

**E Pluribus Unum:
Narratives of National Belonging in the
Avon Press “Growing Up” Anthologies**

Jillian Sandell

NARRATIVES of national belonging reveal the inclusions and exclusions embedded in such categories as “citizen,” “immigrant,” or “foreigner.” The United States’ Constitution celebrated the inclusive utopian spirit of “we, the people” even while it excluded some individuals—based on their group identity—from the rights it protected. More than two hundred years later, the disparity among individual experience, group identity, and a sense of national belonging remains. These discrepancies between what Renato Rosaldo (1994) calls legal and cultural citizenship often become legible through personal narratives. As rhetorical modes that take historical experience to make visible formerly invisible subjects, autobiography and lifewriting in general have become increasingly important genres for “minoritized” writers—women and men of color, white women, gays and lesbians of different races, working-class women and men, and new immigrants—to articulate not just individual subjectivity and group affiliation but also a sense of connection with, or alienation from, the nation.

For this reason, “autobiography studies” is often also “identity studies.” In the discussion below, I want to suggest that if autobiography is the genre of identity politics, anthologies have become its formal extension.

Anthologies represent and produce what Benedict Anderson (1983) has called “imagined communities” of readers and writers. In the last two decades of the twentieth century, a number of anthologies used as their organizational frame the theme of a shared life course or generation, from coming out to coming of age.¹ Such collections reinforce the perceived correspondence between individual subjectivity and group identity, and between individual autobiography and collective narratives. This essay focuses on one such collection of books from Avon Press, which between 1992 and 1997 published a series of anthologies about growing up in the United States as part of a racial or ethnic group. To date the series includes *Growing Up Black* (1992), *Growing Up Chicana/o* (1993), *Growing Up Asian American* (1993), *Growing Up Native American* (1993), *Growing Up Jewish* (1996), and *Growing Up Puerto Rican* (1997). As a response to exclusionary narratives of national belonging, each book in this series functions like rights-based discourses: simultaneously demanding inclusion into the category “American” and drawing attention to the fact that “America” was founded on the prior exclusion of people in the groups the series treats.² Each book collects excerpts from classic and more recent autobiographies as well as, in some cases, fictional coming-of-age stories.

Anthologies are a significant site for the circulation of autobiographies. For this reason, it is essential that scholars of lifewriting understand the ways that anthologies of autobiographical excerpts transform the meaning and import of individual autobiographical narratives. Anthologies demand that a section of an autobiography be representative of the larger text, a process that parallels in miniature how autobiography as a genre is said to function: the person’s life is in some ways presumed to be exemplary of either a larger group of people, an historical moment, or a common life experience. In this way the promise of autobiography is that it will represent experience, not just put into language the life of its author, but also be “representative” of the experiences of a group to which the autobiographer belongs. Anthologies like Avon’s that have as their organizing frame a particular identity—such as “Growing up Black”—exhibit contradictory impulses. On the one hand, in order to render visible the category represented—for example, “Black”—all narratives must be framed within its terms; on the other hand, by capturing a multiplicity of voices within the larger organizing principle of the text, anthologies acknowledge the variety

of experiences—of blackness, say—captured within identity categories. As such, an anthology typically implies a larger context within which it exists, and instantiates Anderson’s “imagined community.” As collections of materials from a variety of authors from different historical or geographical locations, anthologies provide a way for readers, most of whom will never have face-to-face contact, to think of themselves as a part of a larger community of scholars and readers. An “imagined community” is not simply or easily a part of the “nation” however, but frequently a response or challenge to it.³ The Avon “Growing Up” series produces a sense of “imagined community” that challenges the prevailing narratives of national belonging.

The Making and Marketing of Identity

Cultural groups are sometimes mistakenly seen as having “come of age” when their practices, foods, music, and cultural texts are aggressively marketed as part of mainstream consumer culture (Dávila 2001). Therefore, it is important to locate these anthologies within the context of consumer culture. While the “Growing Up” series was originally published by Morrow, the paperback rights went to Avon Press. Unlike the original hardback editions, the paperback series was aimed at young readers, presumably in the hopes of high-school course adoptions. The content of the books remained the same, but the covers of the paperbacks (presumably chosen by Avon Press, not the editors) were new: each includes a stylized photo of a boy and girl representing the particular ethnic or racial group. In almost all of these pictures, an older boy with a prop to signify an activity (a book, a soccer ball) sits or walks with a younger girl who appears to listen to him attentively. These photos reinforce some of the gendered aspects of racialized and ethnic identities and the photos’ *mise-en-scènes* reproduce problematic stereotypes—the Jewish boy and girl poring over a textbook, the Asian American children carrying school backpacks, the African American children walking on a dirt road, the Chicano boy holding a soccer ball, and the Native American children walking in a forest. Given these cover images, it would be easy to dismiss this series as merely an example of what Marilyn Halter (2000) calls the “marketing of ethnicity.” Certainly the books’ explicit framing of life experiences in terms of fixed—and even stereotyped—racial and ethnic categories seems at first to signify an overly simplified account of growing up in the United States. As trade paperbacks, however, these books function as a bridge between academic work on

identity (most of the editors and many of the contributors are academics) and popular understandings of identity that circulate as part of mass culture.

Each book in this series offers a collective account of coming of age as part of a racial or ethnic group, framed as a narrative that combines two historical trajectories: one tracing a timeline from the nineteenth century to the present day, and another moving from accounts of early childhood to late adolescence. These twin historical approaches frame the history of a racial group in terms of the life course, with the “past” designated as youth and adolescence and the “present” and “future” as adulthood. These books are accounts of not just individuals growing up, but also how the very cultural groups of which they are a part have “come of age.” What Avon Press’s frame fails to acknowledge, however, is that what has “come of age” is not these groups, but rather white people’s or mainstream awareness of them.⁴

The first book in the Avon Press series of anthologies is a revised edition of *Growing Up Black* (1992), first published in 1968. That the remaining books in the series should depict other racial and ethnic groups is not surprising. Rather than following the 1977 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) statistical directive that named five broad racial and ethnic categories (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, White, and Hispanic), however, the series creates its own. As historian David Hollinger (1995) suggests, racial diversity in the United States is typically understood within the OMB’s “ethno-racial pentagon.” These five groupings, while culturally popular and widely deployed, are problematic and far from comparable. As Michael Omi (2001) points out, only “Black” is defined as a racial group; “Hispanic” is defined as an ethnic group with cultural designators, while anyone identifying as “American Indian and Alaska Native” must not only trace his or her heritage to the original peoples of North America, but also maintain cultural affiliation, a condition not required of other groups (12–14).⁵ Within the Avon series, the separation of “Latino” (the OMB’s “Hispanic”) into “Chicana/o” and “Puerto Rican” and the inclusion of a book on growing up “Jewish” suggest that the OMB’s five categories are not as fixed as might first appear.

While each anthology in the Avon Press series presents coming-of-age stories by authors from the various racial and ethnic backgrounds, the books are by no means easily comparable to each other. The long tradition of African American testimonial and autobiographical writing, for example, means that many of the authors in that book are familiar and well known. The tables of contents for other books in the series contain lesser-known

contemporary writers, and the narratives include more explanatory notes to provide historical context. The series nevertheless presumes an equivalence among stories about “growing up Black,” “growing up Jewish,” “growing up Native American” and so on. It does not assume, however, an equivalence with “growing up European-American,” a category not included in the series, and an absence that reinforces the series’ commitment to what is now known as identity politics. The politics of identity, and the “hyphenated Americans” such discourses produce, often “freeze” in time and place a series of geographical, historical, or political displacements (Shohat 1998, 7–8). As revealed in the titles of the “Growing Up” books, the Avon Press’s organizational frame of identity politics similarly freezes into a single category a range of autobiographical narratives originally written in different contexts. This reframing suggests that the editors of these anthologies functioned as co-authors, recasting works originally intended for a different audience in a different historical moment. Here, one of the central aspects of anthologies becomes visible: anthologies always imply an editor making deliberate choices and framing the preferred meanings of those choices. In an attempt to create some coherence out of a variety of different experiences, editors must make choices about which authors and life-stories to include. The editors of the “Growing Up” series transform the meanings of the autobiographical excerpts from a series of individual excerpts to a larger collective narrative. By treating these books as more than just a collection of excerpts, the editors become paramount in determining what these books mean and how they work as anthologies. The motto of the United States—*E Pluribus Unum* (out of many, one)—captures the ideological function of this series of anthologies.

The series assumes that it is possible to read “race” in a literature of a particular cultural group, an assumption that produces these identities as much as it reflects them.⁶ In what follows, I discuss each anthology in turn, arguing that composite identities emerge from the collective autobiographical narratives each reprints. I discuss at some length the original and revised editions of *Growing Up Black* to argue that the two historical moments in which they were published dramatically shape the content and meaning of “growing up black” in the United States. Anthologies about coming of age are no exception to the rule that the past is always produced through the lens of the present. Since both editions of *Growing Up Black* as well as *Growing Up Jewish* were edited by the same person, Jay David, I then move to *Growing Up Jewish* to consider his role as editor in shaping the three books. The rest of this article addresses the

remaining books in the series, showing how they follow or depart from the earlier model. One detail that distinguishes *all* the books published after the two editions of *Growing Up Black*, however, is that, in addition to the editor's introduction, they include either a foreword or afterword from a different author, which challenges the singular framing that an anthology's editor typically provides. After discussing each book in turn, I suggest some broader implications of this series for autobiography studies generally.

Growing Up Black

The original 1968 version of *Growing Up Black* reflects its historical context. The Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the 1950s and 1960s provided an important model for later political struggles. "Blackness" thus has often served as a benchmark for understanding racial difference in the United States. The overall picture one gets when reading *Growing Up Black*—especially if the book is read cover to cover in one or two sittings—is that of unremitting oppression and violence. Phillipe Ariès's (1965) claim that "childhood" is an historically recent category of experience barely applies to the lives of all these authors, suggesting not only that childhood is created by the historical conditions associated with industrial capitalism, but also that it is available only to certain racial groups.

Nevertheless, as editor Jay David explains in his introduction to the first edition of *Growing Up Black* (1968), "This is a book about children," adding that "what gives this anthology particular significance is the fact that the narrators are Negro adults recalling a Negro childhood. *Growing Up Black* takes the reader into this dark world" (9). The anachronism of "Negro" is historically appropriate language, although the book is called "Growing Up Black" (not "Growing Up Negro"), which reflects the increasing importance of the Black Power movement in 1968. But the use of "dark" to signify both blackness and a sense of foreboding is more troubling. While it establishes for the reader the connection between race and discrimination, it also reinforces the trope that yokes "black" (meaning racial identity) with "dark" (signifying danger). That this is also a book partly aimed at white readers is clear when David writes, "It is my hope that white readers of *Growing Up Black* will [...] bridge the gap between themselves and the authors of the selections" (10). David's framing of the book's pedagogical purpose suggests that learning occurs through identification—that in giving white readers access to the "dark world" of African American experience, they might better understand the history of

racism and legacy of slavery in the United States. Such a mode of reading suggests that the meaning in the text is produced by “bridging the gaps” between the author, reader, and text, a bridge produced through the transcendence of race. In framing the reading practices of its audience in this way, *Growing Up Black* affirms, through sameness or difference, the reader’s own identity, but does not automatically challenge the ways that identity itself is produced.⁷ David’s editorial selections include excerpts that depict turning points in characters’ racial consciousness that are violently imposed rather than voluntarily assumed. Although he cautions readers not to confuse individuals with their race, his selections nevertheless encourage readers to extrapolate from individual accounts to larger social analyses of racism in the United States. While it would be hard to ascertain how many white readers read the book, its focus on white racism—something black readers would not need to be educated about—suggests a desire for white readership.

David’s editorial hand is everywhere visible. His opening preface, the section descriptions, and the brief introductions to each piece shape the book by providing historical contexts to enable readers to understand why stories of violence, crime, family disruption, and death need to be told. Unlike later volumes in the series, where editors trace the key historical events that shape human experiences, David gives only a brief history, gesturing instead to general trends, such as African Americans’ migration north after World War I and the dominance of female-headed households among African Americans. This thin veneer of historical contextualization suggests that the book provides white readers with an *introduction* to black experience only. Published in the late 1960s, when the increased political visibility of African Americans often went hand in hand with increased violence and racialized terror, David’s editorial choices and narrative threads capture a moment in the Civil Rights movement when anger was an important political weapon against white oppression. That the text allows few moments of relief from this anger suggests how crucial it was to convey the horrors of racism and of the legacy of slavery in the United States and how important it was for David to select excerpts that captured those experiences.

In drawing upon autobiography rather than fiction for the book, David reflects the importance of autobiography to African American letters. For David, the value of autobiography goes beyond literary merit. He writes that “In the words of the authors represented here are found not only nineteen moving and personal narratives, but also a history in brief of the Negro people in America” (9–10). Such a claim anticipates those of contemporary

literary scholars like Henry Louis Gates (1993), who argues that the connection between African American autobiography and history occurs because “the narrated, descriptive ‘eye’ was put into the service as a literary form to posit both the individual ‘I’ of the black author and the collective ‘I’ of the race” (62–63). The “collective I” suggests that a collaboratively written history is itself a kind of anthology, with many voices coming together to create a single, if not always entirely unified, voice. In this understanding, history is no longer a linear chain of events but rather a collection of voices. *Growing Up Black*’s theory of history here intersects with its theory of instruction through identification: lived experience has an authenticity that fiction and history do not, and meaning is produced in the encounter between the text and the reader, not just in the text itself. The publication of *Growing Up Black* occurred simultaneously with a larger movement in the 1960s to establish black presses and to reprint African American texts for both libraries and individual readers. Making African American literature available was an important way that publishing houses participated in and supported political struggles for racial equality and justice (Stephens 1988, 20). This increase in the number of black texts anticipated and helped to create the flourishing market for African American literature in subsequent decades as well as the inception and institutionalization of Black Studies in the academy.

One of the most important turning points recounted by authors in *Growing Up Black* is that of coming into consciousness about racism, and the violence and pain that often accompanies this new knowledge and awareness. As David writes, “Probably the single most important event in the life of any Negro child is this recognition of his own coloredness” (13). These experiences are typically twofold: first, an understanding of how identities are racialized in the United States, and second, a realization of the power relations embedded in these identities. For most authors, these realizations come at an early age and shows the different levels of awareness that accompany racial consciousness, from a sense of being black to a sense of what that blackness means in the United States, what Richard Wright in his excerpt calls the difference between the “facts” and the “feelings” associated with racial knowledge (David 1968, 234).

The importance of education, and especially of learning to read, is a familiar theme of African American slave narratives, and in David’s anthology, it appears not only in the accounts by Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington, but also in those by later writers born after emancipation. Douglass famously writes that as soon as he understood that

white people knew that to educate slaves would be to help liberate them, he “understood the pathway from slavery to freedom” (David 1968, 105–06). And Washington notes that “From the time that I remember having any thoughts about anything, I recall that I had an intense longing to learn to read” (David 1968, 120). Later writers also note that reading shaped their sense of racial consciousness. After reading *Life of Ignatius Sancho*, for example, William Holtzclaw says, “I cannot express the inspiration I received from learning for the first time that a colored man could really make history” (David 1968, 142). The need for black leaders to model black leadership is also reflected in Bill Russell’s excerpt, in which he tells of reading about Henri Christophe, the feared leader of the Citadel in Haiti, noting that “to this day, I cannot in my mind fix upon Henri Christophe as a bad man. For he was the first hero of my youth. A black man who became the dominant force in a power structure” (David 1968, 192–93). *Growing Up Black* models black leadership, which reflects the era of the book’s publication. It appeared in 1968 at the moment of transition between the goals of integration and separatism. While the Civil Rights movements of the 1950s and early 1960s had fostered a politics of integration, the nascent social and political movements of the 1960s generated very different literary and political strategies—the Black Power and Black Arts Movements.⁸

For many of the authors, name-calling accompanies the access to racial consciousness and leads to subsequent confusion and then an explanation of what such names mean. The coming into consciousness about race thus becomes framed within the political context of racism in the United States, rather than within a celebration of different racialized histories and cultures. Explanations of “difference” are often not made in words but in the violent actions of tormentors who physically or verbally torture individuals. This torture becomes exacerbated when parents or friends must explain what the names mean. Discussing how his friends schooled him in these nuances, Will Thomas writes that “[w]hen that day began, I was but a boy. At its end I had become a *Negro* boy, and as such, for the first time, troubledly glimpsed walls which, like morning mists, arose between people different in something called race” (David 1968, 55, emphasis in original). Here, the transformation of Thomas’s racial awareness entails a new sense of identity, one that not only involves knowledge of the violent history of racism in the United States, but also provides him the tools with which to negotiate the world using his newly acquired knowledge. The spaces of childhood, especially school and the streets where children spend time together, reinforce the effects that location has on identity. The “private” space of the

family does not provide a “haven from the heartless world” of racism, since the separation of “private” and “public” spaces is produced within, not outside of, ideologies of race and gender.⁹ The safe space of family is assaulted by the knowledge acquired at school, reinforcing the fact that, as Aída Hurtado (1996) claims, state and public discourses constantly intervene in the lives and domestic arrangements of the working classes and of people of color, rendering useless any notion of private domestic space (18).

The recurring themes of family deaths and breakup, themes that demonstrate the fragility of the family unit during and following slavery, permeate the anthology. For those born during slavery, such as Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington, not knowing one’s parentage or date of birth was almost a given. When his mother dies, Douglass writes, “Never having enjoyed, to any considerable extent, her soothing presence, her tender and watchful care, I received the tidings of her death with much the same emotions I should have probably felt at the death of a stranger” (David 1968, 96). Not just the presence of death marks many excerpts, but also the fact that the rituals of grief and mourning typically accompanying death are sometimes made impossible to perform. Richard Wright notes that after white men brutally murder his uncle, “There was no funeral. There was no music. There was no period of mourning. There were no flowers. There were only silence, quiet weeping, whispers, and fear” (David 1968, 240). Since family and parentage are so attenuated, childhood cannot exist as a meaningful category.

The prevalence of family breakup among African Americans received particular attention in 1965 when a United States Department of Labor report entitled “The Negro Family: The Case for National Action,” now known by its author’s name as simply “The Moynihan Report,” caused controversy by claiming that “at the heart of the deterioration of the fabric of Negro society is the deterioration of the Negro family” (1965, 5). Daniel Patrick Moynihan claimed, “the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which, because it is so out of line with the rest of American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole, and imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male” (1965, 29). That the disruption of the black family is an historical legacy of the violent disruption of kinship during slavery, and that the dominance of female-headed households reflects the institutional and structural forms of racism that constrain and demarcate employment and housing options for African Americans, are now widely acknowledged. Indeed, the Moynihan Report

implicitly shows how such a category as “private family life” is circumscribed by the social and historical conditions that structure kinship. But *Growing Up Black* came out at a time when the claims of the Moynihan Report were taken by many as truth rather than opinion, and therefore, when such claims needed to be countered in every available forum. Unsurprisingly, therefore, David introduces Dick Gregory’s excerpt, which depicts his fatherless home life, by informing readers about the historical legacies of slavery on the black family, adding, “emerging from the chaos of ghetto decadence and promiscuity is the figure of the mother. Whenever a child’s life in the slums has a happy ending, it is likely due to the almost savage protectiveness of the Negro mother for her children” (1968, 241). David’s use of “ghetto decadence” and “savage protectiveness” here unwittingly perpetuates rather than challenges the very kinship patterns he is trying to demystify, which reminds us that, as Hortense Spillers (1987) argues, Moynihan’s report replicates, rather than defines, preexisting understandings about the status of black women in the United States.¹⁰ Instead, Spillers argues, the black woman—and especially the black mother—needs to be resignified “out of the traditional symbolics of female gender [...] [to] make a place for this different social subject” (1987, 80, emphasis in original). From Spillers’ perspective, David’s celebration of the “savage protectiveness” of black motherhood falls within the traditional symbolics of African American female experience. As Spillers suggests, what was needed instead was a new understanding of black womanhood.

Reflecting its moment of publication, in the book “growing up black” almost always means growing up as a black male. Even the cover of the book features two young African American boys—both in close-up, one with his mouth open and staring at the camera, with the other looking to the side—rather than a boy and a girl. While this cover is far more defiant than the later Avon Press cover, which shows a boy and girl in plaid and denim staring at the ground and walking along a dirt path, it still reflects the prevailing, masculinist understanding of African American experience. Only three of the eighteen contributors to the book are women, which impacts the collective voice of the book by assuming male experiences are representative of men and women.

In 1992, William Morrow reissued *Growing Up Black* with a revised table of contents, and some minor changes to Jay David’s introductory and explanatory notes. The new edition reflected its different historical moment. It no longer assumes a white audience, for example, but rather a general audience educating itself about the history and experiences of African

Americans. David's editorial role once again shapes the collective voice of the book, not only in his choice of selections but also in his introductory comments, which are necessarily in keeping with their later publication date. "African American" and "black" replace "Negro," and the flourishing African American literature of the late twentieth century offers a wider range of authors from which to choose. David still selects only autobiographies, an editorial decision not followed in the other books in the series and a choice that again reflects the importance of autobiography to the African American literary tradition. It also, however, replicates a long tradition of reading African American autobiography as history or sociology, not as literature.

The most dramatic change between the first and second editions of *Growing Up Black* is the new section "1951 to the Present—After We Have Overcome." This section allows David not only to update the book to include many of the writers who came of age during and after the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s, but also to expand the range of voices included. Published twenty-four years after the original edition, the revised version includes twenty-five excerpts, fourteen of which had been published since the mid-1960s. David includes more women in this edition, such as Audre Lorde, Maya Angelou, Angela Davis, and Anne Moody. Notably absent, however, is Harriet Jacobs, despite the fact that Jean Fagan Yellin's important reissue in 1987 of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) allowed Jacobs's previously marginalized autobiography, which foregrounds some of the gendered dimensions of slavery, to earn a central place in the African American canon.

Most dramatically, many of the authors from the first edition who describe their violent coming into racial consciousness were replaced with stories of more subtle, though no less insidious, racism. Maya Angelou's description of her eighth-grade graduation and Carl Holman's account of winning a poetry contest only to be mistaken for a white boy's servant when he attends the award reception show how racism shifted from overt to covert expressions of hostility. Such subtle racism also shifts the focus from stories that depict the structural and institutional forms of racism to individual and interpersonal forms. For example, David includes an excerpt from Lorene Cary's *Black Ice* (1991) that reveals the effects of racism in a personal way. In 1972, Cary was one of first black girls to attend St Paul's, a boarding school in New Hampshire that for more than 150 years had been exclusively male and almost exclusively white. Cary finds that "one girl after another would say, 'It doesn't matter to me if somebody's white or black or green or

purple. I mean people are just people” (David 1992, 56). The euphemism of “white or black or green or purple,” as Ruth Frankenberg (1993) argues, “camouflages socially significant differences of color in a welter of meaningless ones.” She notes that what people often consider to be their own “color blindness” is really “power evasion” and a refusal to acknowledge institutionalized racism (149). That such stories are no less traumatic to recount or painful to read suggests the political gains of the 1960s did not always translate into change for individuals. The absence of violent stories gives the later volume a different collective voice, which may reflect Cornel West’s claim that the rise of black middle-class teachers who assign and evaluate literature has decreased the demand for protest literatures (1993, 39).

While the earlier anthology focused on stories of hardship and violence, the later edition builds on those stories by showing how subsequent generations fare. David importantly urges readers to understand that despite the political transformations in the twentieth century, the social reality for many African Americans is not that different from that of their parents or grandparents. David’s editorial choices reveal his desire to advocate for the importance of education and for African American male leaders, which suggests that he continued to believe in the Moynihan Report and desired to model ways to relieve the “crushing burden” placed on black men by matriarchal kinship structures. The inclusion of narratives by Carl T. Rowan, one of the first black commissioned Navy officers; Lorene Cary, the first black female to attend her prestigious boarding school; as well as Ralph David Abernathy, a Baptist pastor who worked with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., allows Jay David to focus on many of the African American achievements that had occurred since the publication of the book’s first edition. Part of David’s reasons for making these selections seems to be to provide models of how others might also achieve greatness. Gone in this edition are Will Thomas, Angelo Hernan, James Corrothers, Bill Russell, Ethel Waters, and Dick Gregory, whose autobiographies depict street and criminal life, often as the only means of survival. Replacing them in this edition are excerpts mostly from men who, David writes, took a different path. Part of David’s project in these new excerpts seems to be an attempt to model alternative ways of “growing up black.” In his introduction to Abernathy’s excerpt, for example, he asks, “What in Abernathy’s background gave him the fortitude to practice nonviolent protest in the face of snarling dogs and deadly bombs? This excerpt from his autobiography gives a sense of the stability, dignity, and love that made up his childhood”

(1992, 151). Indeed, the final two entries of the volume—John Edgar Wideman and Robert Douglas Wideman’s coauthored excerpt from *Brothers and Keepers* and Nathan McCall’s “Dispatches from a Dying Generation”—both try to account for the reasons that African American men take different paths. Ostensibly arguing that the choice between crime and education is serendipitous rather than deliberate, Wideman, Wideman, and McCall remind the reader that in the United States young black men disproportionately enter the prison-industrial complex rather than the university. The collective voice of *Growing Up Black* nevertheless reflects the prevailing social climate of self-improvement rather than the need for structural change in the society’s politics and economy.

Growing Up Jewish

Editor of both editions of *Growing up Black*, Jay David also edited the 1996 *Growing Up Jewish*, and once again he has a prominent editorial presence. He acknowledges in this book that creating an anthology is a collaborative rather than individual effort. David’s introductory material in *Growing Up Jewish* reflects what he perceives to be the differences between “growing up Jewish” and “growing up black.” He notes, for example, that “Unlike other American minorities, Jews are well represented in our country’s collection of writings” (1996, xi). He thus implies that whereas in *Growing Up Black* his goal was to bring African American literature to a wider audience, this same purpose does not underlie *Growing Up Jewish*. David gives a short history of Jewish immigration in the United States, noting the different waves of immigrants from various European countries and with different socioeconomic backgrounds. By focusing on immigrants from Europe, David reinforces the dominant “white” narrative of Jewish identity in the United States.¹¹ His introductory comments to individual excerpts provide additional historical context. Whereas in *Growing Up Black* he writes that there is a “single strand of community that unites the experiences of all American Negroes everywhere” (9), the meaning of “Jewish” is, he writes, “widely disputed: a spiritual quest, a cultural heritage, a nation, a race, a people” (xi). Whereas, for David, then, “growing up black” presumes a common experience and shared sense of identity, the starting point for *Growing Up Jewish* is the diversity, rather than the unity, of Jewish experience in the United States. David credits the country with allowing for this diversity of experience, writing that “Too often in world history, other people have had the power to decide what a Jew would be,

and the power has had no good end: pogroms, Jewish ghettos, the Holocaust. It's different in America, because Jews here can set their own agendas" (xi). As Anzia Yezierska puts it in her excerpt, America, not Israel, is "the Promised Land" (David 1996, 3). This immediately distinguishes the book from his *Growing Up Black*, which had few occasions to celebrate the "American Dream."

Despite David's celebration of Jewish literature and of the possibilities offered to Jews in the United States, many writers in the volume recount stories of violent name-calling that shaped their sense of Jewish identity. As in other books in the series, the violent attribution of identity through name-calling often takes two stages: the act of naming and the subsequent understanding of it through cautious conversations with friends or family members. In contrast to *Growing Up Black*, however, name-calling is not a universal experience, although it has traumatic effects when it occurs. Even when authors do not experience explicit name-calling, anti-Semitism often appears in other ways. Grace Paley remembers, for example, that her teachers commented on her "particularly loud" voice, and were always telling her to "be quiet" (David 1996, 57), while Anne Roiphe's camp teachers tell her that "You must control your loud Jewish voices" (David 1996, 104). The framing of "loud voices" as problematic reinforces the attitude that speech or social visibility is not always politically desirable. This emphasis on voice is echoed also in the importance of language to many growing up Jewish when English is often not spoken within the family. Maurice Hexter says matter-of-factly, "We spoke German at home" (David 1996, 28), while Lewis Meyer writes, "Papa spoke Yiddish with an Arkansas accent" (David 1996, 43).

Regardless of whether or not it is observed, religion plays a significant role in *Growing Up Jewish*. Indeed it is the only anthology in the series to include religion as a major theme, reflecting the fact that "Jewish" refers to both religion and ethnicity. For some, such as Maurice Hexter, who writes that "Naturally we had a kosher home" (David 1996, 29), it is a seamless part of everyday life. Others seem estranged from religion. Kate Simon, for example, writes that "There was a certain enjoyable distinction and shame in being among the few Jews on the block who used the same utensil for both butter and meat dishes" (David 1996, 167). For others, an early cynicism about tradition and faith becomes replaced with tempered acceptance and celebration. Letty Cottin Pogrebin writes that as a child she hated repeatedly reading the Haggadah, adding that "It took me a long time to understand that going through it all over again *is* the point: that an event has no meaning

until human beings invest it with meaning” (David 1996, 123). The phrase “an event has no meaning until human beings invest it with meaning” captures the rhetorical mode of autobiography as a genre, and of the social importance of this series of anthologies.

Of the twenty-five excerpts in *Growing Up Jewish*, twelve are by women, a significant difference from the gender ratio of the first edition of *Growing Up Black*. While several stories by women allude to some stereotypically gendered aspects of Jewish identity—the cliché of “loud Jewish voices,” for example, bears most heavily on women—only Letty Cottin Pogrebin explicitly discusses misogyny. She recalls a button she saw at a Jewish feminist conference that said, “It’s not just tallit envy” to which she responds, “But for me, it *was* tallit envy. What I wished for was not a boy’s sex but his tallit and tefillin and his significance in Jewish life” (David 1996, 119). The rituals and paraphernalia allow her to notice and resist her sense of marginalization as a girl.

Rebecca Goldstein’s fictional “The Legacy of Raizel Kaidish” is, perhaps surprisingly, the only story that directly mentions the Holocaust. It is a parable about acting in ways that serve the greatest human good and create the minimum of suffering. To save her own life in Buchenwald, we learn, the girl’s mother betrayed two women scheming to escape the gas chambers. She spends the rest of her life trying to make up for this by living life in a way that minimizes suffering. Specifically, the girl notes that her mother’s concern was that “I should come to know, without myself suffering, all that she had learned there” (David 1996, 198). This claim reflects the goal of all testimonial writing—for readers to learn about suffering without having to experience it themselves. In this way, this fictional piece ironically intends to do the work usually expected of non-fictional autobiographical writing.

All of the excerpts in the final section are fictional. This transition to fiction appears in all the later “Growing Up” books, and suggests both the varying status of autobiographical writing in different ethnic literary traditions and a desire to celebrate fiction as a form of lifewriting. Whether through autobiography or fiction, *Growing Up Jewish* depicts the tension between religious and secular worlds, between past and present, and between the “traditional” countries from which families immigrated and the “new” or “modern” United States in which they now live. In this way, as in almost all the books in the series, the space of the United States becomes temporalized as modern and adult, a process that implies that the past is

displaced to another location.¹² In the Avon Press series, minoritized groups “come of age” only after they arrive in the United States.

Growing Up Latina/o

The Avon series does not have a single book on “Latina/o” identity, but instead, two books representing two specific Latina/o groups—Chicanas/os and Puerto Ricans. By discussing them together, however, the differing historical experiences that would usually be subsumed under the general category “Latina/o” become clear. *Growing Up Chicana/o* (1993) is the only book in the “Growing Up” series that comprises only fictional works. Since there is a large body of Chicana/o autobiographies from which editor Tiffany Ana López could have made selections, her focus on fiction represents a deliberate decision. López instead creates the anthology from a range of contemporary fictional Chicana/o texts, a choice she says reflects her desire to showcase both lesser known and famous writers, as well as to present what she claims to be the best of Chicana/o literature.¹³ Part of her mission in this collection is to reshape the canon of Chicana/o literature. Her editorial decisions represent a challenge to those critics, such as Genaro Padilla (1994), who have argued for the importance of first-person narratives to Chicano literature and history, since López instead argues for the preeminence of the short story. As she notes, the short story is important to many minority writers who do their creative writing alongside full-time jobs, the brevity of the form reflecting the historical constraints within which they were written. *Growing Up Chicana/o*, made up predominantly of short stories included in their entirety rather than excerpts from larger works, is one of the slimmest volumes in the series. It is also one of the most traditionally literary, focusing on the mythical and poetic aspects of Chicana/o identity. Even though the entries are all fictional, the “autobiography” in this anthology appears in the fictionalized versions of their lives that the authors tell in their short stories, as well as in the prefatory comments to each piece, where López frequently discusses the relationship between fiction and autobiography in each author’s work. The space of autobiography thus exists in the prefaces while also being legitimized in the fictions themselves, rendering them more “real” by virtue of their relationship to lived experience.

Some authors’ prefatory comments illuminate the differences between identifying as “Chicana/o” or “Mexican American.” Alicia Gaspar de Alba, for example, whose short story imagines the childhood life of Sor Juana Inés

de la Cruz, says that she did not “grow up Chicana” because her family instilled in her a pride in being “Mexicana” and a sense of embarrassment towards Chicanos who “ruined” Spanish and assimilated too easily into American life (López 1993, 69–70). Indeed, the transition of group self-identification from “Mexican American” to “Chicana/o” reflects changes in the political status and movements of people of Mexican descent.¹⁴ López’s insistence on naming the book *Growing up Chicana/o*, rather than “Growing Up Hispanic” or “Growing Up Latino” (the publishers’ preferred titles), reflects her desire to foreground three things: “Chicana/o” as a political identity, the impossibility of encompassing all Latina/o experiences in a single volume, and the gendered aspects of racial identities. López thus not only foregrounds gender by including equal numbers of stories by women and men, but also by insisting on using “Chicana/o” and not “Chicano.”

Themes of space and time pervade the collection, connecting the stories and memories of Chicana/os to the symbolic and physical spaces of Aztlán and the borderlands.¹⁵ These themes first appear in the foreword by Rudolfo Anaya, author of the classic Chicano trilogy *Bless Me Ultima* (1972), *Heart of Aztlán* (1976), and *Tortuga* (1979), the last of which is excerpted in the anthology. Depicting mythical journeys that combine symbolic and socioeconomic struggles, Anaya’s trilogy of novels connect the lives of young men in the *barrio* with the mythical space of Aztlán. Anaya’s presence in this volume reinforces the importance of folklore and mythology to Chicano literature and legitimates the fictional choices López makes. He connects history and literature when he says, “In these stories [...] you will find a special slice of Chicano history. It is a creative history, told in the form of stories” (López 1993, 7). Anaya provides the historical background of the coining of the term “Chicano” in the 1960s and explains why it remains politically important for Chicanos to preserve the Spanish language and Mexican cultural traditions. In so doing, he assumes an audience largely unfamiliar with the broad strokes of Chicana/o history and politics. Anaya argues for a common experience based on a shared language, writing that “Whether our ancestors were the first Españoles or Mexicanos who settled the Southwest or the newly arrived immigrant from Mexico, we all are heirs to the same common history,” adding that “Spanish is the mother tongue” (López 1993, 7–8).

Anaya frames the book for white readers. Noting what he has elsewhere called “the censorship of neglect”—that even when such texts are published, they are not always widely available in bookstores or for course adoption—Anaya claims, “If Chicanos and Anglo Americans are to understand each

other better, then these stories are one way toward that eventual understanding.” Part of writing for white readers, Anaya explains, is the need for Chicana/o writers to “code-switch” by using a form of bilingual writing, such as writing in English, even when the story takes place in a Spanish-speaking setting (López 1993, 9). Gerald Haslam’s story, “The Horned Toad,” for example, translates the Spanish dialogue by repeating it in English. This form of code-switching is in contrast to the version used by writers not included in the anthology, such as Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, who go back and forth between Spanish and English (and, in the case of Anzaldúa, Spanish, English, and a number of regional and indigenous languages) not just to capture the “authenticity” of Chicana/o speech, but also to create for non-Spanish speakers the experience of *not* understanding every word. The absence of writers using such techniques suggests that *Growing Up Chicana/o* is primarily aimed at English-only readers.

López opens her own introduction to the volume by connecting the process of anthology building to larger social and political struggles, writing that “Like Chicana/o culture, this anthology is woven from many sources of support” (11). Her acknowledgements are extensive, and by naming her many personal and institutional allies, López foregrounds the ways that anthologies produce and reflect imagined communities of readers and writers. López also acknowledges the selection process at work in the anthology, noting that “This anthology is not meant to be all-inclusive or totally representative of what it means to be and grow up Chicana/o” (1993, 20). Unlike Anaya, however, for López this collection is not for white or Anglo readers, but rather for those young Chicano men and women who need stories of their lives reflected back to them. She writes, “When I was growing up Chicana, I never read anything in school by anyone who had a z in their last name. No González, no Jiménez, no Chávez, no López [...] This anthology, is, in many ways, a public gift to that child who was always searching for herself within the pages of a book,” adding that “I hope that this anthology will be read by young people” (1993, 17).

López suggests that it was college that enabled her to identify as Chicana, allowing her to connect her own reading practices with her identity formation. She writes, “I only discovered these shared experiences in a college course in Chicano literature; it was then that my thoughts about growing up Chicana began to come together” (1993, 18). López’s recollections about college literature classes contextualize her decision to include only fiction in her anthology since they allow her to trace a

genealogy of literary traditions among Chicana/o writers. López is not the only one in the anthology to make such a connection. Alicia Gaspar de Alba, for example, writes that “Not until my first year in college did I learn, through a Chicano literature course [...] that I was, indeed, a Chicana” (López 1993, 70). Such claims resonate throughout the book, reflecting some of the ways that Chicana/o studies and Chicana/o literature have become institutionalized in colleges, schools, and universities around the country, which in turn shapes the production of Chicana/o identities.

The coming into racial or ethnic consciousness through education marks a difference between this anthology and other books in the series. Few stories depict instances of name-calling, for example, perhaps in part because these stories seem overwhelmingly to take place outside of real time and space. Instead, many authors draw on magical realism to combine realistic depictions of events and characters with fantastic, mythical, and dreamlike elements. This is a consequence of López’s choice to include only fiction, not autobiography. López notes that she did not aim to produce an anthology with a unified ideological position, but rather one that demonstrated the range and quality of Chicana/o literature. The anthology’s strong connection to Chicana/o Studies and its celebration of Aztlán and of the mythical and symbolic aspects of Chicana/o identity, suggests it is at least partly influenced by the historical legacy of La Raza Unida party.¹⁶

The opening story of the collection reflects the importance of magical realism in it. “The Ruins,” by Patricia Preciado Martin, tells of Alma, a young girl who visits some local ruins to commune with the spirits. She encounters Doña Luz, a woman who dies when, despite her protests, the urban renewal project relocates her to public housing. She now haunts the ruins, saying “Mi casa es su casa” (López 1993, 33–34). This ironic use of the classic Mexican adage—a phrase that denotes not just hospitality but also the traditional values of *familia* and community—suggests that the urban renewal project took the benign intent of the expression all too literally and stole the woman’s home. While in the ruins, Doña Luz appears to Alma surrounded by shreds of paper that, she tells the girl, represent “the history of our people,” and then she tells Alma, “I entrust it to you lest it be lost and forgotten (López 1993, 36). In an “avalanche of blinding whiteness,” this archive turns into moths, testifying to the fragility of historical memory and to a clearly racialized violence connected to the urban renewal project that kills Chicana/o history and memory.

Several stories in the collection depict young boys and girls coming into their sexual identity. David Nava Monreal’s “Sister Katherine” tells of a

boy's own apprehensive sense of his sexuality, displaced onto his fear of a nun at his school. The young Arturo, a boy who is "slightly built [...] and [who] held his books with long and feminine fingers" (López 1993, 176), fears Sister Katherine, a woman who brutally beats the children and who torments him for being like a woman. After Sister Katherine becomes sexually involved with another nun, her behavior changes and she stops tormenting the children. The inclusion of this story reflects López's desire to address issues of homosexuality, and to foreground the ways that ethnic identities are produced within, not outside of, ideologies of gender and sexuality. Two stories in this collection include lesbian characters, and both are nuns, which connects the homosocial and extra-familial space of the convent with alternative representations of sexuality. López importantly challenges the presumed heterosexuality of Chicana/o identity and opens up a conversation about the intersections of gender, ethnicity, and sexuality.

The importance of education, a theme throughout the series since education often becomes a way to "come of age" in society, is dramatically depicted in Marta Salinas's short story "The Scholarship Jacket" in which she writes, "We couldn't participate in sports at school because there were registration fees, uniform costs, and trips out of town [...] the scholarship jacket was our only chance (López 1993, 128). This story, along with Francisco Jiménez's "The Circuit," which tells of a young boy trying to balance his schoolwork with his work in the fields, are two of the lesser-known works in the anthology but are stories that López says have received the most positive responses from readers and reviewers alike. Indeed, both stories depict the challenges facing young boys and girls in poor rural settings and combine brevity of form with intensity of expression to convey the struggle to attain an education within a system that often punishes Chicana/o children for being poor or speaking Spanish.

Overall, the stories in *Growing Up Chicana/o* celebrate the mythical and imaginative aspects of Chicana/o culture. In so doing, López acknowledges the connections between Chicana/o literature and Latin American magical realism, something Anaya also mentions in his foreword (López 1993, 9). In her introduction, López remarks on the specificity of being Chicana/o rather than part of another Latino group, yet she does not elaborate what these differences are, or what might be gained in differentiating Chicana/o experiences from other Latina/o experiences (or, for that matter, mixed- or multi-race experiences). Instead, as she emphasizes, the focus on "cultural issues and customs" (López 1993, 19) that authors address in their short stories exemplify the shared cultural practices and histories that in turn

shape the collective experience of “Growing Up Chicana/o.” In this way, López importantly links the production of ethnic identities to cultural practices such as literature and lifewriting, recognizing that her own anthology will contribute to this process.

If naïve readers think that stories about growing up Puerto Rican could be combined with stories about growing up Chicana/o in a single text entitled “Growing Up Latino,” then Ed Vega, who writes the foreword to *Growing Up Puerto Rican* (1997), quickly assures them otherwise. He reminds readers that two important facts distinguish Puerto Ricans from other ethnic groups in the United States: first, that for many, Puerto Rico is still considered a colony of the United States, and second, that the United States term “people of color” is inappropriate in Puerto Rico, since the term presumes a dominant white group against which all other people are defined, a situation Vega claims is not true of Puerto Rico (de Jesús 1997, vi).¹⁷ Indeed, Vega reminds the reader that even the term “American” is a misnomer since “the Americas” include over thirty countries, not just the United States. While the vogue is to use the terms “Asian American” and “African American,” he adds, the term “Puerto Rican American” is not only “linguistically clumsy” but also inaccurate, since the Jones Act of 1917 automatically made all Puerto Ricans United States citizens. For Vega, the Ponce massacre of 1937, when Puerto Rican police killed nineteen Puerto Rican nationalists and wounded two hundred others during a peaceful demonstration to protest the United States government’s imprisonment of Nationalist Party leader Albizu Campos, is “a metaphor for the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico” (de Jesús 1997, vii). The importance of this event in Puerto Rican history is indicated in the anthology by the inclusion of Ana Lydia Vega’s recreation of the day of the massacre in her short story “Liliane’s Sunday.” Also, the first story in the collection, Abraham Rodríguez Jr.’s “The Boy Without a Flag,” thematizes the massacre with a father’s betrayal of his son, echoing the United States’s betrayal in the Ponce massacre. Such stories and framing material suggest a more traditionally political approach by editor Joy L. de Jesús than those of the editors of other anthologies.

Growing Up Puerto Rican contains excerpts from both autobiographical and fictional works. However, Vega expresses a preference for fiction and notes the prevalence of what he calls “immigrant testimonial books,” saying that in his own writing he has avoided the genre “in the hopes of elevating our experience to the level of inventiveness required for literature” (de Jesús 1997, x). Of the twenty excerpts in this volume, seven are autobiographical

and thirteen are short stories or excerpts from novels (four of which are translated from Spanish). Even though sixteen of the twenty excerpts were originally written in English, Vega emphasizes the importance of Spanish in Puerto Rican culture as well as this anthology, writing that “out of historical necessity, the literature of Puerto Rico exists in two languages [...] nearly all the writers in this anthology are bilingual” (de Jesús 1997, viii–ix).

Growing Up Puerto Rican wants simultaneously to stress the diversity and uniformity of Puerto Rican experience. In his foreword, Vega explains the historical and political contexts of Puerto Rican literature, tracing the colonial history of the island, giving key dates of political events, and reminding the reader of the movements for independence that remain important to the island. Noting, for example, that the poor and mostly black or racially mixed blue-collar immigrants to Hawaii and the United States did not have access to the kinds of resources that might enable them to write, he emphasizes the relationship between a national or ethnic literature and the political and historical contexts within which such literatures can be produced. Despite the disparity of experiences, whether living on the island or in the United States, working in Hawaiian sugar plantations in the early 1900s, or attending an American university in the last half of the twentieth century, Vega makes certain to emphasize that “what unifies these writers more than anything is the experience of being Puerto Rican regardless of where one resides” (de Jesús 1997, xi).

Despite Vega’s claim that “Not until I came to the United States [...] did I come to realize that my mother was considered white and that my father, because of his African features, was considered black” (de Jesús 1997, vi), the stories in the anthology suggest that for many other authors, racial hierarchies were part of Puerto Rican life, both on the island and in the United States. Indeed, the final section of the anthology, made up entirely of stories set on the island and including stories originally written in Spanish, most aggressively addresses racism. In “The Gift,” for example, by Rosario Ferré, two girls—one light, one dark—are friends at school. Carlotta, “the first mulatto student to be admitted to the school in its half century of existence” (de Jesús 1997, 207), is selected as the queen for the Juan Ponce de León carnival, only to be expelled from her school when she tries to democratize the pageant by making it open to all townspeople. This story’s being placed last in the collection suggests that Vega’s claims of relative racial harmony in Puerto Rico reflect his ideas or wishes more than reality.

Perhaps more accurate is Vega's implicit claim that the United States exacerbates already existing tensions among light- and dark-skinned Puerto Ricans. The excerpt from Piri Thomas's *Down Those Mean Streets* (1991), the first Puerto Rican coming-of-age memoir written in English to become a bestseller in the United States, includes an exchange between the author, who is dark-skinned, and his brother José, who is light: "Maybe Poppa's a little dark, but that's the Indian blood in him. He's got white blood in him" (de Jesús 1997, 65). Also, as Judith Ortiz Cofer writes in her autobiographical "Silent Dancing," "My father could have passed as European, but we couldn't. My brother and I both have our mother's black hair and olive skin, and so we lived in El Building and visited our great-uncle and his fair children on the next block" (de Jesús 1997, 71). The sense of spatial segregation according to color, not just race, applies not only to neighborhoods and housing projects, but also to social and political spaces, as demonstrated in Julio Marzán's short story "The Ingredient." Even though he is Puerto Rican, Vincent finds he cannot join the Latin Students Association because he is not "Latin" enough, yet a Puerto Rican girl he likes won't date him because he is "too" Puerto Rican.

Vincent's need to claim his identity in college is echoed in other accounts that treat the importance of education in understanding what it means to be Puerto Rican. Joy L. de Jesús, for example, opens her introduction by celebrating a Tato Laviera poem that she first read in college: "AmeRícan, defining myself my own way any way many ways Am e Rican, with the big R, and accent on the í!" (de Jesús 1997, xvii). Laviera's rewriting of "American" as "AmeRícan" provides a context for the pieces in the collection. Like Tiffany Ana López in *Growing Up Chicana/o*, de Jesús explains that she was first introduced to Puerto Rican literature in college. Aurora Levins Morales also recalls "learning" in college not just that her identity is Puerto Rican, but more specifically, that she is an immigrant. Reading in her college literature classes immigrant testimonials of the kind Vega avoids, she suddenly realizes that these stories also apply to her. Recalling that her mother "learned accentless English in record time" (de Jesús 1997, 35), Morales celebrates her dual Puerto Rican and Russian ancestry. Yet, by the end of her excerpt, she finally looks only to Puerto Rico, not Russia, as her real homeland. The anthology's focus on "Puerto Rican" experiences is unable to accommodate this author's double heritage.

Growing Up Chicana/o and *Growing Up Puerto Rican* exemplify the challenges in using excerpts of lifewriting to represent historical experience.

The focus on a delimited identity group allows each editor to select contributions that will support her understanding of “Chicana/o” and “Puerto Rican,” respectively. At the same time, because of the series’ frame, there is little space to allow for what Angie Chabram-Dernerseian (1999) calls “the transnational connection” between different Latino/a identities and histories. Calling herself “Chicana Riqueña” to emphasize geopolitical intersections among different groups, Chabram-Dernerseian emphasizes the need to understand cultural and geopolitical linkages across racial and ethnic groups, not to disrupt existing histories and communities but to forge connections among them (265–66). In their desire to represent the flourishing literature from Chicana/o and Puerto Rican writers, and because of the organization of the Avon series, the editors of *Growing Up Chicana/o* and *Growing Up Puerto Rican* must necessarily emphasize singular rather than multiple or hybrid identities.

Growing Up Native American

In her foreword to *Growing Up Native American*, Inés Hernandez reminds readers that despite the specificity of Native Americans’ experiences, the prevailing interest in “diversity” and “multiculturalism” may mean that “people of many ethnicities, including recent immigrants from throughout the Americas as well as other parts of the world, will find something in this collection that will speak to them with respect to issues of identity, culture, community, and representation” (Riley 1993, 7–8). However, she also hopes that the book “falls into the hands of many Native American readers who see the text as a respectful opening into the multilayered and intricate worlds from which they (we) come” (Riley 1993, 8). Her use of “falls” suggests that Native American readers may come across the book more through serendipity than deliberate choice. The collection contains fourteen autobiographical pieces and seven short stories or excerpts from novels. The foreword ends with a list of further readings about Native American literature and history, acknowledging the impossibility of thinking that one anthology can cover all of Native American experience.

Like *Growing Up Puerto Rican*, this volume reminds readers of the ongoing colonial status of many people living within the borders of the United States, and that “What we have in this collection, in many cases, are stories by or about ‘prisoners of war’” (Riley 1993, 10). The book also reminds readers that even when people recognize the many Native

American tribal affiliations, the names given these groups are often not chosen by the groups themselves. As Lame Deer writes, "Our people don't call themselves Sioux or Dakota. That's white man talk. We call ourselves Ikce Wicasa—the natural humans, the free, wild, common people" (Riley 1993, 135).

Throughout the foreword and introduction, Hernandez and Riley trace key moments in Native American history, reminding readers, for example, that the United States government entered into over three hundred treaties with Native peoples that they later broke or dishonored. Individual prologues to various excerpts include more information: for example, one of the anthology's sections is "Schooldays," in which Riley explains that in the 1870s, Congress allocated funds for Indian schools, first as day schools but later as boarding schools in order to more fully separate children from their communities and traditions. Part of her project is to provide positive and realistic, rather than exotic representations of Native Americans for all readers, and she connects her own role as editor of this book with her recollection that, as a child in the 1950s and 1960s, she "was completely unaware that books written about Native American people by Native American people existed." In the books she did read, "Native Americans were usually exotic, cultural artifacts from the past, the stereotypical 'Vanishing Americans'" (1993, 22–23). Based on these experiences, she writes, "I decided to use the opportunity of putting together this anthology as a chance to rectify, in some small way, the situation of my childhood, not only for myself and my own children, but for anyone, Indian or non-Indian, interested in the real-life experiences of Native American people" (23).

As in other volumes in this series, language is important, and Hernandez writes that "The voices in this collection come in English, in one of the invaders' languages" (Riley 1993, 14). Simon Ortiz adds that "In my childhood, the language we all spoke was Acoma, and it was a struggle to maintain it against the outright threats of corporeal punishment, ostracism, and the invocation that it would impede our progress towards Americanization" (Riley 1993, 30). Yet even though he comes to learn English "through forceful acculturation," Ortiz also says that he now loves to write in that language, suggesting the difficulty of sustaining cultural languages and affiliations in the face of punishment and compulsory assimilation (Riley 1993, 30–31).

The experience of attending school is, for almost all the authors included here, a traumatic one. Teachers punish native children for speaking their native languages, yet in at least one school they also didn't teach

English. Lame Deer, for example, remembers that “In all those years at the day school they never taught me to speak English or to write and read. I learned these things only many years later, in saloons, in the Army, or in jail” (146). What *is* taught at school, however, is that they are “Indians.” As Lee Maracle writes, “Three months after I entered school I became aware that I was an Indian” (Riley 1993, 257). In *Growing Up Chicana/o*, going to college and “learning” to be Chicana/o were positive experiences. In *Growing Up Native American*, by contrast, the experience in school (none write of college) of “learning” to be “Indian,” rather than Native American, is overwhelmingly traumatic. One of the most moving accounts of school life is the excerpt by N. Scott Momaday, who uses stream-of-consciousness to capture the way that memories become confused through time and to show how his own sense of identity as “Indian” is torn: “well yes ma’am I’m a Kiowa yes ma’am I’m sure it’s not Keeowa no ma’am I can’t say the Lord’s Prayer in Kiowa I can’t say much of anything really my dad can yes ma’am I *am* proud to be so American” (Riley 1993, 223). The repetition here of “yes ma’am” shows the teacher’s powerful presence, but Momaday’s response also draws attention to the absurdity of asking a Native American boy if he is “proud” to be “American.”

This theme of identity recurs in many selections. Joseph Bruchac, for example, writes, “Who am I? My name is Joseph Bruchac [...] Yet my identity has been affected less by my middle European ancestry ... than by that small part of my blood which is American Indian” (Riley 1993, 238). He later emphasizes the importance of place, not blood, to his identity, writing that “[h]ad I been raised on other soil or by other people, my Indian ancestry might have been less important” (Riley 1993, 244). Lee Maracle also writes that even though she had one white parent, she learnt quickly in school that “white people didn’t like me because of the colour of my skin. I talked about it with kids on the Reserve but they would just say ‘We don’t like whites either’ [...] Of course, my situation wasn’t simple because my old man was white [...] By the time I was nine I didn’t want anything to do with whites” (Riley 1993, 257–58). These accounts show how “blood” and “place” shape a person’s identity differently.

Growing Up Native American emphasizes the tensions between being Native American and being considered American. Writers express ambivalence about claiming their European heritage, and the editorial choices and commentaries provide context for that ambivalence. The book also provides an important challenge to the typical use of “America” to signify the United States. Riley includes in *Growing Up Native American*

selections from both the United States and Canada because, as she argues, “the imaginary boundaries laid down between these two countries are nonexistent in the minds and hearts of tribal peoples” (Riley 1993, 24). In this way, this anthology draws attention to the ways that Native American identity and experience are always produced within a transnational context and among tribal groups across different geopolitical locations.

Growing Up Asian American

Like other editors in the series, Maria Hong opens her introduction by emphasizing the unifying aspects of “growing up.” She also reminds readers that while the excerpts have “been written by authors identified as Asian American [...] the focus of each work shifts dramatically depending on whether the author grew up in a community of his/her ethnic group” (Hong 1993, 13–14). By emphasizing that experiences of growing up are shaped not only by one’s parents and heritage but also by the location of one’s childhood, this anthology marks a departure from the rest of the series, which focus primarily on growing up in ethnic enclaves. When Jeanne Houston’s family moves to a predominantly Asian American district, for example, it feels like “a country as foreign as India or Arabia would have been. It was the first time I had lived among other Japanese, or gone to school with them, and I was terrified all the time” (Hong 1993, 132). This fear calls into question the stereotype of the comfort of living in a community of people from one’s racial group.

Growing Up Asian American (1993) also does not focus on its potential white readership. Hong writes, “the kinship among their stories is manifested not only by the recurrence of certain themes, but also by the sense of recognition many Asian American readers will experience reading them” (1993, 14). She is not, however, trying to define what it means to be Asian American; rather “The purpose of this anthology is [...] to enable individual readers to determine for themselves what we share and where we diverge by reading a collection of works on this subject” (Hong 1993, 17). Emphasizing that part of her project is to make available Asian American stories previously marginalized from the “mainstream American media,” Hong also addresses *Growing Up Asian American* to young people and provides a significant bibliography of further reading, which allows her collection to be understood as simply *one*, not *the*, anthology of Asian American experience.

Like other editors in the series, Hong associates her own coming into consciousness as an Asian American with her education in college, writing that it was not until she was in college that she learned about Asian American cultural and political movements: “Reading poems and stories from Asian America and working in a community of Asian American historians, artists, and writers, I felt both comforted and empowered” (15). This interplay between cultural and political movements and the formation of departments that teach Asian American literature has been documented by William Wei (1993), who argues that in the 1960s and 1970s, most instructors in departments and programs of Asian American studies were activists and community leaders rather than scholars (132–61). This reflects the lag time between the discovery of the need for Asian American studies (and other identity-based departments) and the formation of a generation of students credentialed in Asian American history, politics, and literature who might become professors. Indeed, many of the early college courses, Wei argues, were organized around the rubric of “The Asian American Experience” and focused on autobiographical accounts of identity formation as a way to understand the history of Asian Americans in the United States.

Language shapes the Asian American narratives included in this anthology. Hong explains that there is no glossary because “many of the writers strongly believe that words from Asian languages should not need to be explained” (1993, 16), and the collection includes works by many authors from different Asian American groups using non-English words from a variety of Asian languages. One short story, “Paint,” by Darrell H. Y. Lum is written entirely in Hawaii Creole English. The presence of this story in the book represents a dramatic difference from the ways that language is addressed in other books in the series. The majority of the stories tell of growing up speaking English, however. Jeanne Houston, for example, writes that “I had never spoken anything but English” (Hong 1993, 133), while Hisaye Yamamoto writes that “English lay ready on the tongue but Japanese had to be searched for and examined” (Hong 1993, 286).

What most distinguishes *Growing Up Asian American* from other books in this series, however, is that it allows for more complicated accounts of being of “mixed” race or of growing up in multiracial settings. The Hawaiian protagonist in Maria Hara’s “Fourth Grade Ukus” finds it comforting when she is referred to as “hapa” (mixed race). Gus Lee in “Toussaint” writes of Chinese Americans singing African American blues songs (Hong 1993, 95–96). In “Chang,” Sigrid Nunez, whose father is Panamanian Shanghainese American and mother is German American,

writes that after some Chinese men visit her father and she hears him speak Chinese, she thought, “So it was true, then. He really was Chinese. Up until that day I had not quite believed it” (Hong 1993, 361). Once in the United States, her father changes his name from Charles to Carlos and drops his Chinese family name, taking instead his mother’s, and she wonders “why a man who thought of himself as Chinese, who had always lived among Chinese, who spoke little Spanish, and who had barely known his mother would have made such a decision [...] He’d been a Chinaman Chang for twenty years—and now all of a sudden he wanted to pass for Hispanic?” (Hong 1993, 363). Her question draws attention to the limits of identity categories and to the ways that a place can change a person’s sense of who he or she is. Such a framing, as Liz Bondi (1993) writes, suggests that “Who am I?” might sometimes be answered by the question “Where am I?” (98).

The experience of becoming American for Asian Americans takes various forms. Lydia Minatoya recounts in “Transformation” that “my parents gave me an American name and hoped that I could pass” though she adds that her name “did not provide the camouflage my parents had anticipated. I remained unalterably alien” (Hong 1993, 111). Pardee Lowe writes of her father’s encouraging his children to “become good American citizens, albeit remaining Chinese” (Hong 1993, 177). Lowe finds that the reality, however, is that “it was difficult to be a filial Chinese son and a good American citizen at one and the same time” (Hong 1993, 186). Even those who seem to assimilate, as R. A. Sasaki seems to suggest in “First Love,” are maintaining a fantasy. The narrator loves a woman who “had an air of breeding that came from three generations of city living, one college-educated parent, and a simple belief in the illusion so carefully nurtured by her parents’ generation, who had been through the war, that she was absolutely Mainstream” (Hong 1993, 381). This ironic characterization reinforces the fact that moving through U.S. rites of passage does not guarantee feeling or being American.

While Hong’s selections certainly depict experiences from the nineteenth century to the present, her editorial hand makes visible problematic assumptions about which important moments in history define immigration, and for whom. The internment camp experience during World War II is a key turning point in the history of Japanese Americans, one that the organization of this volume reflects, and one that editor Hong argues represents for *all* Asian Americans “an abrupt end of innocence, a transition from childhood to adolescent doubt and rage” (Hong 1993, 17). Hong’s framing of Asian American history unwittingly implies that earlier Asian

American immigrants, for example, Chinese laborers recruited to build railroads, were naïve and innocent and reinforces the sense that all Asian Americans came of age in the late twentieth century. It also erases the specificity of Japanese American experiences during World War II, collapsing them into a general “Asian American” experience. By foregrounding recent immigration patterns in this way, Hong frames the struggles of earlier immigrants as those of “innocent children,” suggesting that Asian American immigration is primarily important as a contemporary issue. Such an understanding, as Lisa Lowe (1998) argues, reinforces a presumption that Euro-American immigration is in the “past,” while “racialized immigration is temporalized as if it were a recent event” (Lowe 1998, 29). Hong’s focus on Japanese American internment camps, while marginalizing (even eliding) other Asian American experiences during World War II, also underscores the limitations of devoting only a single volume to “Growing Up Asian American.”

The section entitled “The Beginnings of Identity,” for example, while including narratives from a variety of Asian Americans, is dominated by stories of the internment. The accounts emphasize that racial identities are often thrust on people, rather than actively chosen, and show how families were torn apart both physically and symbolically through the United States’ responses to Pearl Harbor. Gene Oishi, for example, writes how “the loyalty question was like a disease that had infected the family” (Hong 1993, 148). Hong’s use of the internment camps to frame her anthology collapses Japanese American experiences into all Asian American experiences. On the one hand, this reflects a certain historical reality in which Chinese and Korean Americans were discriminated against because they were perceived to be Japanese Americans.¹⁸ But on the other hand, it reinforces the monolithic category “Asian American.” At the time, the internments drew everyone’s attention to the perceived split between being American and what we would now call being Asian American. Even when Japanese Americans were United States citizens, “their citizenship, as it turned out, was less important than their race” (Hong 1993, 150). Family members cautiously pass down their stories of internment “like it was an heirloom” (Hong 1993, 215). The stories of internment have different meanings and implications for those in Hawaii, however, where the greater percentage of Japanese Americans in the population and the need for local labor meant that a much smaller proportion of them were interned there than on the mainland. For Hawaiian Japanese, therefore, the injunction is to tell the

stories. By contrast, for Japanese on the mainland, as Garrett Hongo explains, “their injunction was silence” (Hongo 1993, 217).

Perhaps because it is the largest volume in the series and has the longest table of contents, *Growing Up Asian American* is in many ways the most complex anthology of the series. Certainly Hongo emphasizes the internment of Japanese over other aspects of Asian American history, which marginalizes the experiences of other Asians immigrating to the United States. But her goal in editing the anthology is not simply to represent Asian American experiences, but also to “raise questions of identity, assimilation, cultural history, and heritage” (Hongo 1993, 13). She does so by allowing the category “Asian American” to expand to incorporate a wide range of experiences, including those written about multiracial heritages or using words from languages other than English.

Conclusion

In producing an anthology, an editor must create a collective narrative out of a series of individual selections. For this reason, the anthology has been an important genre for minority literatures because it allows for what Barbara Benedict (1996) calls a “heteroglossia of diverse voices” to be published within a single text (29). At least one critic has noted the connection between the anthology and identity politics, claiming that contemporary anthologies foster an “affirmative-action approach to literature” (Gordon 1990, A1). In collecting the work of multiple authors in one text, anthology editors assume a readership that do not—or will not—read multiple books in their entirety, only excerpts from them. Perhaps for this reason, anthologies have inspired as much debate about the reading practices they foster as about their content.¹⁹

At the turn of the twenty-first century, autobiography is the genre of identity politics par excellence. Yet many of the editors of this series chose to include both fiction and non-fiction. Stephen Sumida reminds the reader of *Growing Up Asian American*, for example, that the status of Asian American autobiographies as “authentic” or “truthful” documents is powerfully shaped by the context within which such narratives are produced. The narratives created in response to interrogations at immigration stations on Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay, for example, “became associated with the creation of a fictional identity for strategic purposes,” which helps explain why many Chinese American autobiographies—perhaps most famously Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The*

Woman Warrior—mix fictional and factual accounts in the writing of “memoir” (Hong 1993, 401).

While almost all the books in the Avon Press series remark on the commonality of “growing up” as part of human experience, their editors also acknowledge the difficulty they had in finding selections that fit the design of the series. As the writer of the foreword for *Growing Up Puerto Rican*, Ed Vega, for example, remarks, “finding pieces about growing up Puerto Rican that had been previously published in English, the criteria in selecting the stories, was challenging” (de Jesús 1997, x). Maria Hong similarly notes, “Within the body of Asian American literature ... prose pieces about coming of age in America are relatively scarce” (1993, 15–16). Finally, Joy L. de Jesús notes the absence of stories set outside of New York and stories by gay and lesbian Puerto Ricans in her anthology. Her comments suggest that any choice for inclusion implies an exclusion and hint at the inevitable gaps such selections create. Despite Ed Vega’s preference for fiction expressed in his foreword to *Growing Up Puerto Rican*, the selection process at work still demands autobiographical content. As the editor for the most recent (and apparently final) book in the series, de Jesús’s comments show how her desire for inclusion and coverage (stories set outside New York and stories by gay Puerto Ricans), yet this desire leaves intact a stable notion of presumably heterosexual, New York-based “Puerto Rican” identity that might have been modified by her having included works by gay or lesbian or Boston or Chicago writers. Indeed, except in *Growing Up Chicano*, the presumed heterosexuality of the category “American” remains more or less intact.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the difficulties editors face when selecting excerpts for their volumes, the editors need to *create* “growing up” as a unifying aspect of human life and to locate similarities across an otherwise wide range of life experiences. In part, this reflects the challenges of the anthology form. Its two temporal registers—the moment when the original work was written and the moment it is later excerpted—mean that the significance of the works will be redetermined by the context within which it is reprinted. The mandate of the series demands that stories tell of “growing up,” so excerpts are chosen accordingly even if the larger book from which the excerpt comes, or the original intent of the author, is something else entirely. By having individual experiences represent historical knowledge, this series reinforces the kinds of differences that sometimes prevent coalitions across race or solidarity around specific problems rather than distinct identities.

Anthologies of autobiographical excerpts do not simply make visible the cultural heritage of an identity formation or celebrate its place within the nation, but also provide a way to recognize and understand the historical erasure of racialized and gendered immigration in both the past and the present. The “Growing Up” series draws attention to the ways that coming of age in the United States is often a transnational experience. Many of the authors point to other national locations or historical moments as formative of their own identity and experience. It is important, however, not to flatten out the differences between forced displacement and voluntary migration, and to attend to the geopolitical circumstances that precede immigration (Kaplan 1996). These differences profoundly shape both the experiences of immigrants and the subsequent narratives they produce. Indeed, as Lisa Lowe (1998) argues, “identity” movements are not only claims for cultural roots, but also attempts to bring to consciousness the racialized exclusions of United States history. In this way, we must understand identity formation and the forms of lifewriting it generates as both historical and spatial processes. The “Growing Up” series reveals these geographies and histories of racialized and gendered otherness to the imaginary and political category of “American” readers.

While it is perhaps a truism to say that personal experience is no longer considered the only or most authentic location of knowledge, autobiography remains important because it allows writers and readers to show that identity is not only a matter of experience or visible features, but also of what Judith Butler (1990) calls “the socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility” (17). The category “personal experience” remains a powerful form of social knowledge because it is often our first encounter with racism, sexism, homophobia, and other modes of discrimination. Lifewriting that addresses these experiences and connects minoritized identities with broader structural inequities can help us better understand the relationship between lived experience, group identity, and a sense of national belonging. One of the challenges is to find ways to teach and analyze such lifewriting not just by encouraging identification, but instead by showing how identification and identities are themselves produced. This means avoiding what Caren Kaplan (1992) calls “in-law” forms of autobiography—those forms of lifewriting that celebrate exoticization or individualism—and emphasizing instead the possibility of lifewriting’s “out-law” status—those that use the tropes of autobiography to disrupt rather than consolidate colonialist and capitalist discourses of subject-formation (115–38). As Kaplan emphasizes, this “out-law” status emerges in both the production and reception of

lifewriting. In this way, we can read excerpts included in the “Growing Up” series against themselves or within a critical perspective to better understand why and how in different historical moments, certain rhetorical resources—such as lifewriting—or certain political categories—such as racial identities—become available and even privileged as a way to articulate a sense of connection with or distance from the nation within which an individual lives.

The Avon Press “Growing Up” series represented a much-needed challenge to the canon of American autobiography and literature in the 1990s. As a series that honors the importance of multiculturalism, it offered alternatives to prevailing narratives of national belonging. Again and again, editors emphasize the urgency of their projects, frequently mentioning that when they were growing up, there were no such anthologies to read. Additionally, each individual anthology includes a range of accounts of “growing up,” which complicates any unified notion of what constitutes being “American.” But it is also important to consider the series as a whole. While multiculturalism has provided an important corrective to the normative whiteness and maleness of American autobiography, and while anthologies have become an important genre that makes non-white, non-male texts more widely available, they do not automatically revise the parameters of the canon or the nation. Taken in its entirety, for example, the premise of the Avon Press “Growing Up” series in some ways exemplifies what Minoo Moallem and Ian Boal (1999) call “multicultural nationalism,” a form of nationalism that can include a range of racial and ethnic identities but often homogenizes differences, dismisses hybridity, commodifies alterity, and ignores power relations between and among groups of people with different geopolitical histories (256–58). Multicultural anthologies of autobiographical narratives may challenge what George Gusdorf (1980) calls the “conditions and limits” of Western autobiography, but in so doing they often celebrate diverse cultures without connecting those cultures to histories of immigration or displacement or to heteronormative traditions of cultural production. They also sometimes assume that multicultural groups produce their identities in relation to an imagined hegemonic whiteness. For this reason, scholars of lifewriting should consider the circulation of autobiographical excerpts within anthologies because the circumstances of reception—the difference between reading an individual excerpt, reading an entire anthology, or reading a series of anthologies—will dramatically shape the meaning of the text. The nuances and internal contradictions each individual text offers in its account of “growing up” are not always apparent

when the series is considered as a whole. The mandate to focus on individual identities also means that connections between different groups must necessarily be downplayed.

The appearance of the Avon Press “Growing Up” series reflects the importance of identity politics to lifewriting and autobiography and the need for racial and ethnic groups to create and sustain a sense of cultural identity, whether based on race, ethnicity, or religion, in order to maintain political visibility. Editors know that they must emphasize shared cultural experiences, even when they also acknowledge that the actual selections in their volume might dispute the imputation of similarity. Indeed, the series as a whole forcefully shows how different are the experiences between and among racial and ethnic groups. But the generic convention of the anthology that produces a frame within which to understand the selections requires the editors to emphasize some sense of a shared experience. By using chronology to organize the selections, many of the books in the series frame these shared experiences in terms of a racial or ethnic group’s “coming of age.” Such historical narratives can end up framing earlier historical experiences as always in the “past” when in fact they continue to shape present understanding of race and identity. The trope of coming of age invites readers to understand cultural groups within a model of maturation in which European-Americans have implicitly already long since matured into adulthood. As Ella Shohat (1998) points out, always focusing on “oppositional communities against a white European dominant” can “ironically reposition whiteness as normative interlocutor.” Instead, she argues that it is important to “stress the links threading communities together in a conflictual network” (6) and to understand identities and communities in relation to each other. These links would help us see beyond a Eurocentric understanding of “Growing Up American” and recognize that the status of “American” itself changes through the displacements and travels that bring immigrants to the United States. As Shohat notes,

The continually changing makeup of the U.S. forces “us” always to rethink the “we.” The idea of a unitary “American Nation” benevolently receiving new waves of immigrants suggests that only the immigrants, rather than the nation itself, are being transformed, when in fact the nation is transformed by each new wave washing up on its shores. New immigrants stretch with their bodies the boundaries and definitions of Americanness. (1998, 44)

Narratives about “growing up” in the United States stretch the boundaries and definitions of “America.” They also, through the transnational connections forged through immigration and displacement, stretch the boundaries and definitions of the countries and regions with which minoritized groups identify. It is not enough to only add new “hyphenated Americans” to the nation’s canons of law and literature. We must also transform those same canons. As collections of materials organized around a shared theme, anthologies often help us recognize and understand prevailing debates and concerns. The Avon Press series was an important intervention to American lifewriting; new anthologies can equally intervene in current debates about racial and national identity in the context of globalization and to help us better understand the discrepancies between legal and cultural citizenship as expressed in collective narratives of national belonging.²⁰

Notes

I would like to acknowledge the following people who read and commented on earlier versions of this essay when it was still a chapter of my dissertation: Antoinette Chevalier, Elisabeth Freidman, Catherine Hollis, Lani Kask, Ramu Naggapan, Thy Phu, Lincoln Shlensky, Asali Solomon, and Matt Wray. I would especially like to thank Elizabeth Abel, Caren Kaplan, and Chris Nealon for their feedback and guidance. I would also like to acknowledge Thomas Smith and John Hazlett of *Lifewriting Annual* for their thoughtful and useful comments at the final stages of writing.

1. Coined by Douglas Coupland to describe the generation born after the mid-1960s, the phrase “Generation X” has been widely imitated by other writers and editors to frame collections of stories from cultural or chronological groups. See Coupland, 1991; Bernstein and Silberman, 1996; Brokaw, 1998; Leland and Chambers, 1999; and Schiffman, 2000. For a discussion of how the concept of “generation” shaped autobiographical writing in the 1960s in the United States, see Hazlett 1998.

2. I put “America” and “American” in quotation marks to emphasize that these terms are not automatically synonymous with the geopolitical space of “the United States.” Throughout the discussion below, moreover, I assume all identities and collective names are socially and historically constructed, rather than essentially true, though I will not put all names in quotation marks.

3. I have discussed this connection between anthologies and Benedict Anderson’s notion of an “imagined community,” and between “imagined community” and “the nation,” in more detail in Jillian Sandell, 2003. “This Bridge

Called My Book: Anthologies of Women's Life Writing and the Problem of Community." *Prose Studies* 26 (1-2): 278-98.

4. I am grateful to Asali Solomon for helping me articulate this point.

5. Omi (2001) notes that people increasingly realize the political and economic value of racial classification and recognition, and that more and more groups want their identity included on the census. Most recently, Native Hawaiians, Arab Americans (currently included in "white"), and people of mixed racial descent have fought for their own census categories (12-14).

6. In "Writing, 'Race,' and the Difference It Makes" (1993), Henry Louis Gates argues that within European Enlightenment philosophy, blackness signifies the opposite of reason and the rights of man, and that this became the justification for slavery. Thus, he argues that "race" is a trope not a reality, a figure with social not biological meaning. Specifically, he argues that blackness signifies absence, something Toni Morrison (1992) also addresses. For Gates, literature is not just a medium of expressing power, but also a sign of power itself.

7. I am grateful to Elisabeth Friedman for helping me articulate this point.

8. According to Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton (1967), "Black Power" is

a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of this society. The concept of Black Power rests on a fundamental premise: *Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks.* (44, emphasis in original)

The Black Arts Movement of the 1960s argued for forms of literary expression that endorsed and represented the spirit of black power. Writer Larry Neal (1997) defines it as follows: "The Black Arts Movement is radically opposed to any concept of the artist that alienates him from his community. Black Art is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept [...]. The Black Arts and the Black Power concept both relate broadly to the Afro-Americans' desire for self-determination and nationhood" (1960).

9. The phrase "haven from a heartless world" comes from Christopher Lasch (1977). For one account of how notions of "private" and "public" are gendered and racialized terms that produce as much as they reflect the events and spaces they purport to describe, see Hurtado (1996).

10. The legacy of slavery means that kinship among black families is passed through the female line in ways that trouble the usually patriarchal connection between property and family. The Middle Passage, Hortense Spillers (1987) argues, ungendered Africans so that prevailing U.S. notions of "male" and "female" do not correspond to the experiences of African Americans during and after slavery (65-81).

11. I put “white” in quotes because, as Caren Kaplan (1998) argues, the whiteness of U.S. Jewish identity has been produced through “the erasure of Arab, Latino, African, Asian, and South Asian Jews from the dominant narrative of Jewish identity in U.S. contexts” and that this Eurocentric hegemony is produced through racial divisions based on class and property relations (474).

12. In her important study of discourses of travel, Caren Kaplan (1996) argues that metaphors of movement and location often efface the very real geopolitical circumstances that make travel possible or necessary and erase the differences between forced displacement and chosen migration.

13. Personal conversation with Tiffany Ana López, February 3, 2002. When I refer to López’s motives for making various editorial choices, I am drawing on this conversation.

14. One of the first organizations to claim “Mexican American” as an identity was the League of United Latin American Cultures (LULAC). Founded in 1929, it is the oldest Mexican American civil rights association in the United States. and emerged in part in response to critics of Mexican immigration in the 1920s. Its decision to include only Mexican-Americans who were United States nationals and who spoke English has subsequently led critics to regard LULAC as conservative and reformist. But in the 1920s and 1930s LULAC was an important vehicle for articulating a Mexican American resistance to discrimination and forging a sense of ethnic identity as “Mexican American.” In the 1960s, a new generation of Mexican Americans, many of whom worked in alliance with farmworkers and students, forged a new “Chicano” movement that ultimately led to the formation of La Raza Unida party. “Chicano” denotes someone with Mexican or Mexican American heritage, but, as Carlos Muñoz argues, the Chicano movement also separated itself from César Chávez and the farmworkers union by emphasizing Chicano nationalism, and thus “Chicano” often connotes a different sense of identity from “Mexican American” (García, 1989; Muñoz, 1989, 7).

15. According to Carlos Muñoz, Jr. (1989),

Aztlán was the name used by the Aztecs to refer to the place of their origin. Since the Aztecs had migrated to central Mexico from “somewhere in the north,” Chicano activists claimed that *Aztlán* was all southwestern United States taken from Mexico as a result of the Mexican-American War. This included California, Texas, New Mexico, most of Arizona, large parts of Colorado, Nevada and Utah, and a piece of Wyoming. (77)

While Muñoz does not specifically say so, Rodolfo Acuña (1999) states that *Aztlán* is a “mythical place” (14).

16. La Raza Unida Party (RUP) was founded in 1970 by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, author of the epic poem “I am Joaquín/Yo Soy Joaquín,” a poem that criticizes *la sociedad moderna* for destroying “*Joaquín*.” The poem both represented and fueled the Chicano movement. Gonzalez’s role as both founder of La Raza Unida, a political party attempting to challenge the two-party system in the

United States that had some success in Texas, and one of the foremost authors of contemporary Chicana/o literature, demonstrates the connection between political and literary practices. Central to RUP were the nascent student movements. In fact, the role of students in RUP and the importance it placed on education (including bilingual education, financial support, creating new textbooks, and hiring Chicana/o teachers) illustrates the connection between the establishment of Chicana/o studies in the academy and political claims for civil rights. For more on La Raza Unida see Muñoz (1989), 99–126, and Acuña (1999), 390–94.

17. In 1952, Puerto Rico's Popular Democratic Party succeeded in changing the official political status of Puerto Rico from U.S. colony to autonomous commonwealth. While Puerto Ricans can be drafted into the United States military, they cannot vote in national elections, and because of the United States's strong economic ties to the island, Puerto Rico remains in a neocolonial relation to the United States. For a discussion of the history of Puerto Rican resistance movements in the United States and in Puerto Rico, see Torres and Velázquez (1998).

18. The 1982 killing of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American, by two white unemployed auto workers who believed him to be Japanese, is just one of many contemporary examples of this same phenomenon.

19. The history of criticism on anthologies is predominantly a history of the kinds of readers anthologies produce as well as a consideration of the genre's pedagogical uses. See Benedict, 1996; Price, 2000; Riding and Graves, 1928; "What Do We Need To Teach?" 1993.

Works Cited

- Acuña, Rodolfo. 1999. *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*. Fourth ed. New York: Longman.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso.
- Ariès, Philippe. 1965. *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*. New York: Random House.
- Benedict, Barbara M. 1996. *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Bernstein, Robin and Seth Clark Silberman, eds. 1996. *Generation Q: Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals Born Around 1969's Stonewall Riots Tell Their Stories of Growing Up in the Age of Information*. Los Angeles: Alyson Publications.
- Bondi, Liz. 1993. "Locating Identity Politics." In *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile, 84–101. New York: Routledge.

- Brokaw, Tom. 1998. *The Greatest Generation*. New York: Random House.
- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Carmichael, Stokely and Charles Hamilton. 1967. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*. New York: Vintage.
- Chabram-Dernersesian, Angie. 1999. "Chicana! Rican? No, Chicana Riqueña!": Refashioning the Transnational Connection." In *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State*, ed. Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcón, and Minoo Moallem, 264–95. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press.
- Coupland, Douglas. 1991. *Generation X*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- David, Jay, ed. 1968. *Growing Up Black*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- , ed. 1992. *Growing Up Black*. New York: Avon Press.
- , ed. 1996. *Growing Up Jewish*. New York: Avon Press.
- Dávila, Arlene. 2001. *Latinos Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
- de Jesús, Joy L. ed. 1997. *Growing Up Puerto Rican*. Foreword by Ed Vega. New York: Avon Press.
- Frankenberg, Ruth. 1993. *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.
- García, Mario T. 1989. *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930–1960*. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press.
- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. 1993. "Writing, 'Race,' and the Difference It Makes." In *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars*, 43–70. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. and Nellie McKay, ed. 1996. *The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Gordon, Larry. 1990. "Anthology Rattles Tradition." *Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 2001, A1.
- Gusdorf, Georges. 1980 [1956]. "The Conditions and Limits of Autobiography." In *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney, 28–48. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Halter, Marilyn. 2000. *Shopping for Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Hazlett, John Downton. 1998. *My Generation: Collective Autobiography and Identity Politics*. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press.
- Hollinger, David. 1995. *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*. New York: Basic Books.

- Hong, Maria, ed. 1993. *Growing Up Asian American*. Afterword by Stephen H. Sumida. New York: Avon Press.
- Hurtado, Aída. 1996. *The Color of Privilege: Three Blasphemies on Race and Feminism*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press.
- Jacobs, Harriet. 1987 [1861]. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*. Ed. Jean Fagan Yellin. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Kaplan, Caren. 1992. "Resisting Autobiography: Out-Law Genres and Transnational Feminist Subjects." In *De/Colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography*, ed. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, 115–38. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.
- Kaplan, Caren. 1996. *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press.
- Kaplan, Caren. 1998. "'Beyond the Pale': Rearticulating U.S. Jewish Whiteness." In *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age*, ed. Ella Shohat, 451–84. New York: MIT Press and New Museum of Contemporary Art.
- Lasch, Christopher. 1997. *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged*. New York: Basic Books.
- Leland, John, and Veronica Chambers. 1999. "Generation Ñ." *Newsweek*. July 12. 52–58.
- López, Tiffany Ana, ed. 1993. *Growing Up Chicana/o*. Foreword by Rudolfo Anaya. New York: Avon Press.
- Lowe, Lisa. 1998. "The International Within the National: American Studies and Asian American Critique." *Cultural Critique* 40 (Fall): 29–47.
- Moallem, Minoo and Iain A. Boal. 1999. "Multicultural Nationalism and the Poetics of Inauguration." In *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State*, eds. Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcón, and Minoo Moallem, 243–63. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press.
- Morrison, Toni. 1993. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. New York: Vintage.
- Muñoz, Carlos, Jr. 1989. *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement*. New York: Verso.
- Neal, Larry. 1997 [1968]. "The Black Arts Movement." In *The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Nellie McKay, 1959–72. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Omi, Michael. 2001. "Counting in the Dark." *Colorlines: Race, Culture, Action* (Spring): 12–14.
- Padilla, Genaro. 1994. *My History, Not Yours: The Formation of Mexican American Autobiography*. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press.

- Price, Leah. 2000. *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Riding, Laura and Robert Graves. 1928. *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies*. New York: Doubleday, Doran, and Company.
- Riley, Patricia, ed. 1993. *Growing Up Native American*. Foreword by Inés Hernández. New York: Avon Press.
- Rosaldo, Renato. 1994. "Cultural Citizenship and Educational Democracy." *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (3): 402–11.
- Sandell, Jillian. 2003. "This Bridge Called My Book: Anthologies of Women's Life Writing and the Problem of Community." *Prose Studies* 26 (1–2): 278–98.
- Schiffman, Lisa. 2000. *Generation J*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Shohat, Ella. 1998. "Introduction." *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age*, ed. Ella Shohat, 1–62. New York: MIT Press and New Museum of Contemporary Art.
- Spillers, Hortense J. 1987. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* 17 (2) (Summer): 65–81.
- Stepto, Robert. 1988. "Afro-American Literature." In *Columbia Literary History of the United States*, ed. Emory Elliott et al., 785–99. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.
- Torres, Andrés and José E. Velázquez. 1998. *The Puerto Rican Movement: Voices from the Diaspora*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press.
- United States Department of Labor, Office of Policy Planning and Research. *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. March 1965.
- Wei, William. 1993. *The Asian American Movement*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press.
- West, Cornel. 1993. "Black Critics and the Pitfalls of Canon Formation." In *Keeping the Faith: Philosophy and Race in America*, 33–44. New York: Routledge.
- "What Do We Need to Teach?" 1993. Special Section. *American Literature* 65 (2): 325–55.