

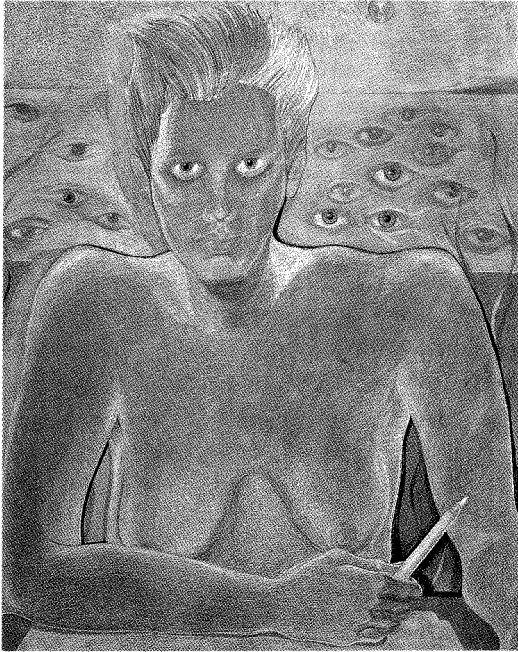
# Women

writing  
culture



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*In Yolanda Fundora's pencil drawing Autoretrato-Autocrítico, the breasts brush up against the arm and hand clutching the pencil. (Drawing courtesy of Yolanda V. Fundora)*



## Introduction: Out of Exile

*As long as she writes little notes nobody  
objects to a woman writing.*

— VIRGINIA WOOLF,  
*Orlando*, 1928

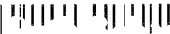
*Let no thought pass incognito, and keep  
your notebook as strictly as the authorities  
keep their register of aliens.*

— WALTER BENJAMIN,  
“One-Way Street,” 1928

### The Bare-Breasted Woman with the Eyes at Her Back

WHAT FIRST attracted me to Yolanda Fundora's drawing were the bare breasts of the woman clutching the pencil. In anthropology it is always the other woman, the native woman somewhere else, the woman who doesn't write, the !Kung woman, the Balinese woman, the *National Geographic* woman, who has breasts. Breasts that can be seen, exposed, pictured, brought home, and put into books.

The woman anthropologist, the woman who writes culture, also has breasts, but she is given permission to conceal them behind her pencil and pad of paper. Yet it is at her own peril that she deludes herself into thinking her breasts do not matter, are invisible, cancer won't catch up with them, the male gaze does not take them into



account. Remember what the Guerrilla Girls once told the Western art world? Only bare-breasted women make it into the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In Yolanda Fundora's drawing, the breasts brush up against the arm and hand clutching the pencil.

The woman in the drawing regards the world with the direct and steady gaze of a keen observer. But behind her is a sea of eyes. When a woman sits down to write, all eyes are on her. The woman who is turning others into the object of her gaze is herself already an object of the gaze. Woman, the original Other, is always being looked at and looked over. A woman sees herself being seen. Clutching her pencil, she wonders how "the discipline" will view the writing she wants to do. Will it be seen as too derivative of male work? Or too feminine? Too safe? Or too risky? Too serious? Or not serious enough? Many eyes bore in on her, looking to see if she will do better or worse than men, or at least as well as other women.

The eyes on a woman's back are also her own eyes. They are everything she has seen in her travels and in her return home. They represent the different roles a woman assumes in the various places where she sojourns, each eye seeing her at a slightly different angle. Sitting down to write, a woman sheds the clothes of each of the different roles she has played and lets all the eyes of her experiences come forth as she contemplates her life and begins to put pencil to paper.

Yolanda Fundora intended her drawing to be a self-portrait. She wanted to find a way both to define and to undefine herself as a Cuban-born artist who has shuttled between Puerto Rico and New York City. She wanted, she says, not to always have to categorize herself, so she decided to make the woman a color that does not exist in real life. A twilight blue, purple woman. Her hair, suggesting a rainbow of indecision, a flowering androgynous peacock, is multicolored—blue, pink, purple, yellow, white, black. Behind the woman the sun has set, the moon has risen, and the tip of an island, an unknown country, beckons from afar.

The picture is also a group self-portrait, Yolanda Fundora says. She drew it a few years ago when she was part of a women's art collective in Puerto Rico. Controversies and debates surfaced all the time among the members of the collective about their role as women artists. The sea of eyes acknowledges the different ways in which women look at the world as well as the willingness of women to accept, rather than to annihilate, such a confusing diversity of visions. When women look out for one another, the sea of eyes on our backs is no longer anything to fear.

Yolanda Fundora's artistic vision encapsulates the spirit of this book, which is all about seeing anthropology through other eyes. The eyes are those of women who do their writing as anthropologists, aware of how their own identity is constructed as female within a discipline rooted in male musing about foreign lands. In focusing on the legacy of women's anthropological writings and on the dilemmas women anthropologists encounter as writers, this book is both unique and long overdue. All eyes, indeed, are on us. But we are not afraid to look back—and to offer a vision of a different anthropology that places women's writing center stage in the debate about how, for whom, and to what end anthropologists embark on

journeys that bring them home again to their desks and, nowadays, to their computers. To computers, let us not forget, assembled by the delicate hands of a native woman somewhere else.

## A Fork in the Road Where *Writing Culture* Meets *This Bridge Called My Back*

This book was born of a double crisis—the crisis in anthropology and the crisis in feminism.<sup>1</sup> It is a 1990s response to two critical projects of the 1980s that emerged separately, like parallel lines destined never to meet, but which this book has set about to join together. One project, emerging within anthropology, was the postmodernist or textualist critique, best exemplified by the anthology *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, edited by James Clifford, a historian of anthropology, and George Marcus, an anthropologist and critic of “realist” traditions in ethnographic writing. Their book was the product of a limited-seating “advanced seminar” at the School of American Research in Santa Fe.<sup>2</sup>

The other project, stemming from critiques of white middle-class feminism by lesbians and women of color, emerged from outside the academy and yet entered the women’s studies mainstream through the anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*, edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, a pair of Chicana lesbian poet-critics.<sup>3</sup> Without academic tenure, Moraga and Anzaldúa worried about paying the rent while producing their book, in which they encouraged women of color who had not thought of themselves as writers to participate. The *Writing Culture* project fell squarely within academic territory; the project of *This Bridge Called My Back* was a challenge to the closed borders of that territory.

I was warned both by our concerned female editor and by a kindly male anthropologist who cares deeply about this project (and contributed to *Writing Culture*) to emphasize that *Women Writing Culture* is a new and distinctive enterprise, something totally original, with no kinship to *Writing Culture*. Otherwise, I was told, we would run the risk of having our book dismissed (by men) as derivative—“And now we hear from the women about the same old thing.” While I appreciate this sensible advice, I prefer to be bold and fearless and claim *Writing Culture* as a key precursor to our feminist project.

The publication of that anthology in 1986 set off a debate about the predicaments of cultural representation that shook up North American anthropology and brought a new self-awareness to the discipline. Even those who criticized *Writing Culture* acknowledged its importance by giving it their serious attention.<sup>4</sup> The book’s purpose was to make an incredibly obvious point: that anthropologists write. And, further, that what they write, namely ethnographies—a strange cross between the realist novel, the travel account, the memoir, and the scientific report—had to be understood in terms of poetics and politics. In a discipline notoriously overcrowded with literary wannabes like the famed Ruth Benedict and Edward Sapir, who hid their poems from the watchful eyes of Papa Franz Boas, the “father”

of American anthropology, this revelation was not earthshaking.<sup>5</sup> But never before had the power of anthropological rhetoric been subjected to such keen and sophisticated textual analysis, extinguishing any remaining sparks of the presumption that ethnographies were transparent mirrors of culture. Its contributors questioned the politics of a poetics that depends on the words of (frequently less privileged) others for its existence and yet offers none of the benefits of authorship to those others who participate with the anthropologist in the writing of culture.<sup>6</sup>

Only Mary Louise Pratt, the lone woman contributor to the anthology, and a literary critic no less, dared to wonder aloud whether it truly was such a great honor to be scripted into the books anthropologists write. How was it, she asked mischievously, with the liberty of someone from outside the discipline, that anthropologists, who are such interesting people doing such interesting things, produce such dull books?<sup>7</sup>

In his introduction to *Writing Culture*, James Clifford sought to answer Pratt's devilish but important question by asserting that anthropology needed to encourage more innovative, dialogic, reflexive, and experimental writing. At the same time, the "new ethnography" was also expected to reflect a more profound self-consciousness of the workings of power and the partialness of all truth, both in the text and in the world. The "new ethnography" would not resolve the profoundly troubling issues of inequality in a world fueled by global capitalism, but at least it would seek to decolonize the power relations inherent in the representation of the Other.<sup>8</sup> The *Writing Culture* agenda promised to renew anthropology's faltering sense of purpose.

Yet women anthropologists and women's anthropological writings were decidedly absent from that agenda. Like a miniature version of the great twentieth-century revolutionary plans that promised one day to solve the "woman question," the *Writing Culture* project asked women "to be patient, to understand . . . [that] their needs—what with Ideology, Politics, and Economics—were nowhere near the top."<sup>9</sup> In an act of sanctioned ignorance, the category of the new ethnography failed to take into account that throughout the twentieth century women had crossed the border between anthropology and literature—but usually "illegally," as aliens who produced works that tended to be viewed in the profession as "confessional" and "popular" or, in the words of Virginia Woolf, as "little notes." The *Writing Culture* agenda, conceived in homoerotic terms by male academics for other male academics, provided the official credentials, and the cachet, that women had lacked for crossing the border. Even the personal voice, undermined when used by women, was given the seal of approval in men's ethnographic accounts, reclassified in more academically favorable terms as "reflexive" and "experimental."<sup>10</sup>

*Writing Culture*, not surprisingly, both saddened and infuriated many women anthropologists. No two pages in the history of anthropological writing have ever created as much anguish among feminist readers as did James Clifford's uneasy statements justifying the absence of women anthropologists from the project of *Writing Culture*. Pushed to account for this gap by the criticism of a feminist reader who reviewed the book in manuscript, Clifford made the now infamous claim that

women anthropologists were excluded because their writings failed to fit the requirement of being feminist *and* textually innovative.<sup>11</sup> To be a woman writing culture became a contradiction in terms: women who write experimentally are not feminist enough, while women who write as feminists write in ignorance of the textual theory that underpins their own texts.

The first major feminist response to these ideas was offered by Deborah Gordon, the coeditor of this book, who argued that “an important problem with ‘experimental’ ethnographic authority is its grounding in a masculine subjectivity which encourages feminists to identify with new modes of ethnography, claiming to be decolonial, while simultaneously relegating feminism to a strained position of servitude.” Yet Gordon insisted that the essays in *Writing Culture* were not malicious; they were simply emblematic of the “ineffective management of men’s negotiation of feminism.”<sup>12</sup> Following Gordon’s insight, Judith Newton and Judith Stacey have chosen to explore in their essay for this volume precisely the difficulties men experience in locating themselves within feminism, as they try to avoid being tourists or, worse, interlopers in womanist terrain.

Certainly it is not our aim in this book to argue for a simple male-female opposition between *Writing Culture* and *Women Writing Culture*. Feminist revision is always inclusive of those men who, as Joseph Boone and Michael Cadden put it, want to abjure the “male gaze” and to learn to “resee” reality in engendered terms rather than through an “I/eye” that imagines itself as transcendent.<sup>13</sup> But the fact is that *Writing Culture* took a stab at the heart of feminist anthropology, which was devalued as a dreary, hopelessly tautological, fact-finding mission—so, tell us, my dear, are women among the Bongo-Bongo indeed so terribly different? As Catherine Lutz notes in her essay for this volume, the constant pressure on us as women to work on our bodies and our fashions now shifted to our writing, which needed more work if its “style” was ever going to measure up.

Afterwards, those of us who had gone into anthropology with the dream of writing and had had our wings clipped for not being analytical enough took hold of the pen with a fervor that would never again permit us to stash our flashes of insight under our beds as Emily Dickinson did with her poetry. In truth, the *Writing Culture* project was a sullen liberation. For we could not miss the irony: As women we were being “liberated” to write culture more creatively, more self-consciously, more engagingly by male colleagues who continued to operate within a gendered hierarchy that reproduced the usual structure of power relations within anthropology, the academy, and society in general.

And thus the irony of this book—which might never have come about if not for the absence of women in *Writing Culture*. Just as the anthology *Woman, Culture and Society*, the landmark text of our 1970s feminist predecessors, appropriated and thereby transformed the anthropological classic, *Man, Culture and Society*, so too we have reclaimed the project of *Writing Culture*.<sup>14</sup> More than twenty years ago Adrienne Rich asserted that male writers do not write for women, or with a sense of women’s criticism, when choosing their materials, themes, and language. But women

writers, even when they are supposed to be addressing women, write for men; or at least they write with the haunting sense of being overheard by men, and certainly with the inescapable knowledge of having already been defined in men's words. That is why "re-vision," the act of "entering an old text from a new critical direction," is for women "an act of survival. . . . We need to know the writing of the past . . . not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us."<sup>15</sup>

But it is tiring to always have to be responsive; that is so often the role women play in our society. Fortunately, although this book began as a feminist response to *Writing Culture*, it grew into something much larger. Our book initiates another agenda that goes beyond *Writing Culture* in its inclusiveness, its creative process, its need to combine history and practice, its humor, its pathos, its democratizing politics, its attention to race and ethnicity as well as to culture, its engendered self-consciousness, its awareness of the academy as a knowledge factory, its dreams. Feminist revision is always about a new way of looking at all categories, not just at "woman." The essays collected here envision another history as well as another future for anthropology, an intellectual pursuit which not too long ago was (and even now often is) still defined as the study of "man."

If *Writing Culture*'s effect on feminist anthropologists was to inspire an empowering rage, the effect of *This Bridge Called My Back*, on the other hand, was to humble us, to stop us in our tracks. We read *This Bridge*, many of us, as graduate students or beginning assistant professors, belatedly educating ourselves in the issues affecting women of color in our country, which our education in anthropology had neglected. Many of us, too, became conscious of our own identities as "women of color," even if our anthropological training made us skeptical about the limitations of the term. As Paulla Ebron and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing note in their essay in this volume, reading *This Bridge* brought new energy to those of us in the academy searching for ways to understand how our politics of knowledge could be reshaped by the women's movement, the African American civil rights movement, and the Chicano/Chicana cultural movements. And yet *This Bridge* thrust a different kind of arrow into the heart of feminist anthropology—it made us rethink the ways in which First World women had unself-consciously created a cultural other in their images of "Third World" or "minority" women.<sup>16</sup> And it forced feminist anthropology to come home.<sup>17</sup> *This Bridge* not only called attention to white feminist oversights but also signaled the importance of creating new coalitions among women that would acknowledge differences of race, class, sexual orientation, educational privilege, and nationality. That the divisions between women could be as strong as the ties binding them was a sobering, and necessary, lesson for feminism. Indeed, *This Bridge* was a product of the most severe and painful crisis the North American feminist movement had ever faced—its need to come to terms with the fact that Other Women had been excluded from (or sometimes, just as matronizingly, unquestioningly included within) its universal project of liberation. Placing *This Bridge Called My Back* side by side on the bookshelf with *Writing Culture*,



feminist anthropologists felt the inadequacy of the dichotomies between Subject and Object, Self and Other, the West and the Rest.

There was also a deep concern in *This Bridge* with the politics of authorship. The contributors, women of Native American, African American, Latin American, and Asian American background, wrote in full consciousness of the fact that they were once the colonized, the native informants, the objects of the ethnographic gaze, and they pondered the question of who has the right to write culture for whom. Anthropologists and similar specialists, they asserted, were no longer the unique purveyors of knowledge about cultural meanings and understandings. Questioning anthropology's often static, unpoliticized, comfortably-somewhere-else concept of culture, they challenged anthropologists to take into account the discriminations of racism, homophobia, sexism, and classism in the America to which we continually returned after pursuing our research in faraway places. Aware of the privileges of authorship, they wrote to challenge the distancing and alienating forms of self-expression that academic elitism encouraged. As Gloria Anzaldúa expressed it, "They convince us that we must cultivate art for art's sake. Bow down to the sacred bull, form. Put frames and metaframes around the writing."<sup>18</sup> Breaking open the notion of "form" in order to democratize access to writing, *This Bridge Called My Back* included poems, essays, stories, speeches, manifestos, dialogues, and letters.

Audre Lorde wrote an open letter to Mary Daly, asking if she viewed her as a native informant: "Have you read my work, and the work of other black women, for what it could give you? Or did you hunt through only to find words that would legitimize your chapter on African genital mutilation?" Gloria Anzaldúa wrote a letter to Third World women writers in which she recalled the pain of coming to writing: "The schools we attended or didn't attend did not give us the skills for writing nor the confidence that we were correct in using our class and ethnic languages. I, for one, became adept at, and majored in English to spite, to show up, the arrogant racist teachers who thought all Chicano children were dumb and dirty." And Nellie Wong, in a letter to herself, spoke of the need to write in many voices and forms while realizing the futility of simply writing: "Your poems and stories alone aren't enough. Nothing for you is ever enough and so you challenge yourselves, again and again, to try something new, to help build a movement, to organize for the rights of working people, to write a novel, a play, to create a living theater that will embody your dreams and vision, energy in print."<sup>19</sup>

*Women Writing Culture* follows in the spirit of *This Bridge Called My Back* by refusing to separate creative writing from critical writing. Our book is multivoiced and includes biographical, historical, and literary essays, fiction, autobiography, theater, poetry, life stories, travelogues, social criticism, fieldwork accounts, and blended texts of various kinds. We do not simply cite the work of women of color or recite the mantra of gender, race, and class and go on with academic business as usual, handing difference over with one hand and taking it away with the other.<sup>20</sup> For we have become all too aware that not only were women anthropologists

excluded from the project of *Writing Culture* but so too were “native” and “minority” anthropologists.<sup>21</sup> In the words of the African American critic bell hooks, the cover of *Writing Culture* hid “the face of the brown/black woman” beneath its title, graphically representing the concealment that marks much of the writing inside.<sup>22</sup> That concealment was based on an odd assumption: that experiments in writing were not likely to flow from the pens of those less privileged, such as people of color or those without tenure.<sup>23</sup> But as Audre Lorde once fiercely asserted, poetry is not a luxury for women and people of color; it is a vital necessity, “the skeleton architecture of our lives.”<sup>24</sup>

Many of the contributors to this book are themselves women of color or immigrants or people of hybrid identity who know what it is like to be othered and so bring to anthropology a rebellious undoing of the classical boundary between observer and observed. Many are the first generation of women in their families to have attained a university education and so bring to anthropology a sharp sense of unease with the hierarchies embedded in educational institutions. Some are lesbians. Some are married with children. Some have chosen to be wives but not mothers, or mothers but not wives. Some are happily single and childfree. Some are tenured and comfortable but kept by administrative burdens from doing the writing that matters. Some are untenured and struggling to do the writing that matters while juggling heavy teaching loads and the burdens of being “junior” faculty. Three are students struggling to do the writing that matters while trying to earn a doctorate. We even have a male voice, that of a young graduate student searching for another location between the history of men’s musing about foreign lands and the impact of feminist awakenings. Our individual trajectories are certainly as diverse as our contributions to this book. If there is a single thing, a common land that all of us are seeking, it is an anthropology without exiles.

### The Question of the Canon, or Do Alice Walker and Margaret Mead Pose a Threat to Shakespeare and Evans-Pritchard?

Anthropology, in this country, bears the shape of a woman—Margaret Mead, the most famous anthropologist of our century. As anthropologists, we ought to be proud of this robust woman and want to claim her, but in reality many of us are embarrassed by her. Only now and then, if she is ruthlessly attacked, do we rise to her defense. Usually we do not take her very seriously. So we are not likely to pay attention when James Clifford remarks in the first page of his introduction that the cover photograph of *Writing Culture*, depicting a white male ethnographer scribbling in a notepad under the gaze of a few local people, “is not the usual portrait of anthropological fieldwork.” And he goes on: “We are more accustomed to pictures of Margaret Mead exuberantly playing with children in Manus or questioning villagers in Bali.”<sup>25</sup>

This is an interesting slip. Margaret Mead was a prolific writer who outwrote

her male colleagues and used her pen to explore genres ranging from ethnography to social criticism to autobiography. As Nancy Lutkehaus points out in her essay in this volume, between 1925 and 1975 Mead published more than 1,300 books, biographies, articles, and reviews. She also wrote short pieces for publications ranging from *The Nation* to *Redbook* magazine, to which she contributed a monthly column. Mead was a public intellectual immersed in the issues of her time; she appeared frequently on television talk shows, and when *Rap on Race* was published she insisted that it keep the dialogical form out of which it had emerged in her conversations with James Baldwin. Yet Mead's reputation as a serious scholar has been damaged by her image in the discipline as a "popularizer." Edward E. Evans-Pritchard, a male contemporary who was an exemplar of the professional model of ethnographic writing that became dominant in the discipline, branded Mead's writing as belonging to the "Rustling-of-the-Wind-in-the-Palm-Trees School." The erasure of Mead as a scholar, writer, and public intellectual, Clifford's slip of the pen, attests to the fact that it is the image of the woman anthropologist as the one who plays with the children and questions the villagers, not the one who writes the texts, that lives on, despite the mythic conception of American anthropology as a profession that is especially receptive to the contributions of women.

Sadly, Clifford is not alone in failing to recognize women's theoretical and literary contributions to anthropology. Nor is it simply men in the discipline who are to blame for overlooking women's work. In her study of citation practices in anthropology, Catherine Lutz underscored how both female and male authors tend to cite more often the presumably "theoretical" writing of men, while women's writing, which often focuses on gender issues, is cited less frequently and usually in circumscribed contexts. In much the same way that the traces of women's labor go unseen in the larger society, Lutz suggests that women's labor in anthropology is quietly erased by the maintenance of a prestige hierarchy within the discipline that has fixed a (male) canon of what counts as important knowledge.<sup>26</sup>

In the United States we have grown accustomed to hearing of debates about the "canon" in departments of English. In recent years several major universities have been revising the traditional curriculum to include writings by women and minorities, the two "groups" who are being called upon to diversify the standard white male reading list of "great books."<sup>27</sup> Even the media have jumped into the debate by offering gloomy science fiction visions of a world where the treasures of high Western culture, perennials dusted and passed on through the generations and the centuries, have been replaced by the faddish writings of black women and ethnic writers, taught by their intolerant and radical supporters in the academy.<sup>28</sup>

One symbol for the perceived threat posed by the canon wars was the media's claim (which is totally bogus) that books by Alice Walker are now assigned more frequently than Shakespeare in English departments.<sup>29</sup> As a hysterical article in *Time* put it, "Imagine a literature class that equates Shakespeare and the novelist Alice Walker, not as artists but as fragments of sociology. Shakespeare is deemed to repre-

sent the outlook of a racist, sexist and classist 16th century England, while Walker allegedly embodies a better but still oppressive 20th century America. . . . Where is this upside-down world? . . . It is to be found on many U.S. college campuses.”<sup>30</sup>

In fact, a key conclusion of the debate has been the need not simply to add the work of excluded writers to standardized reading lists but also to examine how the process of marginalization has shaped the works produced within the dominant culture. As Toni Morrison has put it, “Looking at the scope of American literature, I can’t help thinking that the question should never have been ‘Why am I, an Afro-American, absent from it?’ It is not a particularly interesting query anyway. The spectacularly interesting question is ‘What intellectual feats had to be performed by the author or his critic to erase me from a society seething with my presence, and what effect has that performance had on the work?’”<sup>31</sup> Hazel Carby, commenting on Morrison’s text, adds, “Preserving a gendered analysis for texts by women or about women and an analysis of racial domination for texts by or directly about black people will not by itself transform our understanding of dominant cultural forms.”<sup>32</sup>

Strangely, anthropologists stayed silent at a time when these debates about the literary canon, which were really about negotiating the meaning of Western culture, formed part of everyday public discourse in the United States. Yet anthropologists have much to learn from these debates as well as much to contribute. Although the debates have been reduced, by their detractors, to a battle over the relative merits of the work of Shakespeare and Alice Walker, the key question at stake is what kind of writing will live on in the minds of the coming generation of readers and writers and what kind of writing will perish from neglect and thereby lose its chance to shape and transform the world. Lamenting the “race for theory” that has overtaken the academic literary world, the African American critic Barbara Christian has astutely remarked, “I know, from literary history, that writing disappears unless there is a response to it.”<sup>33</sup>

For many anthropologists, who enter the profession out of a desire to engage with real people in real (and usually forgotten) places, the literary critic, with “his” reading list of the great books of Western civilization, is a symbolic antithesis. At least in its classical form, anthropology was a discipline that was “rough and ready.”<sup>34</sup> Even today, we do not totally believe in books and archives; we believe somehow (still!) in the redemptive possibilities of displacement, of travel, even if, as happens lately, our voyages only return us to our own abandoned hometown or our high-school graduating class.<sup>35</sup> We go in search of life experience, the stuff that, in a profound way, makes books disturbingly ridiculous. Yet ironically we make books out of the things we did not think we could find in books. We end up, as the poet Marianne Moore would say, planting real people and places in the imaginary gardens of our books.

But as academic anthropologists we do not simply write books, we teach books, just as our colleagues do in departments of English. If our fieldwork goes well, if our dissertation is approved, eventually most of us end up—or at least hope to—in

the classroom, teaching neophytes what anthropology is all about. We may tell a few anecdotes, but it is our reading lists that communicate to students what constitutes legitimate and worthwhile anthropological knowledge. Anthropologists have belatedly begun to realize that we, too, have a canon, a set of “great books” that we continue to teach to our students, as dutifully as they were once taught to us in graduate school. That these books just happen to be the writings of white men is an idea that can never be brought up. It seems somehow impolite, given anthropology’s virtue as the first academic discipline even to give a damn about all those remote and often vanquished cultures. So we habitually assign the writing of Evans-Pritchard because his work on the Azande and the Nuer has been enshrined as part of our “core” reading list. Yet we rarely ask students to engage with the writing of Alice Walker, even though, as Faye Harrison persuasively shows in her essay for this volume, she has long seen herself as an active interlocutor with anthropology.

The professional management of anthropology exercises power not just by fixing the value of certain texts in an ahistorical, acultural realm of the classics but by determining which emerging ethnographic writings will be inscribed into the discipline and which will be written off. As Lorraine Nencel and Peter Pels state, “To be taken seriously in the academy, we also have to write ourselves *in* the history of the discipline and, consequently, write *off* rival academic currents.”<sup>36</sup> That is, of course, how canons are constructed. As Joan Vincent puts it, “When we find ourselves holding in our hands ‘classical’ ethnographies, we know that we are about to read the victors in struggles for past and present recognition and the attribution of significance.” The textualist critique in *Writing Culture* did not go far enough, Vincent notes, because beyond analyzing specific texts it is also necessary “to address the politics around the writing of the text, the politics of reading the text, and the politics of its reproduction.”<sup>37</sup>

Recently, American anthropologists have bemoaned the fact that their colleagues in literature leave them out of their discussions about the canon and the possibilities of multicultural teaching.<sup>38</sup> But the continued lack of critical reflection about our own canon suggests that anthropology has yet to carry out the radical kind of self-examination that would bring its multicultural quest home. We assume that because we have always studied “the other,” we have somehow, in the animist fashion we used to attribute to primitive mentality, incorporated the insights of multiculturalism into the academic settings in which we work. American anthropology under the direction of Franz Boas, a German Jew, made an early contribution to undermining racism and to bringing to the national consciousness an awareness of the destruction wreaked upon Native Americans. But repeatedly invoking Boas and resting on those laurels will not build an anthropology of the present. Our anthropology department faculties and student bodies have a long way to go before they become ethnically diverse, while in our teaching we continue to reproduce the theoretical knowledge of Euro-American males.

Why is it that the legacy of what counts as social theory is traced back only to Lewis Henry Morgan, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Michel Foucault,

and Pierre Bourdieu? Why is there not a parallel matrilineal genealogy taking off from, say, the turn-of-the-century work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman? She wrote not only a major treatise, *Women and Economics*, but also the short story "The Yellow Wallpaper," a brilliant allegory about the madness of a woman who was prevented from reading and writing.<sup>39</sup> Why is the culture concept in anthropology only traced through Sir Edward Tylor, Franz Boas, Bronislaw Malinowski, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Clifford Geertz? Could the writing of culture not be traced, as the essays in this volume suggest, through Elsie Clews Parsons, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Ella Deloria, Zora Neale Hurston, Ruth Landes, and Barbara Myerhoff to Alice Walker? Could we not follow this trajectory down to the contemporary oral history and literacy work, analyzed by Deborah Gordon in her essay in this volume, of Rina Benmayor and other Hunter College researchers in the El Barrio Project on Puerto Rican women living in Harlem? At the same time, shouldn't we approach our canon more androgynously and attempt to understand the interplay of male and female theorizing of society and culture? Not only do we need to take a bilateral approach, we need also to question our assumption that, in anthropology, "issues and isms develop unlineally and from within" and turn our attention to "constellations of expatriates, emigrés, professionals, and amateurs engaged in dislocated writing and performance."<sup>40</sup> And do we not need to explore fully, as Toni Morrison and Hazel Carby suggest, the gendered and racial erasures buttressing the canon as we have come to know it? Why is it that anthropology—the discipline whose legitimacy is so wrapped up in the multiplicity of languages and worlds—continues to be conceived in such resolutely patrilineal and Eurocentric terms?

It is high time for a debate about our canon. As Faye Harrison argues, anthropology has tended to relegate the contributions of minorities and women "to the status of special interest trivia . . . the authorized curricular menu of expendable 'add and stir' electives. . . . A socially responsible and genuinely critical anthropology should challenge this iniquitous reaction, and, furthermore, set a positive example by promoting cultural diversity where it counts, at its very core."<sup>41</sup> The essays in this volume offer one entrance into that debate, retelling the story of American anthropology in ways that allow us to imagine what Alice Walker might say, not only to Shakespeare but also to Evans-Pritchard and Mead.

*Women Writing Culture* is rooted in pedagogical concerns, which are also political, epistemological, and historical concerns. This book grew out of my own, often frustrating, efforts to rethink the anthropological canon. In 1991, inspired by Gordon's critique of *Writing Culture*, I taught a graduate seminar at the University of Michigan on "Women Writing Culture: Twentieth-Century American Women Anthropologists."<sup>42</sup> Seventeen women graduate students with diverse interests in anthropology took the course, and together we tried to understand the particular challenges that ethnographic writing has posed for women authors. Our discussions generated tremendous excitement. For the anthropology students in the group, the course filled a lacuna and served as a challenge to the core course program, a year-long exploration of the history and theory of the discipline that in the year I was

teaching included Ruth Benedict as the sole woman author on the reading list. For me, teaching for the first time in my career a course with the word “Women” in the title, I learned firsthand what it meant to teach a course so dangerous—or merely so irrelevant—to the other sex that no men dared sign up for it. Had I called the course simply “Writing Culture,” I am certain the enrollment pattern would have been different. Of course, the more subversive act would have been to have called the course “Writing Culture” and still only have taught the writings of women ethnographers!

Teaching “Women Writing Culture” it became clear to me that, to avoid erasing myself as a woman professor of anthropology, I needed to refigure the canon of anthropological knowledge as it is defined and passed on from one generation to the next in the academy. I needed another past, another history. So I looked for models in the texts of those women ethnographers who came before us. Alice Walker has written that “the absence of models in literature as in life . . . is an occupational hazard for the artist, simply because models in art, in behavior, in growth of spirit and intellect—even if rejected—enrich and enlarge one’s view of existence.” Possibly, in that search for models, my hand would be blistered by the sacred wax of “pure theory”—as Adrienne Rich puts it in a poem that imagines “a woman sitting between the stove and the stars.”<sup>43</sup> But I needed to forge ahead in order to learn how I, as a woman, am scripted into the discipline that gives me permission to script others into my writings.

However, I found it depressing to undertake this search alone. There were too many histories to recover, too many dilemmas to resolve, too many silences to break. To challenge all those excuses for politely shunting aside women’s work in anthropology, *Women Writing Culture* needed many of us speaking at once.

## Madwomen in the Exotic

The women’s movement divided up intellectual labor in such a way that feminist anthropologists set out in search of the “origins” of gender inequality and feminist literary critics set out in search of “lost” female literary traditions.<sup>44</sup> While feminist literary critics went about unearthing the literary women missing from the Western tradition, feminist anthropologists were expected to journey beyond the West, through either the Human Relations Area Files or actual fieldwork, in order to bring back deep truths about womanhood that Western women could use in achieving their own liberation.<sup>45</sup>

Perhaps because origins seemed closer to fundamental truths, feminist literary critics often borrowed theoretical concepts from feminist anthropologists, especially ideas about the nature/culture split and the sex-gender system. Feminist anthropologists were much less influenced by the new readings of sexual/textual politics that quickly became the trademark of feminist literary criticism. On the whole, they preferred to pursue links with classical social theory and political economy and to write carefully argued yet confident texts, studded with cross-cultural examples, that per-

suasively made the case for women's universal subordination while often also revealing the myths of male power. As Deborah Gordon suggests in her conclusion, we need to let go of the reductionist dichotomy of "conventional" versus "experimental" ethnography to fully understand the complex historical moment out of which early feminist anthropological writing arose. Indeed, the classical texts of that historical moment—*Woman, Culture and Society* and *Toward an Anthropology of Women*—were perceived as original and ground breaking, offering a major paradigm shift in the theorizing of anthropology as an intellectual, political, and cultural practice. But the *Writing Culture* critique showed that the mark of theory, as Lutz argues, is ultimately male controlled. Feminist anthropologists may have carried the theoretical day, but by the standard of the avant-garde textual theory promoted by *Writing Culture* they wrote in terms of a notion of grand theory that was outdated, even conservative. No matter how hard they try, women's work is never quite theoretical enough.

Unlike feminist literary criticism, which had an important impact on the reading, teaching, and writing of literature, there was always, as Marilyn Strathern sagely noted, an awkwardness about the conjunction of anthropology and feminism. The awkwardness arose from the difficulty of maintaining the premise of anthropology as a Self in relation to an Other in a context where the feminist researcher is herself an Other to patriarchy's Self.<sup>46</sup> In a case of curious serendipity, two American feminists, Lila Abu-Lughod, located on the East Coast, and Judith Stacey, located on the West Coast, published essays at around the same time with exactly the same title: "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" For Stacey, a fully feminist ethnography can never be achieved, for feminist politics, rooted in sensitivity to all contexts of domination, is incompatible with the basic premise of ethnography, which is that "the research product is ultimately that of the researcher, however modified or influenced by informants." Abu-Lughod was more optimistic about the possibility of a feminist ethnography grounded in the particularities of women's lives and stories. Yet she accepted Clifford's assessment that feminist anthropologists who hold academic credentials rarely experiment with form. Abu-Lughod suggested that the alternative "women's tradition" of ethnographic writing, which is both literary and popular, is associated with the "untrained" wives of anthropologists, from whom feminist anthropologists need to detach themselves in order to assert their professional status.<sup>47</sup>

Stacey and Abu-Lughod addressed themselves to an emerging notion of feminist ethnography distinct from both the anthropology of women (an effort to understand the lives of women across cultures) and feminist anthropology (an effort to understand the social and political ramifications of women as the second sex). At the same time, Kamala Visweswaran offered an early definition of feminist ethnography as a project bridging the gap—to which *Writing Culture* had so bluntly drawn attention—between feminist commitment and textual innovation.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, since the publication of *Writing Culture*, there has been an explosion of creative works of feminist ethnography that seek to close this gap while staying attuned—as



suggested by *This Bridge Called My Back*—to the relationships between women across differences of race, class, and privilege.<sup>49</sup> Our book is situated within this emerging feminist ethnography and its predicaments.

The development of a corpus of feminist ethnographic works that are post-*Writing Culture* and post-*This Bridge Called My Back* has led to a new self-awareness about what it means to be women writing culture. With the pioneering work of Deborah Gordon, we now have our first sophisticated and ambitious history of the awkward relationship between feminist and experimental ethnography, revealing how gender and genre are interwoven in anthropology's canonical texts.<sup>50</sup> *Women Writing Culture* tries to suggest answers to some primary questions: Have ethnographic authority and the burden of authorship figured differently in the works of women anthropologists? What is the cultural logic by which authorship is coded as "feminine" or "masculine," and what are the consequences of those markings? What kind of writing is possible for feminist anthropologists now, if to write unconventionally puts a woman in the category of untrained wife, while writing according to the conventions of the academy situates her as a textual conservative?

One of the major contributions of feminist literary criticism is its assertion that writing matters tremendously for women; that how we plot ourselves into our fictions has everything to do with how we plot ourselves into our lives. From this perspective, some of the criticisms of *Writing Culture* go too far in their skepticism about the crucial importance of texts.<sup>51</sup> As Rachel Blau DuPlessis puts it, "To compose a work is to negotiate with these questions: What stories can be told? How can plots be resolved? What is felt to be narratable by both literary and social conventions?" Literary texts, rather than being mimetic, can provide "emancipatory strategies" for "writing beyond the ending," beyond the narratives of romance or death that have been, for women, the cultural legacy from nineteenth-century life and letters.<sup>52</sup>

Anxiety is the other inheritance that trails women who write. Not the "anxiety of influence" described by Harold Bloom as the quintessential drama of the male writer's Oedipal slaying of powerful male literary precursors but a more basic anxiety, the anxiety of authorship itself. Interestingly, in order to respond to Bloom's trim yet highly influential volume, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar produced a bible-sized tome, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, in which they suggested that women writers in the nineteenth century wrote in the face of deep fears—about being unable to create, unable to become precursors, unable to overcome their distrust of authority. As "daughters" receiving the tradition from stern literary "fathers" who viewed them as inferiors, women attempting the pen "struggled in isolation that felt like illness, alienation that felt like madness." Yet in writing their agoraphobia and hysteria into literature, they created a female literary subculture that empowered other women writers. Unlike the revisionism of male writing in Bloom's anxiety of influence, which imagined "a threatening force to be denied or killed," women's search for female literary precursors "proves by example that a revolt against patriarchal literary authority is possible."<sup>53</sup>

Fifteen years later, the image of last century's woman writer (a privileged white woman, to be sure) as a "madwoman in the attic" remains persuasive, despite its limitations.<sup>54</sup> At the least, the idea of women's anxiety of authorship offers a frame within which to begin to engender the notion of ethnographic authority. Of course, there is a vivid contrast between the entrapped women of nineteenth-century Western literature and the roaming, restless women anthropologists of the twentieth century. But even today, after feminist awakenings, we struggle to make our voices heard and to convince ourselves that our writing, in a time of increasing poverty, racism, inequality, xenophobia, and warfare, still somehow matters. We struggle to believe that our writing is not a cushion against the madness, or worse, a form of madness itself. When the essays for this volume arrived in unwieldy numbers, I relished the idea of producing a book as formidable, as imperative, as wildly desirous of space on the bookshelf as *The Madwoman in the Attic*. Our own *Madwomen in the Exotic*.

Mary Morris notes in her introduction to an anthology of the travel writings of women that going on a journey or awaiting the stranger have been the two plots of Western literature. Women have usually been those who wait. But, Morris adds, when women grow weary of waiting, they can go on a journey; they "can be the stranger who comes to town." Yet women necessarily travel differently, aware of their bodies, their sex, fearing catcalls and rape, seeking freedom of movement, many times in the disguise of men's clothes.<sup>55</sup>

If, indeed, the only narrative traditionally available to women is the love or marriage plot, to try to live out the quest plot, as men's stories allow, is a radical act—even an ungendering, as attested to by the many stories of women anthropologists who have played the role of "honorary male" in the field or have suffered the consequences of being improper "daughters."<sup>56</sup> Anthropology, as the male quest plot turned institution, is by its very nature a paradoxical pursuit for women. Susan Sontag went so far as to claim that being an anthropologist "is one of the rare intellectual vocations which do not demand a sacrifice of one's manhood."<sup>57</sup>

Anthropology makes heroes of men, allowing, even insisting, that they exploit their alienation, their intrepid homelessness, their desire "to make a life out of running" for the sake of science, as Laurent Dubois puts it in his essay in this volume. Dubois, a white male student entering the profession, asks himself, "Has my story already been written?" Situating himself within the male quest narrative inherited, not invented, by anthropology, he interrogates his own desire to run from home in search of the same long horizons sought by his literary hero Bruce Chatwin; and he pays attention, as his own feminist consciousness takes shape, to Chatwin's wife, who was always there, waiting in the suburbs for her husband to return.

In its identification with manhood, anthropology has always been ambivalent about the anthropologist's wife. Barbara Tedlock's essay offers a fascinating perspective on the sexual division of textual labor between anthropologist husbands and incorporated wives. With wit and passion, Tedlock shows how the works of wives, which have often reached wide reading audiences, were treated as unauthorized and illicit within anthropology. Yet throughout the history of the profession,

and even in some contemporary situations, male anthropologists have depended on the unpaid and often unrecognized labor of their wives. Tedlock even tells of an anthropologist who tried to persuade his wife to have a baby in the field so he could obtain information from her for his research! Most importantly, Tedlock suggests that the image of the devalued wife looms over those women who do become anthropologists in their own right. Even as they seek professional credibility, women anthropologists continually undermine their own ethnographic authority by revealing their uncertainty about fieldwork and ethnographic writing.

Anxiety of authorship is the legacy of our terror at having to become (honorary) males.

## In Search of a Women's Literary Tradition in Anthropology

For a woman to be able to travel in the early days of anthropology, she had to have not a room of her own but plenty of spunk and money of her own. This was certainly true of the "mother" of American anthropology, Elsie Clews Parsons, who financed not only her own research but also the research of many other women anthropologists. It was Parsons who introduced Ruth Benedict to feminist anthropology at the New School for Social Research and persuaded her to go further in her studies with Franz Boas at Columbia University. And yet despite her wealth and prominence, as Louise Lamphere notes in her essay in this volume, Parsons never attained a permanent position within the academy. Because she could not train graduate students herself, it was not her name but, rather, that of Boas that became associated with the school of early American anthropology. Women who pursued the quest plot in the early days of the profession did not come home to chairs of anthropology; they had only their writing by which to stand or fall. And so their writing needed to have its own sources of resiliency.

Ruth Benedict, we learn from Barbara Babcock's essay in this volume, always recognized that ethnographic description occurs as writing. In fact, Benedict was often chided for writing too well, for writing anthropology too much like a poet. She frequently turned to literary models, reading Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* as she wrote her own *Patterns of Culture*. Ruth Benedict had come to anthropology, like Elsie Clews Parsons, fascinated with the "New Woman" of the interwar years, the woman "not yet classified, perhaps not classifiable." But in becoming an anthropologist she tucked her feminism away, letting it surface mainly in her use of irony and giving voice to her lesbianism only in her obsession with the "abnormal." Before she turned to anthropology a publisher rejected her manuscript about the "restless and highly enslaved women of past generations," and Benedict never again returned to those feminist concerns explicitly. It was left to Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict's student, to reopen the bridge between feminism and anthropology, but in ways bristling with excessive assurance about women's possibilities that went against the grain of her teacher's more somber vision.

Like Benedict and Mead, Zora Neale Hurston and Ella Cara Deloria were

student-daughters of Papa Franz. Yet Hurston, an African American woman, and Deloria, a Native American woman, were treated more as “native informants” than as scholars in their own right.<sup>58</sup> Neither attained an academic position or, until recently, had much of an impact on anthropology. Their white sisters fared better in getting a foot in the door of the academy, but even Benedict was denied the Chair in Anthropology at Columbia University, becoming a full professor only in the year that she died, and Mead was shunted off to the American Museum of Natural History.

What these four women shared (besides their common infantilization as “daughters” of Papa Franz) was an impatience with the flat impersonal voice that was becoming the norm in the ethnographies of their time. They sought, instead, perhaps because of their inability to reproduce themselves in the academy, to reach a popular audience with their own creatively storied writings. Since that time, as Narayan has noted, two poles have emerged in anthropological writing: on the one hand, we have “accessible ethnographies laden with stories” (assigned to introductory anthropology students to whet their appetite) and, on the other, “refereed journal articles, dense with theoretical analyses” (assigned to graduate students and privileged in core courses). But Narayan asks, “Need the two categories, compelling narrative and rigorous analysis, be impermeable?” As she suggests, they are seeping into each other in increasingly hybrid ethnographic texts.<sup>59</sup> A key contribution of the essays in this book is the revelation of how women, past and present, fruitfully resolve the tension between these two poles of writing.

As Janet Finn points out in her essay in this volume, Deloria was uncomfortable with the distancing forms of fieldwork and writing recommended by her mentor. Deloria told Boas in a letter that “to go at it like a whiteman, for me, an Indian, is to throw up an immediate barrier between myself and the people.” Unable to earn wages in academic arenas, Deloria worked as a research assistant and informant for Boas and other scholars in the anthropological equivalent of piecework. The patronage of white scholars was crucial for Deloria, as it was for another contemporary Native American writer, Mourning Dove, whose novels explored the pressures of being a half-blood Indian woman. Deloria herself, eager to find a way of representing a Sioux woman’s life that did not use typifications, wrote a novel, *Waterlily*, which she dedicated to Benedict, who encouraged her efforts. But *Waterlily*, which today reads like a model of how to blend ethnography and fiction, was rejected in Deloria’s lifetime by publishers who claimed there was no audience for such writing.

By undertaking a nuanced reading of Hurston’s *Mules and Men*, Graciela Hernández reveals how the multiple voices of Hurston as ethnographer, writer, and community member are subtly mediated by the use of a storytelling style that gives power to the spoken words of her informants over the written words of her own text. Hurston’s return to her home community in Eatonville, Florida, with the “spy-glass of Anthropology” obtained in Morningside Heights forced her to negotiate the relationship between ethnographic authority and personal authenticity. Out of that negotiation came a text about African American folk culture that was post-

modern before its time in enacting an exemplary hybridity that combined engaged scholarship with a nuanced portrait of Hurston's own intellectual process. As bell hooks notes, "An essay on Hurston would have been a valuable addition to the collection *Writing Culture*. . . . In many ways Hurston was at the cutting edge of a new movement in ethnography and anthropology that has only recently been actualized."<sup>60</sup>

The essays on Deloria and Hurston are an important first step to recovering the as yet unwritten history of minority women who struggled to find their voice in anthropology. There are other equally important precursors, such as the Mexican American folklorist Jovita Gonzalez, whose paradoxical embrace of male power complicates our image of ethnic-feminist consciousness.<sup>61</sup> As "native anthropologists" writing at a moment when the border between self and other was sharply demarcated, Deloria and Hurston, as well as Gonzalez, were put in the position of needing to rethink the cultural politics of being an insider. The legacy of their writing is of crucial significance to the current challenge to the role of the "detached observer" and to anthropology's shift toward the study of borderlands.<sup>62</sup>

For Ruth Landes, another Boasian daughter, it was not the concept of culture that attracted her to anthropology but, rather, the antiracism that had initially been at the core of its intellectual practice. Sally Cole reveals that Landes continued to theorize about the ethnography of race in her writings on Brazilian and American society, even as the establishment of professional anthropology in postwar universities led anthropologists to abandon the debate on race in favor of the less-politicized notion of the "science of culture." She held firm, too, in the face of pressure from her more powerful male colleague Melville Herskovits, who criticized her for focusing on race and not on "Afro-American culture." Landes wrote "against culture"—a concept recently elaborated by Lila Abu-Lughod—long before it was fashionable to do so in anthropology.

Barbara Myerhoff, in turn, was a writer with a wide popular following as well as a pioneer in the reflexive study of ethnicity and of Jewish studies in anthropology. As Gelya Frank remarks, had Myerhoff not died prematurely of lung cancer, she might have become the Jewish Margaret Mead. Myerhoff's final work as an anthropologist was not a text but an innovative film, *In Her Own Time*, that mixed autobiography and ethnography to express in unusual depth the experience of her own dying. Frank explores the contradictory ways in which Myerhoff turned to the Orthodox and Lubavitcher Jews for spiritual meaning in her final days, acting out the role of an anthropologist "in a trance of deep play," an anthropologist facing her own limitations in achieving a coherent Jewish identity. To bring Myerhoff's work into the canon is to undo another erasure—the Jewish awareness of difference that has been a central, yet closeted, part of anthropology since Franz Boas.<sup>63</sup>

Faye Harrison proclaims that if ethnography is often a kind of fiction, then the converse, that fiction is often a kind of ethnography, is also true. Alice Walker, as Harrison shows, has long written fiction that is a dialogue with anthropology. It is Walker who, in writing about her own search for Hurston in the 1970s,

restored her to anthropology, which had cast her into oblivion, revitalizing interest in her work not just as a fiction writer but also as an anthropologist and a folklorist. Aware that Hurston's precarious position in anthropology has as much to do with her being black as with her writing in creative ways that go against the grain of conventional anthropological reporting, Walker has chosen to stay out of academic anthropology and to enact a corpus of fictional works that embody and expand upon anthropological concerns. Harrison's thoughtful reading of Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar* demonstrates how this text offers a complement and critique to such globalizing works of anthropological theorizing as Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People without History*, which omit gender and race perspectives. Yet Harrison also wisely points out that Walker is only one among many black women and minority intellectuals whose work ought to occupy a central place in the anthropological discussion of the poetics and politics of writing culture.

In their essay on reading across minority discourses, Paulla Ebron and Anna Tsing take on, precisely, the new fictional literature by African American and Asian American writers. As they note, it is no longer social scientists (like Margaret Mead) who are shaping U.S. public understandings of culture, race, and ethnicity but novelists such as Toni Morrison and Amy Tan. Although the literary turn in anthropology is often dismissed as an exercise in self-indulgence, Ebron and Tsing offer a fresh reading of minority discourse as a way of forming alliances among the once colonized. That reading is subtle and crosses many borders simultaneously, showing how representational authority is differently achieved by women and men of color in the United States. "People of color," as they note, names a tension as well as a hope, embedded in their own project, which unfolded in the context of the Los Angeles uprising and Black-Asian hostilities.

Working ethnographically with living writers rather than with literary sources, Smadar Lavie likewise engages in a reading across minority discourses. Her essay focuses on the displacement of language, identity, and homeland in the lives and writings of border poets living in Israel. These border poets are cast into minority status because their Mizrahi and Palestinian backgrounds make them exiles within the Ashkenazi definition of the nation of Israel. Lavie's essay offers a crucial, and necessary, counterpoint to Gelya Frank's treatment of Jewish identity in the work of Barbara Myerhoff. More poignantly, Lavie reflects on the way she herself, as a woman of color within the Israeli system, had to choose migration to the United States in order "to keep her voice," though that, ironically, has meant ceasing to write in Hebrew, her native language.

Dorinne Kondo enacts another kind of reading across minority discourses in her own playwriting, inventing the unforgettable character of Janice Ito, an Asian American film professor who dreams of becoming the African American disco diva Grace Jones. Seeking to subvert dominant conceptions of race, Kondo says she turned to theater because it was a space where Asian Americans could be something other than model minorities. Theater also allowed her to make the shift from the

textual to the performative and to carry out engaged collaborative work. It opened a space for her to be a “bad girl,” not a “sad girl.”

Fiction, as both Kondo and Narayan show, can be an ideal genre for putting flesh back both on the anthropological subject and on ourselves as women of the academy. Fiction also reaches a broad audience because it entertains as well as educates, enabling anthropological insights to travel further. In our age, when borders rather than closed communities prevail, readership is no longer homogenous. Ethnography should not be like “those first class lounges behind hidden doors in the airport, which only certain people, having paid their dues, get to walk through.”<sup>64</sup> For ethnography to matter in a multicultural world it needs to reach a wider range of audiences both in and beyond the academy.

Along with fiction, a variety of creative nonfiction genres now exist to widen anthropology’s reach. Yearning for an anthropology that will be written not just by and for other academics, Deborah Gordon takes a close look at how new kinds of collaborative texts can be created when ethnographic research takes place within community agendas. Sharing privilege, sharing literacy, sharing information—which in our world is power—is one way for feminist relationships in postcolonial conditions of inequality to bridge the gaps between women in the academy and women in ethnic communities. The El Barrio project (of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College in New York City) focuses on oral history work as a way to empower women to revise the scripts of their lives. Women teaching other women the writing skills they need offers a model, Gordon suggests, for expanding the focus on writing culture beyond the purely aesthetic dimensions of the individual text to a truer opening of the doors of anthropological writing to all who wish to enter.

Collaborative work has always been a key part of feminist practice. *Women Writing Culture* emerges from a collaboration between myself and Deborah Gordon and from our affectionate agreement to disagree. Whereas I, as a feminist ethnographer, place the accent on how women write culture, Gordon, as a feminist historian of anthropology, places the accent on how women are written by culture. Our introduction and conclusion are meant to be in tension with each other. Similarly, we have already seen how Ebron and Tsing together explore minority discourse from African American and Asian American vantage points. Judith Newton and Judith Stacey, in turn, join forces to examine how the feminist desire for multiple alliances might reach out to male cultural critics searching for ways to locate themselves within feminism. Studying “up,” they hope to bring back new feminist lessons, learning what men (and white women) gain by adopting “traitorous identities” that challenge their own privilege but help to build a nonsexist and nonracist society.

Working collaboratively in a different way to explore diasporic identity, Aihwa Ong, who views herself not as Asian American but as an expatriate Chinese, seeks out the stories of newly immigrant Chinese women as they come into their own sense of agency in the United States. At the same time, she questions the notion of

privileged nativism and notes that being positioned as some kind of insider to the culture does not predispose one to produce a politically correct ethnography of the Other. Indeed, she reminds us that Third World women in the Anglophone academic world are privileged in comparison with women from their ancestral cultures. Feminist ethnographers need to develop a "detrterritorialized" critical practice that deals with inequities not only in that "other place" but also in one's "own" community.

In her tale of two pregnancies, Lila Abu-Lughod offers a keen example of how to detrterritorialize ethnography, tacking back and forth between her own technological experience of pregnancy and the experiences of her Bedouin and Egyptian friends. Abu-Lughod's focus on her impending motherhood also breaks a taboo. The first generation of feminist anthropologists, who viewed motherhood as one of the central institutions that kept women from attaining power in the public sphere, never wrote about their own conflicts between reproduction and anthropology. In the last decade, as feminism has come under increasing attack and abortion rights have been challenged, motherhood has become a public goal for women. Articles are continually appearing in the mainstream press about women who endanger their fetuses or regret having chosen a career over motherhood.<sup>65</sup> Feminist ethnographers in this country are not immune to these cultural pressures, and Abu-Lughod is brave to speak of them, opening a space for others to tell their stories. Abu-Lughod herself felt equally vulnerable to the pressures of her Bedouin and Egyptian friends who pitied her childlessness.

Ellen Lewin's essay offers a counterpoint to these concerns. With verve and insight, Lewin reflects on the heterosexual assumption that undergirds anthropology, which until recently has seemed not to require explanation or theorizing. Indeed, anthropology does have a sex, as I suggested earlier, being virtually synonymous with manhood. Yet doing lesbian ethnography leads Lewin to the conclusion that identity is always in flux among ethnic, racial, age, professional, and other markers. A lesbian is never only a lesbian. Lewin's desire to feel identified with her lesbian subjects backfires among those women who, unlike her, have chosen to become mothers without husbands. By focusing on differences among lesbians, Lewin adds an unusual level of complexity to our understanding of the dilemmas of working ethnographically on one's "own culture."

The vast majority of the essays in this book follow the current trend in American anthropology of focusing on writing culture here, in the United States, where we make our living as anthropologists of the academy. Our aim, ultimately, has been to examine the poetics and politics of feminist ethnography as a way of rethinking anthropology's purpose in a multicultural America. One limitation of this approach is that it could not be more international in its focus.<sup>66</sup> Yet by working in those spaces we think of as "home," which in turn are crosscut by multiple intersecting spaces of identification and difference, our book makes an important theoretical contribution: we move away from the "West" versus the "Rest" and the "Self" versus "Other" dichotomies that uncritically informed *Writing Culture* and still remain central to the quest narrative of anthropology. Even whiteness, as Kirin Narayan



shows in her story, is not a monolithic identity but is layered with shades of difference that blur the boundaries between “inside” and “outside.” As Anna Tsing notes, “Participant-observation begins at home—and not only because we are studying ‘ourselves’; part of every ‘us’ is ‘other’ too.”<sup>67</sup>

Indeed, as I relate in my essay “Writing in My Father’s Name,” I had to engage with the most profound predicaments I had ever faced as an anthropologist when I brought struggles from home into my ethnography, *Translated Woman*. It pained me to discover that I had alienated my parents by writing about them in ways they found disturbing. Anguished about my “wickedness,” I returned to Mexico, hoping to be vindicated by giving the book I had written about her to my *comadre* Esperanza. But there was no redemption; my *comadre* told me she did not want to keep a text she would never be able to read.

Writing hurts.

Because writing hurts, Kirin Narayan’s Charity—a white woman on the outside but with a heart lost in India—is an endearing creation of the feminist anthropological imagination. For Charity enacts the romance of being loved, even adored, for her writing. Her anthropological account of an Indian village is read passionately, consumed from head to toe, by a male anthropologist, about whom Charity only knows that he is a “Weberian.” The letters from her admiring reader fill her with hope and nostalgia, as she faces the fact that she is no longer the confident graduate student writing the exemplary dissertation, but a marginal person in the academy, trying to maintain a tenuous grip on reality by summoning up her memories of those theories in the texts of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski and *Writing Culture* that she once studied with such devotion.

What will happen to Charity? Will her writing bring success, fulfillment, a move from the margins to the center? Let us try to imagine a bright future for this ambivalent heroine—and for all women writing culture as this century rushes to a close.

## Notes

I am deeply grateful to Deborah Gordon, Rachael Cohen, Lila Abu-Lughod, Kirin Narayan, Anna Tsing, Benjamin Orlove, an anonymous reviewer for the University of California Press, and our editor, Naomi Schneider, for their thoughtful and encouraging comments on this text. My thanks to Laura Kunreuther for the epigraph from Virginia Woolf. An earlier version of these ideas appeared in my “Introduction,” special issue on “Women Writing Culture: Another Telling of the Story of American Anthropology,” Ruth Behar, ed., *Critique of Anthropology* 13, no. 4 (1993): 307–26.

1. This double crisis had earlier inspired feminist anthropologists to think about our purpose. See, in particular, Lila Abu-Lughod, “Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?” *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 5 (1990): 7–27.
2. James Clifford and George Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). The emphasis put on the fact that the book emerged from an “advanced seminar” is striking; the word “advanced” appears three times on the first page of the preface. For further background, see George E. Marcus and Dick Cushman, “Ethnographies as Texts,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11 (1982): 25–69.

3. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press, 1983).
4. See, for example, Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); Richard Fox, ed., *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (Santa Fe, N. Mex.: School of American Research Press, 1991). At 25,000 copies, *Writing Culture* has also sold well, a rare feat for an academic collection of essays published by a university press.
5. On the intellectual and poetic exchanges and conflicts of Sapir and Benedict, see Richard Handler, "Vigorous Male and Aspiring Female: Poetry, Personality, and Culture in Edward Sapir and Ruth Benedict," in *Malinowski, Rivers, Benedict and Others: Essays on Culture and Personality*, ed. George W. Stocking, Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 127–155.
6. I recognize that in this capsule summary I am offering an image of *Writing Culture* as a monolithic text. As many readers have pointed out, there were key differences among the authors in the book. For example, Talal Asad's essay does not concern textual theory; Michael Fischer's essay focuses on ethnic autobiography rather than on ethnography; and Paul Rabinow's essay criticizes the preoccupation with textual form and also seeks an uneasy alliance between anthropology and feminism that stands in opposition to James Clifford's stance. Yet, despite these differences, the book has been read not as a collection of essays that are in conversation with each other but, indeed, as a programmatic treatise calling for anthropologists to be more aware of the literary foundations of what they do. The book continues to be read through the filter of Clifford's introduction, which emphasizes textual form and theory, and so, in reader-response fashion, this is the perspective I too emphasize.
7. Mary Louise Pratt, "Fieldwork in Common Places," in *Writing Culture*, 33.
8. For further discussion, see George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). Richard Fox, in his introduction to *Recapturing Anthropology* (p. 9), criticizes the textualist approach for misunderstanding the nature of power and for subscribing to a myth of anthropological writing as artisanship rather than as "industrial discipline."
9. Slavenka Drakulić, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993), 46–47.
10. For example, Paul Rabinow's *Fieldwork in Morocco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977) and Vincent Crapanzano's *Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) were viewed as original examples of experimental ethnography, even though they clearly built on a tradition of women's writing that included Laura Bohannan's *Return to Laughter* (New York: Doubleday, 1964; orig. 1954) and Jean Briggs's *Never in Anger* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970). Curiously, the only text by a woman ethnographer that was discussed in any detail in *Writing Culture* was Marjorie Shostak's *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), a life history written by the wife of an anthropologist involved in the Harvard Kalahari Project, whose vivid personal account of fieldwork has secured it a favored place in introductory anthropology courses.
11. See James Clifford, "Introduction," in *Writing Culture*, 21–22, where he claims that those women anthropologists who had made textual innovations "had not done so on feminist grounds," while, on the other hand, those who, as feminists, were "actively rewriting the masculinist canon" had not "produced either unconventional forms of writing or a developed reflection on ethnographic textuality as such."
12. Deborah A. Gordon, "Writing Culture, Writing Feminism: The Poetics and Politics of Experimental Ethnography," *Inscriptions* 3/4 (1988): 8, 21. Other responses followed,

- including Frances Mascia-Lees, Patricia Sharpe, and Colleen Ballerino Cohen, "The Post-modernist Turn in Anthropology: Cautions from a Feminist Perspective," *Signs* 15 (1989): 7-33; Margery Wolf, *A Thrice-Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Barbara Babcock, "Feminism/Pretexts: Fragments, Questions, and Reflections," *Anthropological Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (1993): 59-66.
13. Joseph A. Boone and Michael Cadden, eds., *Engendering Men: The Question of Male Feminist Criticism* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 3.
  14. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds., *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974); Harry Lionel Shapiro, *Man, Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956). *Writing Culture* can be seen as a masculinist response to *Woman, Culture and Society*. The fascinating complexities of this politics and history are more fully explored in Deborah Gordon's conclusion to this book.
  15. Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision," in her *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978* (New York: Norton, 1979), 35-38.
  16. Moraga and Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back*. Also see Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 1-80. In this context we should also note the importance of the work of "native" women anthropologists outside the United States. See, for example, Soraya Altorki and Camillia El Solh, eds., *Studying Your Own Society: Arab Women in the Field* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1988).
  17. The impact of *This Bridge Called My Back* on feminist anthropology can be seen in Faye Ginsburg and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, eds., *Uncertain Terms: Negotiating Gender in American Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990).
  18. Gloria Anzaldúa, "Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to Third World Women Writers," in *This Bridge Called My Back*, 167. Also see her anthology, *Making Face, Making Soul: Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Foundation, 1990).
  19. Audre Lorde, "An Open Letter to Mary Daly," Gloria Anzaldúa, "Speaking in Tongues," Nellie Wong, "In Search of the Self as Hero: Confetti of Voices on New Year's Night," in *This Bridge Called My Back*, 96, 165-66, 180-81.
  20. Norma Alarcón, "The Theoretical Subjects of *This Bridge Called My Back* and Anglo-American Feminism," in *Criticism in the Borderlands: Studies in Chicano Literature, Culture, and Ideology*, ed. Héctor Calderón and José David Saldívar (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991), 37.
  21. See the important minority critiques of Lila Abu-Lughod, "Writing against Culture," 137-62, and José Limón, "Representation, Ethnicity, and the Precursory Ethnography: Notes of a Native Anthropologist," 115-35, in *Recapturing Anthropology*; Angie C. Chabram, "Chicana/o Studies as Oppositional Ethnography," *Cultural Studies* 4, no. 3 (1990): 228-47; Christine Obbo, "Adventures with Fieldnotes," in *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology*, ed. Roger Sanjek (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 290-302. For a rethinking of minority positioning, see Virginia R. Dominguez, "A Taste for 'the Other': Intellectual Complicity in Racializing Practices" and "Comments," *Current Anthropology* 35, no. 4 (1994): 338-48.
  22. bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 130-31.
  23. James Clifford, "Introduction," in *Writing Culture*, 21, n. 11; Paul Rabinow, "Representations Are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology," in *Writing Culture*, 234-61.

24. Audre Lorde, "Poetry Is Not a Luxury," in her *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, N.Y.: The Crossing Press, 1984), 36-39.
25. Clifford, "Introduction," 1.
26. Catherine Lutz, "The Erasure of Women's Writing in Sociocultural Anthropology," *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 4 (1990): 611-27. It would be worthwhile to expand Lutz's analysis to see to what extent the contributions of anthropologists of color are likewise, or perhaps more irrevocably, erased through standard citation patterns. On counteracting the erasure of women's labor in the history of anthropology, see Nancy J. Parezo, ed., *Hidden Scholars: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993); and Barbara A. Babcock and Nancy J. Parezo, *Daughters of the Desert: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest, 1880-1980* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988). As Barbara Babcock pointed out to me, it is significant that the History of Anthropology series at the University of Wisconsin Press has studiously avoided gender, feminism, and women anthropologists. Certainly, George W. Stocking, Jr., the editor of the series, has written the most thorough and thoughtful historical account of our anthropological canon. See his *The Ethnographer's Magic and Other Essays in the History of Anthropology* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).
27. Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990); Mary Louise Pratt, "Humanities for the Future: Reflections on the Western Culture Debate at Stanford," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 89 (1990): 7-25. Renato Rosaldo is one of the few anthropologists who has engaged with the debates around multiculturalism. He also has been a key exception to the trend to write off women's work in anthropology. In *Culture and Truth*, he criticizes the Weberian "manly" ethic and instead identifies with feminist thinking. Rosaldo not only tries to write anthropology that is rooted in the emotions of grief, sorrow, and rage, but he consciously reclaims subjective forms of social analysis used by women anthropologists (see pp. 1-21 and 168-95).
28. The American media, for the most part, represented the debate as being about "The Rising Hegemony of the Politically Correct," as one article was titled (Richard Bernstein, *New York Times*, October 20, 1990, sec. 4, p. 1). A huge outpouring of articles and reviews on the subject appeared during 1990 and 1991.
29. Hazel Carby, "The Canon: Civil War and Reconstruction," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 28, no. 1 (1989): 36.
30. William A. Henry III, "Upside Down in the Grove of Academe," *Time*, April 1, 1991, 66.
31. Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 28, no. 1 (1989): 11-12.
32. Carby, "The Canon," 40.
33. Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 1 (1988): 78.
34. Geertz, *Works and Lives*, 137.
35. See, for example, Limón, "Representation, Ethnicity, and the Precursory Ethnography"; and Sherry Ortner, "Reading America: Preliminary Notes on Class and Culture," in *Recapturing Anthropology*, 163-89.
36. Lorraine Nencel and Peter Pels, "Introduction: Critique and the Deconstruction of Anthropological Authority," in *Constructing Knowledge: Authority and Critique in Social Science*, ed. Lorraine Nencel and Peter Pels (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 17.
37. Joan Vincent, "Engaging Historicism," in *Recapturing Anthropology*, 49.
38. Annette Weiner, "Anthropology's Lessons for Cultural Diversity," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 22, 1992, 31-32. In response, the 1992 annual meeting of the American

Anthropological Association made multiculturalism its central theme, but the relevance of the canon debates to anthropology was not the main subject of discussion.

39. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Writings* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982).
40. James A. Boon, "Between-the-Wars Bali: Rereading the Relics," in *Malinowski, Rivers, Benedict and Others*, 243. Also see James A. Boon, *Other Tribes, Other Scribes: Symbolic Anthropology in the Comparative Study of Cultures, Histories, Religions, and Texts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982). An exemplary reading across genres can be found in James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning: Conrad and Malinowski," in his *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 92–113. More readings across genders and ethnicities are needed, as suggested by Ebron and Tsing in their essay in this volume.
41. Faye V. Harrison, "Anthropology as an Agent of Transformation: Introductory Comments and Queries," in *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further Toward an Anthropology for Liberation*, ed. Faye V. Harrison (Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association, 1991), 6–7. Also see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness," in *Recapturing Anthropology*, 17–44.
42. In my seminar, as in this collection of essays, I decided to keep the focus on the role of women in American cultural anthropology to maintain historical continuity. While this perspective may seem limited, there is still much missing here about women's contributions just to American cultural anthropology. Clearly, it would be worthwhile to expand this feminist reading of the history of women in anthropology to other national traditions and eventually to develop an international perspective. Within the British tradition, for example, one might ask why Edmund Leach's *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964) was hailed as a ground-breaking departure from classical functionalism while Audrey Richards's *Chisungu: A Girl's Initiation Ceremony Among the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956) was not (Peter Pels, personal communication). On women in British social anthropology, see Nancy Lutkehaus, "'She Was Very Cambridge': Camilla Wedgwood and the History of Women in British Social Anthropology," *American Ethnologist* 13, no. 4 (1986): 776–98.
43. Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 4; Adrienne Rich, "Divisions of Labor," in her *Time's Power: Poems 1985–1988* (New York: Norton, 1989).
44. See Rosaldo and Lamphere, *Woman, Culture and Society*; Rayna Reiter (Rapp), ed., *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975); Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Henrietta Moore, *Feminism and Anthropology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); Micaela di Leonardo, ed., *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977); Ellen Moers, *Literary Women: The Great Writers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Nancy K. Miller, *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Hamlet's Mother and Other Women* (New York: Ballantine, 1990).
45. A classical example is Shostak's *Nisa*. See Deborah A. Gordon's insightful analysis of this text in *A Troubled Border: Feminism and the Textual Turn in Anthropology* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming).
46. Marilyn Strathern, "An Awkward Relationship: The Case of Feminism and Anthropology," *Signs* 12, no. 2 (1987): 276–92. Recently, the awkwardness has been recast in terms

- of the relationship between postmodernism and feminism. See Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, and Cohen, "Postmodernist Turn"; Linda J. Nicholson, ed., *Feminism/Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Deborah Gordon, "The Unhappy Relationship of Feminism and Postmodernism in Anthropology," *Anthropological Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (1993): 109–17.
47. Judith Stacey, "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" *Women's Studies International Forum* 11, no. 1 (1988): 22–23; Abu-Lughod, "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" 18–19.
  48. Kamala Visweswaran, "Defining Feminist Ethnography," *Inscriptions* 3/4 (1988): 36–39. Also see Visweswaran's *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).
  49. Judith Stacey, *Brave New Families* (New York: Basic Books, 1990); Dorinne Kondo, *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Ruth Behar, *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993); Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).
  50. Gordon, *Troubled Border*.
  51. I think this is the case with the feminist critique of Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, and Cohen, "The Postmodernist Turn," and to some extent with the volume edited by Fox, *Recapturing Anthropology*.
  52. Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Writing beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 3; Patricia Yaeger, *Honey-Mad Women: Emancipatory Strategies in Women's Writing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Carolyn Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life* (New York: Norton, 1988).
  53. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 48–51. Limón, in "Representation, Ethnicity, and the Precursory Ethnography," is the only anthropologist who, to the best of my knowledge, draws on the idea of the anxiety of influence. On the ambivalence academic women feel toward the authority they do hold, see Nadya Aisenberg and Mona Harrington, *Women of Academe: Outsiders in the Sacred Grove* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).
  54. On the complexities of recent feminist literary criticism, see Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller, eds., *Conflicts in Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn, eds., *Changing Subjects: The Making of Feminist Literary Criticism* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
  55. Mary Morris, ed., *Maiden Voyages: Writings of Women Travelers* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), xv–xxii.
  56. For discussion of these issues, see Peggy Golde, ed., *Women in the Field: Anthropological Experiences* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Diane Bell, Pat Caplan, and Wazir Jahan Karim, eds., *Gendered Fields: Women, Men and Ethnography* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Diane Wolf, ed., "Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork," special issue of *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 13, no. 3 (1993): 1–103.
  57. Susan Sontag, "The Anthropologist as Hero," in her *Against Interpretation* (New York: Doubleday 1986; orig. 1966), 74.
  58. This view of the "native scholar" is, unfortunately, not yet obsolete; see Obbo, "Adventures with Fieldnotes." Also see the comparative essay by Deborah A. Gordon, "The Poli-

- tics of Ethnographic Authority: Race and Writing in the Ethnography of Margaret Mead and Zora Neale Hurston," in *Modernist Anthropology: From Fieldwork to Text*, ed. Marc Manganaro (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 146–162.
59. Kirin Narayan, "How Native Is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" *American Anthropologist* 95, no. 3 (1993): 28–29.
  60. hooks, *Yearning*, 143.
  61. José Limón, "Folklore, Gendered Repression, and Cultural Critique: The Case of Jovita Gonzalez," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 35, no. 4 (1993): 453–73.
  62. On borderlands in anthropology, see Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth*.
  63. For an important discussion of how anthropology's discomfort with assertive Jewishness has created an "epistemology of the Jewish closet," see Virginia Dominguez, "Questioning Jews," *American Ethnologist* 20, no. 3 (1993): 618–24.
  64. Laurent Dubois, "Namings" (unpublished essay written for a seminar taught by Ruth Behar, "Ethnography Writing Workshop," 1994).
  65. Faye D. Ginsburg, *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, "Monster Stories: Women Charged with Perinatal Endangerment," in *Uncertain Terms*, 282–99; Anne Taylor Fleming, *Motherhood Deferred: A Woman's Journey* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1994).
  66. Even staying focused on the tradition of American cultural anthropology, many important figures are absent, including Gladys Reichard, Hortense Powdermaker, Gene Weltfish, Jean Briggs, and Eleanor Leacock. To fill in gaps, see the excellent volume by Ute Gacs, Aisha Khan, Jerrie McIntyre, and Ruth Weinberg, eds., *Women Anthropologists: Selected Biographies* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).
  67. Anna Tsing, letter to Ruth Behar, October 13, 1994. My sincere thanks to Anna for the lucid reflections in her letter to me, on which I have drawn for the ideas in this paragraph.