, fecundity in Levinas's terms, insists upon ethical responsibility in the face of the
Other. It is within the ethical relationship of fecundity, when usury is no longer the barrier
between self and other, that the third being comes to life. This paternity/maternity is the
realization of a futurity that is not possible with only the self. Levinas expounds,

> But the encounter with the Other as feminine is required in order that the
> future of the child come to pass from beyond the possible, beyond projects.
> This relationship resembles that which was described for the idea of infinity;
> I cannot account for it myself, as I do account for the luminous world by
> myself. This future is neither the Aristotelian germ (less than being, a lesser
> being) nor the Heideggerian possibility which constitutes being itself, but
> transforms the relation with the future into a power of the subject. Both my
> own and non-mine, a possibility of myself but also a possibility of the other,

of the Beloved, my future does not enter into the logical essence of the

possible. (*Totality* 267)

The significance of the child reaches beyond biological reproduction, and truly resides within

procreative powers. The powers of re-creation are, thus, realized within each new life. The

determinism of our histories is no longer in control of our futures.

Hale realizes her daughter as the hope for futurity that is not determined by the

abusive inheritance Hale has suffered. Of the many returns to homelands, spaces where her

bloodlines stretch back for generations, Hale's return with her daughter to the reservation

provides the hope of reclamation. Re-creation and re-generation allow the place to transform

from the past to the future. Hale becomes lost and methodically notes the changes across

the landscape, she anticipates sharing with her daughter, "what I know of what used to be. [.

. .] what I know to her. Maybe even some of the feeling for the land" (170). She finally feels

like she is at home, adding "For an Indian, home is the place where your tribe began. [. . .]

Home is the place where your people began, and maybe where your family began and your

family still is" (170-1). Mircea Eliade adds, "The return to origins gives the hope of rebirth. [.

. .] We get the impression for archaic societies that life cannot be *repaired*, it can only be *re-

created* by a return to sources" (emphasis original qtd. in Sandner 266). As mother and

daughter stand near the graves of their ancestors, Hale understands that although the Coeur

d'Alene Reservation is her home, the place "where [her] memories began," she will never

again be able to live there (185). "That's okay, isn't?" her daughter asks. Hale ponders her

fragmented memories of family and land and finally answers, "Yes. It's all right" (185). Upon

the land she knows within her blood and flesh, Hale envisions possibilities within her

daughter through the legacy of her ancestors. She recognizes, "My daughter can choose, as I

never could, whether or not to be an Indian. She has always considered herself one" (186).

Her daughter's desire to work in and be part of a Native American community fulfills the journey Hale could not accomplish on her own.

Lundquist concludes, "In *Bloodlines*, Hale turns to the legacy of grandfathers and grandmothers to locate herself in time and space. True, she inherited dysfunction, but also the power to endure. She chooses to both belong and to adopt a healing attitude toward what that belonging means" (*Native American Literatures* 231). Though she must continue to travel on her journey alone, she is not afraid. Her stories invite others to belong to her community of healing.

Autoethnography is, above all, a work of healing. Just as the Navajo singer calls six directions to his central point, the autoethnographer gathers knowledge from every available resource. Through the epistemological journey of autoethnography, we come to see that "unless we understand the history which produced us, we are determined by that history; we may be determined in any event, but the understanding gives a chance" (Winters qtd. in Schubnell 26). The search for identity through autoethnographic exploration brings the autoethnographer and reader toward an ethical understanding they may otherwise find inaccessible. Acknowledging the inevitable fragmentation of stories, histories, and memories allows us to access knowledge in our quests for consciousness. As we accept responsibility for each story entrusted to us, we can converge the false dichotomy of *ipseity* and *alterity*—the self and Other—without reducing difference to the same. Each one of us has the power to embark upon our own autoethnographic journey, guided by the ethical imperative that we are responsible for our mythos, our ancestors' stories, and each Other.

WORKS CITED

Adams, Henry. *The Education of Henry Adams*. New York: Modern Library, 1931.

Anderson, Linda. *Autobiography*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Angel, Mary Anne. "Making Woman-Meaning: The Story of Us." Diss. U of Dayton, 2006.

Baldridge, William. "Reclaiming Our Histories." *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on
        Religious Identity in the United States and Canada*. Ed. James Treat. New York: Routledge,
        1996. 83-92.

Barr, Marleen S. *Genre Fission: A New Discourse Practice for Cultural Studies*. Iowa City: U of
        Iowa P, 2000.

Beebee, Thomas O. *The Ideology of Genre*. University Park, PA: Pennslvania State U P, 1994.

Charleston, Steve. "The Old Testament of Native America." *Native and Christian: Indigenous
        Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada*. Ed. James Treat. New York:
        Routledge, 1996. 68-80.

Cohen, Richard A. Translator's Introduction. By Emmanuel Levinas. *Ethics and Infinity*.
        Trans. Richard A. Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquense U P, 1982. 1-15.

Cuch, Forrest. Lecture. Brigham Young University, Provo, UT. 1 Apr. 2008.

De Man, Paul. "Autobiography as De-Facement." *MLN* 94 (1979): 919-930.

        Derrida, Jaques. "The Law of Genre." Trans. Avital Ronell. *Critical Inquiry* 7.1
        (Autumn 1980): 55-81.

Frow, John. *Genre*. The New Critical Idiom. Oxon, England: Routledge, 2005.

Hale, Frederick. "In the Tradition of Native American Autobiography? Janet Campbell
        Hale's *Bloodlines*." *Studies in American Indian Literature*. 8.1 (1996): 68-80. ASAIL.
        Harold B. Lee Lib. Brigham Young U. 5 Apr. 2008
        <http://oncampus.richmond.edu.erl.lib.byu.edu/faculty/ASAIL/sail-hp.html>.

—. *Janet Campbell Hale*. Western Writers Series 125. Boise, ID: Boise State U, 1996.

Hale, Janet Campbell. *Bloodlines*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1998.

Haraway, Donna. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the

      Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14.3 (Autumn 1988). 575-599.

Henley, Joan. "Exploring the Ways to Rainy Mountain." *Approaches to Teaching N. Scott*

      Momaday's The Way to Rainy Mountain. Ed. Kenneth Roemer. New York: Modern

      Language Association, 1988. 47-53.

hooks, bell. "writing autobiography." *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader.* Eds. Sidonie

      Smith, and Julia Watson. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1998. 429-432.

King, Thomas. "'You'll Never Believe What Happened' Is Always a Great Way to Start." *The*

      Truth about Stories. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003. 1-29.

Krupat, Arnold. *Ehtnocriticism*. Berkley: U of California P, 1992.

Lau, Kimberly. "This Text Which Is Not One: Dialectics of Self and Culture in

      Experimental Autoethnography." *Dialogues*. Spec. issue of *Journal of Folklore Research*

      39.2/3 (May/Dec. 2002): 243-259.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Collected Philosophical Papers*. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Boston: Kluwer

      Academic, 1987.

—. *Ethics and Infinity*. Trans. Richard A. Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquense U P, 1982.

—. *Totality and Infinity*. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne U P, 1979.

Lundquist, Suzanne Evertsen. "Carter Revard as Autoethnographer or *Wa-thi'-gethon*." *The*

      Salt Companion to Carter Revard. Ed. Ellen L. Arnold. Cambridge: Salt, 2007.

—. "College Composition: An Experience in Ethnographic Thinking." *Approaches to Teaching*

      N. Scott Momaday's The Way to Rainy Mountain. Ed. Kenneth Roemer. New York:

      Modern Language Association, 1988. 110-115.

—. *Native American Literatures: An Introduction*. Continuum Studies in Literary Genre. New

      York: Continuum, 2004.

—. *Trickster: A Transformation Archetype*. San Francisco: Mellan Research U P, 1991.

Marx, Rachel Leone. "Traversing the Organizational Landscape: Personal Narrative and the

      Changed Self." Diss. Colorado State U, 2007.

Momaday, N. Scott. *A Man Made of Words: N. Scott Momaday*. DVD. University of California

      Television, 1997.

—. *The Names*. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

—. *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1969.

Neuman, Shirley. "Autobiography: From Different Poetics to a Poetics of Difference."

      Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Practice. Ed. Marlene Kadar. Toronto: U of

      Toronto P, 1992. 213-230.

Paniptchuck, Ilka I. "I Am Like the Salmon Swimming against the Current: An

      Autoethnography of Exchanging Identity for Learning." MS thesis. U of Alaska

      Anchorage, 2006.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York: Routledge,

      1992.

Purcell, Michael. *Levinas and Theology*. New York: Cambridge U P, 2006.

Revard, Carter. *Winning the Dust Bowl*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2001.

Robinson, John A. "Personal Narratives Reconsidered." *The Journal of American Folklore*

      94.371 (Jan.-Mar. 1981): 58-85.

Sabra, Samah. "(Re)Writing the Other/self: Autoethnography in the Transcultural Arena of

      Representation." MA thesis. Brock U, 2005.

Sandner, Donald. *Navaho Symbols of Healing*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979.

Schubnell, Matthias. "Tribal Identity and the Imagination." *Approaches to Teaching N. Scott

      Momaday's* The Way to Rainy Mountain. Ed. Kenneth Roemer. New York: Modern

      Language Association, 1988. 24-31.

Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Storyteller*. New York: Arcade, 1981.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *Life in Common: An Essay in General Anthropology*. Lincoln, NE: U of

Nebraska P, 2001. *Ebrary* 4 Apr. 2008. Harold B. Lib. Provo, UT <http://

site.ebrary.com.erl.lib.byu.edu/lib/byuprovo/Doc?id=5002707&ppg=153>.

Walsh, Dennis. "The Place of Janet Campbell Hale and Sherman Alexie in American Indian

Literature." *Idaho, Tough Paradise: The Literature of Idaho and the Intermountain West*. 22

Nov. 2006. 5 Apr. 2008 <http://libraries.idaho.gov/node/495>.

Weeks, Jeffrey. "Remembering Foucault." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*. 14.1/2 (2005): 186-

201.

Weems, Mary Elise. "I Speak from the Wound in My Mouth." PhD thesis. U of Illinois at

Urbana-Champaign, 2001.

Young, Margaret Laureen. "Saving Charmstrings." PhD thesis, U of Illinois at Urbana-

Champaign, 2003.