

Introducing the Anthropologist as Writer

Across and Within Genres

Helena Wulff



There you are: facing the computer screen. Your “field,” whatever that was, is some distance away, at least for now. You have worked through the materials you collected there, and think you have them in a promising order. Time for the next step: to write. You may not get away from the screen any time soon—not really get away.

Then at some later point, you are there again in front of the screen, checking your emails. Has that publisher or editor you had in mind been in touch yet, responding to your proposal, or even to that entire manuscript you sent? If so, expect—at best—a period in front of the screen again, reviewing, rewriting, perhaps reorganizing.

Anthropologists have mostly celebrated the field experience in all its variety. Yet in fact, they are likely to spend as much time sitting in front of the computer screen. Once it has begun, writing is in one way a very solitary activity, but in another way, it is not: you may be in interaction with an imagined audience of colleagues, students, as well as people in your field, perhaps general readers, and, increasingly, the representatives of academic audit culture.

For some time now, anthropologists have understood that they are also writers, and have engaged in scrutinizing the implications of this fact. Clifford Geertz, in his influential book *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973: 19), famously asked (in the idiom of the time): “What does the ethnographer do?—He writes.” Taking existing conversations on writing in anthropology as a point of departure, the mission of this volume is twofold: first, to identify different writing genres anthropologists actually engage with; and second, to argue for the usefulness and necessity for anthropologists of taking

writing as a craft seriously *and* of writing across and within genres in new ways. This introduction will contextualize writing in anthropology historically and theoretically, move on to my own experience of writing dance journalism as one instance of broadening anthropological writing, and conclude by offering an overview of ways of writing anthropology as discussed in the following chapters.

What writing genres are anthropologists expected, in various contexts, to master in the twenty-first century? Anthropological writing is a timely topic as it shapes the intellectual content of the discipline, as well as careers and institutional profiles. Academic scholarly writing is obviously the primary genre for anthropologists, and the recent debate has had its center of gravity here. **Yet anthropologists also do much writing in many styles and genres other than academic scholarly writing.** Writing for various **administrative** contexts, which includes not one but a number of changing genres, is—because of their control over academic values—regarded as an expanding problem by many, if not most, anthropologists with intellectual drives. Sooner or later most anthropologists find themselves writing academic administrative texts, filling in extensive forms, and filing reports (Brenneis 2009). With increasing demand, many anthropologists also develop a capacity to write reports commissioned by development agencies, municipalities, and business corporations. But there is also significant cultural, social, and political critique communicated through anthropological writings (Gusterson and Besteman 2010). There are **anthropologists who write memoirs** (Narayan 2007; Stoller 2008; Collins and Gallinat 2010), and **fiction**, as commented on by Ruth Behar in the book chapter “Believing in Anthropology as Literature” (2009). Anthropologists have taken an interest in writing novels (Stoller 1999), poetry (Tedlock 2002), and even crime novels (White 2007) inspired by ethnography. The fact that anthropologists also are engaged readers of detective stories has been examined by Regina Bendix (2012). Ulf Hannerz (2013) has written about a legendary Swedish detective story writer, Stieg Trenter (whose idiosyncratic spelling of his first name most likely influenced Stieg Larsson of the globally best-selling “Millennium Trilogy” when he changed his name from Stig to Stieg), pointing out similarities between anthropologists and detective story writers. **Travel writing**, especially that describing dark sides such as violence and security issues, is examined by Skinner (2012).

CONTEXTUALIZING WRITING IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Writing and writers have attracted anthropological attention for quite some time. Clifford Geertz (1988) analyzed the anthropologist as author (particu-

larly Malinowski, Benedict, Evans-Pritchard, and Lévi-Strauss), and in the 1990s, Eduardo Archetti edited the volume *Exploring the Written* (1994a), which applies an anthropological perspective to texts ranging from fiction and songs to letters and newspapers. As Archetti (1994b: 13) argued, “a literary product is not only a substantive part of the real world but also a key element in the configuration of the world itself.” And the volume *Anthropology off the Shelf: Anthropologists on Writing* (2000), edited by Alisse Waterston and Maria D. Vesperi, elaborates on anthropological writing for a general audience, especially on questions of racism, sexism, and ethics. An anthropological inquiry into writing is not limited to the anthropology of writing, text (Barber 2007), reading (Boyarin 1993; Reed 2011), and cultural literacy (Street 1997), but includes ideas from literature that have been a frequent source for anthropologists. Writing as a way of life is one of Michael Jackson’s recurrent themes as in *The Other Shore* (2012). Kristen Ghodsee presents an original experimental ethnographic writing form when she includes some ethnographic fiction chapters in the third person among other ethnographic chapters in the first person in *Lost in Transition: Ethnographies of Everyday Life after Communism* (2011), her monograph about the collapse of communism in Bulgaria.

One of the enduring impacts of the “writing culture” debate during the 1980s is that it made anthropologists sharpen their writing tools. There was the critique of what was conceptualized as narcissism, with focus on the fieldworker at the expense of the people of the study, which was mostly articulated in British anthropology by, for example, Dawson, Hockey, and James (1997), while the volumes by Barton and Papen (2010) and Zenker and Kumoll (2010) testify to the influence of the debate on “writing culture” two decades after it first came about. So does the issue of *Cultural Anthropology* (Orin 2012) celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of *Writing Culture* (1989) edited by James Clifford and George Marcus. In that anniversary issue of *Cultural Anthropology* there is an interview entitled “Anthropology and Fiction” where Damien Stankiewics (2012: 536–537) talks to Amitav Ghosh, the Indian writer who has a Ph.D. in social anthropology from University of Oxford and is quoted by a number of contributors here. When asked about his writing anthropology versus writing fiction, and his novel *In an Antique Land* (1992), Ghosh replies by first praising his anthropological training:

But after I finished my dissertation I was left with a nagging sense of dissatisfaction: I felt that everything that was important about my time in Egypt had been left unsaid. To describe this as a “nagging sense of dissatisfaction” is perhaps inadequate. Like many who’ve spent a long time alone in a foreign circumstance, I was haunted by my experiences. This was one of the reasons why it became so important to write the book. While living in Egypt, I did two kinds of writing. I

kept field notes and I also wrote a set of diaries. In my mind the field notes were the “anthropological” part of my work; the diaries were more literary. My dissertation was based almost entirely on my field notes; similarly the first-person narrative in *Antique Land* is based on my diaries.

A sense of being constrained by the academic form of dissertation writing has thus produced fiction from the field, but also, in line with the argument of this volume, kept developing experimental ethnographic writing and new genres.

In fact, the affiliation between anthropology and literature goes a long way back. With his literary interest, Victor Turner (1976: 77–78) regarded African ritual and Western literature as “mutually elucidating.” Richard Handler and Daniel Segal (1990) looked at Jane Austen as an ethnographer of marriage and kinship in her time and class in England, which showed contrasting social realities. And when Nigel Rapport (1994) did fieldwork in the village Wanet in England, he made the writer E.M. Forster his companion ethnographer by considering Forster’s literary writings parallel to his own findings in the village. Among the volumes juxtaposing anthropology and literature are Dennis and Aycock (1989), Benson (1993), Daniel and Peck (1996), and De Angelis (2002). In *Novel Approaches to Anthropology* (2013), Marilyn Cohen and her contributors discuss the role of historical as well as contemporary novels in anthropology. Writing about the relationship between fiction and anthropology, Archetti (1994b: 16) distinguished three categories of fiction: “The realistic historical novel that attempts to ‘reconstruct’ a given period in a given society; the totally imagined story set in a historical period; and the essays devoted to an interpretation of a nation, its characteristics and creed.” As Archetti (1994: 16–17) pointed out, “some kind of historical and sociological knowledge is important in fiction,” which is where the process of writing fiction is similar to that of writing anthropology. But when Archetti says that he does not believe that novelists are really aware that they make use of cultural topics, he seems to be thinking more of novelists who situate their work in their own culture rather than in foreign places. For Archetti, as for many literary anthropologists, fiction around cultural topics is “ethnographic raw material, not ... authoritative statements about, or interpretations of, a particular society.”

A TALE OF TWO TRANSLATIONS

“So you’re a writer—why don’t you write about us in the paper?” one dancer after another kept asking me when I was doing fieldwork in the transna-

tional ballet world in Stockholm, London, New York, and Frankfurt am Main (e.g., Wulff 1998, 2008a).¹ The people I was studying seemed to suggest that I make myself useful by writing about them in the newspaper, and also, they told me, in dance magazines, international and national. In order to give something back to the people that had allowed me access to the closed world of ballet, I thus set out on my first piece of cultural journalism (Wulff 1994) for *Svenska Dagbladet*, a Swedish newspaper that features daily essays on topics of culture, history, and politics by academics, freelance writers, and journalists.

Cultural journalism is a feature of outreach activities at many universities. In the framework of Swedish university life, the activities of communicating and collaborating with groups and audiences outside the university is summed up by the term *tredje uppgiften*, the third task, the other two being teaching and research. Not least among anthropologists, disseminating research results to a wider audience is regarded as a question of democracy, even a matter of ethics; this is also supported by the argument that “scholars live on taxpayers’ money.” It is also the case that the Swedish Research Council requires a popular article as a part of the final reporting of funded projects. It is remarkable, and somewhat contradictory, that the call to disseminate research to a wider audience is not reflected in academic ranking and citation indices. Nonetheless, cultural journalism contributes to the reputation of the discipline, and not only to that of the individual anthropologist who writes in newspapers and speaks on radio or television. As to the actual writing this is a tale of two translations: from data to academic text, and from academic text to popular text. One crucial point in relation to reputation and ranking is that cultural journalism by anthropologists tends to be performed in the national language of the anthropologist, such as Swedish, Norwegian, German, or French, even though international academic publications are primarily in English. **Cultural journalism is thus on the whole unnoticed by colleagues in other countries.**

The translation I had to perform when I did my first journalistic essay entailed a different type of translation than the academic one I was trained for. As anthropologists we can be said to translate our fields into academic conceptualizations. Doing journalism, I had to make my anthropological findings not only accessible, but also attractive to a wider readership familiar with culture and the arts, but not necessarily with anthropology. Writing my essay for *Svenska Dagbladet*, I was aware that dancers and other people in the ballet world I was still studying, and thus depended on for my continued research, would also read it. They were more likely to read this relatively short essay rather than my forthcoming academic book (Wulff 1998) (which eventually turned out to be the case) as most dancers are not voracious read-

ers. But it was not difficult to keep their trust. They knew I was not a critic, and that is why they had allowed me back stage for so long, even into intimate situations. I could have been critical in my essay about certain conditions in the ballet world, such as the lack of long-term contracts in some companies, the use of drugs to enhance dancing capacity, the prevalence of anorexia, or wealthy fathers giving large sums of money to ballet companies in exchange for their daughters getting leading roles at the expense of better dancers. But this was not the place for that. Writing my essay, I also had to organize the text differently than I normally did when I wrote academically. The standard academic format provides more space, which allows for an introduction, perhaps in the form of an ethnographic vignette; an articulated aim, followed by ethnographic evidence related to a theoretical discussion; and a conclusion, which shows how this ethnography has contributed to theoretical development. Writing my newspaper essay, I had to stick to no more than 1,800 words, much shorter than academic articles in journals and volumes tend to be. I also had to start with the essence of the essay, rather than building up an argument toward it as in academic texts. And just like on stage in the theater, entrance is essential. In order to capture the general reader of a newspaper—remember, I was writing about ballet, which most people think of as elitist, old-fashioned, and artificial—the entrance of an essay has to be striking. Slightly provocative or seemingly contradictory beginnings often work—something that gets the attention of even the reluctant reader. Next I had to make my sentences short and clear. There is no time for complicated arguments or efforts to impress colleagues with theoretical ideas. In journalism, captivating ethnographic cases are useful as a way to indicate a wider circumstance. This is the same technique as in poetry where a few lines can crystallize a long life or a country's contested history. And just like in the theater, again, exits are important for how and whether a piece is remembered afterward, They should also be carefully crafted. In contrast with academic writing, in journalism it is important to stop in time—otherwise the editor will do it, which often means cutting from the end, raising the risk that concluding points disappear. With newspapers you cannot negotiate about word count. Essays can in fact end on the climax, or with a question. It is common that they end by connecting to the opening, thereby forming a circle. The end can also be used as a contrast, turning everything that has been said previously around without warning, which can be one way of making an argument. In my experience, more often than not, endings appear during the writing process; they do not always end up they way I have planned.

When I posted my first essay in a yellow mailbox one sunny late summer day in southern Sweden, which you did in 1994 (this was before email),

I knew that if the essay was accepted, the editor would do the headline. This is common practice in journalism, and I would not have any influence over it. He would also write a short introduction summarizing the essay. It was thus not until the very morning the essay appeared in the newspaper that I learned that the title of it was “Ballet—a language everyone can understand.” Had I been allowed to do my title, I would never have come up with a title that general, but it was fine. The editor obviously knew what he was doing, and I was still learning to relate to a wider readership not only outside academia but also outside the ballet world. The essay was a success. I was suddenly surfing on fame—as long as it lasted, which was for about a week. After all there is a new essay every day in this newspaper. But friends and family, of course, and also colleagues, acquaintances, and people I did not know—such as a ballet fan who wrote a fan letter to me(!)—praised my essay. I even heard from my primary school teacher, whom I had not seen in about thirty years. I got a sense that “everyone” had read my essay, also from the knowledge that this newspaper is printed in hundreds of thousands of copies. This quick major impact is quite different from what happens in the academic world, where publications not only take much longer to write, but also reach a considerably smaller readership. Academic publications may also last much longer, though, while newspaper essays are in most cases forgotten after a while. Even in this era of Internet publication, books and journals are still cherished and kept in collections. Newspapers are thrown away or used for packing things.

What I had not expected with my first essay was that it would become a part of my fieldwork in two ways. First, the dancers did read it, and to my great relief they liked it. And I realized that part of the reason that they liked it was that I had managed to verbalize what mattered the most to them about their dancing life. Contrary to many media reports of the ballet world, my essay was a positive portrait. Dancers are vulnerable; they often feel misrepresented in the media, and see themselves as different from other people. They are trained to express themselves through their dance, not through words. Second, as I mentioned above, by using materials in the form of field notes, for a general readership, I discovered new data, circumstances, and connections in my materials that later would enrich my academic writing.

Since then I have continued to write cultural journalism once a year or so. I keep meeting colleagues who have an interest in writing in this genre, but do not know how to get a piece into a newspaper. There seems to be an assumption that academics can also write popularly without any coaching. To write anthropological journalism requires training. This has to be taken seriously, and it should be provided for students and young scholars. Certain anthropologists who would like to write journalism now and then make

the mistake of not adhering to the rules and conditions of journalism. This is surprising in light of the fact that seeing the “native’s point of view” is supposedly our expertise. We have to learn to switch into a less academic, meaning more straightforward, tone, and of course to adjust to the very compressed time and space frames, at least with newspapers. This, again, is different from what we are used to in academia.

Since my first journalistic essay, my cultural journalism has consisted of essays on my ongoing research, review articles on books relating to my research, and feature articles on choreographers and composers. I occasionally write for the Swedish daily, the Swedish dance magazine, and British or European dance magazines. Like any writer, I have had rejections, but after one or more attempts found another publication for rejected articles. With time, I have learned that cultural journalism, not least dance journalism, has to be hinged on current events. Timing is central.

I have had commissions for dance journalism. One was for a German art magazine *Parallax*, for which I was asked to write about the fact that dancers have two careers, as they stop dancing early and then move on to a second career. I wrote in English and the essay was translated into German, which meant that I could read it but with effort (Wulff 1997–98). Another commission was for a Swedish magazine, *Axess*, which publishes popular scholarship. I wrote about a dance photographer and his work. Even though I had submitted images, the editor added more images and made the essay into what he referred to as a “photo essay”; it was like a gallery illustrating my text (Wulff 2003). Unsurprisingly, my early essays were more edited by the editors than the more recent ones. I also get higher fees now than I did in the beginning. This is not only because fees are higher for all freelance writers, but because I am now known in some circles as a scholar who sometimes does cultural journalism. With time and articles published, you acquire a reputation in your field of journalism. All this also applies to fellow anthropologists such as Andre Gingrich in Vienna, Thomas Hylland Eriksen in Oslo, and Dan Rabinowitz in Tel Aviv, who write anthropological journalism now and then.

Going back now to the issue of translation: already Evans-Pritchard (1965) identified anthropology as cultural translation, a notion that has been influential in the discipline, as well as debated. For what is it exactly that is translated? Cultural conceptualization can obviously get lost in translation, or be misunderstood. There is a risk that we look for cultural units that are actually incomparable. What does a dance anthropologist, for example, study in a culture where there is no word for dance? Anthropologists are acutely aware of this problem. **Yet things may also be *found* in translation:** call it understanding, interest in a different way of life. The classical in-

sight in anthropology is, of course, that learning about difference is a way to learn about yourself. The debate on cultural translation in anthropology has generated insights into the relationships between interpretation, understanding, and authenticity. As Hannerz (1993: 45) suggests, there are “two main ideas of the translator’s role, when we think of translation in its ordinary sense”: the first type of translator is expected to convey the meaning of a language in an exact, literal way, “impartial,” official, while the second type is allowed more creativity as this translation is “to be responded to in aesthetic and intellectual terms both as a reflection of the original work and as a work in its own right.” It is obviously the latter type of translation that anthropologists are aiming for. And it can be taken further to a second translation, from academic findings into cultural journalism, as an instance of one anthropological genre.

WAYS OF WRITING ANTHROPOLOGY

Cultural journalism is thus one way of writing anthropology. The following chapters offer a variety of ways of writing anthropology: in relation to the making of an anthropological career, ethnographic writing, journalistic and popular writing, and writing across genres.

Dominic Boyer argues most convincingly in the opening chapter for the necessity of being a writer in anthropology today. Despite the fact that the discipline depends on engaging teaching for its survival and reproduction, and that teaching can be said to be the discipline’s oxygen, it is as Boyer points out nevertheless “the knot of writing, peer review and publishing” that defines an academic career. **In a neoliberal perspective of academic audit, ranking, and impact factors, teaching is losing its prestige.** Instead, a central concern is writing and publishing in relation to careers and academic organization. This is an elusive area as criteria keep changing: what one cohort of anthropologists was trained for is bound to be different once they begin being exposed to assessment. To what extent is the quality of academic writing tailored to research assessments and evaluation formats, and what are the intellectual consequences of this? Don Brenneis has done extensive ethnographic work on scholarly publication, research funding, assessment exercises, and the construction of scholarly knowledge. As he reports on its limitations, he is not convinced about the efficacy of peer review. In his chapter he investigates “writing to be ranked” as well as different types of “reading for ranking.” With his scholarly approach, Brenneis sheds new light on the idea of managerial accountability in the academic world. Research applications for funding form a special genre, one genre within

the genre of writing to be ranked. Sverker Finnström's chapter details the clash between academic values and administrative values in research funding. In order to write a successful research application, Finnström learned to streamline his text, which led to what he experienced as intellectual corruption. Applying Maurice Bloch's (1977) idea of "the long conversation" for a long-term relationship to the field, Finnström also discovered, did not fit with the rhythms and realities of European academic life. Eventually, he was awarded a major research grant and landed a lectureship. Now that he finds himself on the other side, so to speak, with requests to evaluate research applications, Finnström has developed the dual capacity of performing assessment work in accordance with administrative requirements while keeping his intellectual integrity alive.

In that part of the global scholarly landscape where English is the natural choice of language, alternatives are hardly ever explicitly discussed. In Máiréad Nic Craith's chapter, the dominance of the English language in academic publishing and ranking is problematized. Writing in English means a larger readership, at least potentially, but the size of the readership might depend on the publisher's reach. As Nic Craith says, the focus on English excludes many scholars and institutions, but **there is an expanding drive to learn to operate academically in English as a second language.** Translation, both literal and cultural, is a dilemma here, including the fact that things get lost in translation. Despite efforts to acknowledge other world languages as well as small languages, Nic Craith is not very hopeful that this will change the position of the English language in the academic world. Still, as she concludes, in light of the nature of anthropology as a discipline for human diversity, **it makes sense, not only academically but also ethically, to sometimes publish in other languages than English.**

The acclaimed Irish writer Roddy Doyle had his breakthrough with the novel *The Commitments* (1987), which describes a group of unemployed young people in working class Dublin who form a soul band. It has also been made into a film. Interviewing Doyle for my study of the social world of Irish writers (Wulff 2008b, 2012a, 2012b, 2013), I asked him about his writing routine. He then talked about self-discipline, and how he writes Monday to Friday between 8:30 in the morning until about 6 in the evening, divided into two-hour sessions. He spends one of his daily breaks, he spends "looking at the BBC football page." As to the actual writing, Doyle prefers filling pages rather than worrying over the quality of the first draft. This is why editing is key. "When I edit, I'm a bit obsessed!" Only editing can make him work into the night or on a Saturday morning.

In his chapter in this volume, Brian Moeran considers the craft of editing anthropological texts. This is clearly an underestimated craft, despite the

fact that it is key also for writing academic texts. Editing requires training, and it is possibly useful with a bit of talent to start with. Admittedly, some people seem to have a natural flair for editing (and some for proofreading, as they spot errors more easily than others). Moeran identifies self-editing as a process of making choices. It has to do, basically, with what to include and exclude, how to pitch the texts theoretically, the role of the ethnography, and—following Van Maanen (1988)—what style to choose: realistic, confessional, or impressionistic. Moeran applies Howard Becker’s (1982: 198) notion of “editorial moments” to these situations in which choices are made, both in editing one’s own texts and those of colleagues. This is where editing from the perspective of the publisher’s editor, as well as from that of the desk editor, comes in. Moeran **does not want editing to be conflated with writing. They are different activities: writing means striving to get into a flow, while editing means stopping the flow in order to think about structure.**

Alma Gottlieb, Paul Stoller, and Kirin Narayan have long offered authoritative approaches to ethnographic writing. For Alma Gottlieb writing an engaged anthropology for a wider readership and teaching ethnographic writing to students are paramount. Having already been a fine writer in high school, Gottlieb joins Amitav Ghosh in his frustration over the constraints of the academic writing format. Gottlieb confesses in her chapter that while adhering to the expected academic writing style and publication outlets first as a Ph.D. student, and later when she was on her tenure track, she began clandestine writing. Together with Philip Graham, the fiction writer, Gottlieb wrote what was going to be published as *Parallel Worlds* (1993), a popular account in which the anthropologist and the writer each commented on their shared experiences of Côte d’Ivoire. As there was a risk that this book might jeopardize Gottlieb’s application for tenure, she kept it separate from the university world. This worked until the book was awarded the Victor Turner Prize in Ethnographic Writing. Since then it has been used extensively in teaching. Paul Stoller likewise found the academic format limiting as a young anthropologist. In his chapter he spins the story of how he (together with Cheryl Olkes) wrote the experimental ethnography *In Sorcery’s Shadow* (1987), which, despite a number of early institutional setbacks, became a classic in anthropology. The book builds on Stoller’s time as an apprentice sorcerer. It was his teacher, the sorcerer Adamu Jenitongo, who put him on the path to experimental writing that eventually would release his writing powers. The sorcerer urged Stoller to write a story that would be remembered, a story from which younger generations could learn about “the truth of being.” As Stoller rightly says, good stories are not only effective for making points, they also tend to remain. Therefore, **anthropologists should write for the future.** For Narmala Halstead, the process was the reverse. She

had written novels, plays, poems, and short stories in the past, but her Ph.D. work put an end to that kind of writing, she explains in her chapter. As a committed Ph.D. student, she did not find time for writing fiction. She also notes that she had to accommodate her writing style to an academic one. Still, her experience as a fiction writer, as well as a journalist later on, did contribute to the way she conceptualizes anthropology. Halstead shows how a life history of writing in different genres fuses into a notion of *life-writing* that is a conduit for both personal and professional writing experiences. In *Alive in the Writing: Crafting Ethnography in the Company of Chekhov* (2012), Kirin Narayan merges her experience of ethnographic writing with that of Anton Chekhov, playwright and short story writer, as he reported on Sakhalin Island, the Russian penal colony. And it is around Chekhov, as her ethnographic muse, that Narayan's chapter revolves. She considers letters about Chekhov's journey to Sakhalin, his own reflections on his research, and the actual act of writing about this, which resulted in his most substantial nonfiction work. It enticed Narayan to rethink her engagement with ethnography in terms of "a golden thread of continuity" as she gathered different topics and texts into her book. She also learned how an ethnographic sensibility structures not only Chekhov's ethnographic work, but much of his literary *oeuvre*.

To the problem of negotiating between scientific study and engaging storytelling belongs the desire to share one's work with as broad an audience as possible. In the spirit of Amitav Ghosh, Anette Nyqvist wrote a popular account parallel to writing her doctoral dissertation. She explains in her chapter that she did not feel held back by the academic form, but with her background in journalism she found that writing a popular version of her dissertation was most beneficial for her academic writing. Interestingly, she introduces the notion of *cross-writing* as a way to improve a text in one genre by imports from another one and to keep the flow going. Oscar Hemer identifies himself as a writer, a literary writer but also a journalist. His doctoral research in anthropology was on fiction and truth in the transition processes in South Africa and Argentina (Hemer 2012). In his chapter Hemer mentions the "like-sided triangle" (Hemer 2005) covering the three writing practices—academic, journalistic, and literary—that are distinguished by different traditions and genre conventions. Hemer's preferred writing style is a discursive text that makes room for literature and journalism, as well as aspects of reportage, essay, and memoir. His literary case is Jorge Luis Borges's (1974) short story "The Ethnographer" about a doctoral student who eloped from the field.

Again, usually when you sit there in front of your computer screen, you are alone at your keyboard. At their keyboards, pianists sometimes sit next

to one another, making music together. Something like that may now occur increasingly often in anthropology as well.

The recent upsurge in different forms of collaboration shape writing styles, intellectual contents, and careers. This is evident in the multi-authored chapter written by anthropologist Eva-Maria Hardtmann, activist-scholar-lawyer Vincent Manoharan, feminist Urmila Devi, Jussi Eskola with an M.A. in religion, and activist-drummer Swarna Sabrina Francis. It describes how the writing process emanated from a workshop of the Global Justice Movement in Kathmandu attended by scholars and activists. In order to include their various personal styles in the same text, they agreed to write in a dialogical form. This went very well, as everyone felt their voice came through. But when they tried to write a collaborative text with a single voice, their different writing styles and political and intellectual approaches made it a conflictual endeavor.

As to writing across genres, in his chapter Nigel Rapport draws inspiration from the novelist E.M. Forster when he declares his belief in the individual rather than in “the people.” Rapport’s twinning of anthropology and literature has the form of a **Kantian cosmopolitan vision of anthropology that entails “a bringing together in a dialectical tension two poles of human existence”**: all of humanity and the individual. Rapport outlines his notion of fiction and anthropological understanding around “fiction as local practice,” and makes clear that what he refers to as anthropology’s fictional truth goes back to the discipline’s humanistic origin. Mattias Viktorin’s chapter is framed by a literary case from a novella by Andrei Volos (2005) about a woman who at times struggles to convey her thoughts into words, to “wrap them into words.” To her, ideas seem to change in the process, and what comes out is not her sparkling thoughts but flat statements that fall apart. With Hanna Arendt’s notion of emergence, Viktorin goes on to show how anthropologists are able to address processes of rendering visible the “not yet,” also using examples from the painter Paul Klee.

A notable current development relevant to the volume, which urges for writing across genres, is the growth of new media forms, in large part connected to the Internet. Blogs, social media, and open access now also have their part in the shaping of anthropological writing, raising urgent questions about how technology impacts on writing skills, collaboration, and communication (Kelty et al. 2008; Balakian 2011; SavageMinds.org). Drawing on her experiences of writing the monograph *Digital Drama: Teaching and Learning Art and Media in Tanzania* (2012), Paula Uimonen discusses the three formats it took: a printed book, a website (<http://www.innovativeethnographies.net/digitaldrama>), and a hyperlinked e-book, as well as the relationships between them. For one thing, the website had to tell its own tale, through

many visuals and videos with some short texts. In designing the website, Uimonen's intention was not only to make it into a colorful illustration of the book for readers who wanted to learn more; even more importantly, the idea was to present the website as a trailer for the book for those who had not yet read it.

In contrast with many writers of fiction, scholars tend to develop a writing style that follows a set structure, and then stick to that style. While aware of both intellectual challenge and academic audit requirements, Ulf Hannerz, in the final chapter of this volume, suggests two possibilities to further writing styles, as well as careers, in anthropology. The first possibility is to continue to do field research, which might entail different types of field studies than the traditional one year away. The second possibility, which is his main concern in this chapter, is "a plea for experimenting with greater diversity in styles of writing, more ways of using anthropological ideas and materials, perhaps developing new genres." Rather than pursuing the widespread "me and my fieldwork" approach when writing, Hannerz suggests an openness to "writing otherwise." Among other things, this would entail making more use of ethnography that colleagues have collected and analyzed, especially in terms of comparison and synthesis.

Before concluding, let me note that the development of creative writing in university programs and workshops, and the process of teaching writing, is beginning to be analyzed anthropologically (Wulff 2012a). A sibling genre to creative writing, which has come forth especially among anthropologists in the United States, is **creative nonfiction** (Cheney 2001). Going back to New Journalism in the late 1960s, this literary genre features real events in a fictional form (Narayan 2007). Connected to this is a growing concern in anthropology with having its reporting and its social and cultural understandings reach a wider public (Eriksen 2006). The particular task of anthropological writing naturally has much to do with the emphasis on understanding social and cultural diversity, in local and national society but not least globally. Some of the deliberations over the forms and techniques of writing relate to parallels and contrasts with journalism and other reportage as shown by Boyer and Hannerz (2006).

Prefiguring chapters on different ways of writing anthropology, I have made the case for the advantage of writing across and within genres in new ways. This is especially captured by Anette Nyqvist's concept of *cross-writing* and Ulf Hannerz's call to *writing otherwise*. Geertz's (1980) notion of blurred genres might seem like an obvious backdrop here, but my aim has been to show the importance for anthropologists of constantly developing their writing skills in distinct genres. One advantage of writing across genres is the possibility of taking inspiration from another genre, in style and structure as

well as content. Rather than blurring genres, this is actually an efficient way to keep developing the character of one genre.

It is clear that anthropologists have a lot to gain from honing the capacity to operate in different genres ranging from academic writing to journalistic writing, even fiction. By cultivating flexible writing, new possibilities for expression and conveyance spring up. This is beneficial for anthropological knowledge production, not least as such writing might reveal different aspects of social and cultural life than traditional anthropological writing can do.

Helena Wulff is Professor of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University. Her research is in the anthropology of communication and aesthetics based on a wide range of studies of the social worlds of literary production, dance, and visual culture, and recently on writing and contemporary literature in Ireland. Among her publications are the monographs *Ballet across Borders: Career and Culture in the World of Dancers* (1998) and *Dancing at the Crossroads: Memory and Mobility in Ireland* (2007), as well as the edited volumes *The Emotions* (2007), and *Ethnographic Practice in the Present* (with Marit Melhuus and Jon P. Mitchell, 2010).

NOTES

1. Some paragraphs in this section first appeared in Helena Wulff. 2011. "Cultural Journalism and Anthropology: A Tale of Two Translations." *Archivio Antropologico Mediterraneo online* 12/13, 13, no. 1: 27–33.

REFERENCES

- Archetti, Eduardo P., ed. 1994a. *Exploring the Written: Anthropology and the Multiplicity of Writing*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
- . 1994b. "Introduction." In *Exploring the Written: Anthropology and the Multiplicity of Writing*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
- Balakian, Sophia. 2011. "Mapping a Lost Friend: Technology and Tracing a Transnational Life." Paper presented in session on "Writing Ethnography: Experimenting on Paper, Experimenting Online" at the American Anthropological Association, Montreal, 16–20 November, 2011.
- Barber, Karin. 2007. *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barton, David, and Uta Papen, eds. 2010. *The Anthropology of Writing: Understanding Textually-Mediated Worlds*. London: Continuum.

- Becker, Howard S. 1982. *Art Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Becker, Howard S. 1998. *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research while Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Behar, Ruth. 2009. "Believing in Anthropology as Literature." In *Anthropology off the Shelf: Anthropologists on Writing*, ed. Alisse Waterston and Maria D. Vesperi. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Bendix, Regina. 2012. "'Tatorte'—or: Why Do Anthropologists Love Mysteries?" Paper for the Symposium for Andre Gingrich's 60th Birthday, University of Vienna.
- Benson, Paul, ed. 1993. *Anthropology and Literature*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Bloch, Maurice. 1977. "The Past and the Present in the Present." *Man* 12, no. 2: 278–292.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. 1998. "The Ethnographer." In *Collected Fictions*. London: Penguin.
- Boyarin, Jonathan, ed. 1993. *The Ethnography of Reading*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Boyer, Dominic, and Ulf Hannerz. 2006. "Introduction: Worlds of Journalism." *Ethnography* 7, no. 1: 5–17.
- Brenneis, Don. 2009. "Anthropology in and of the Academy: Globalization, Assessment and our Field's Future." *Social Anthropology* 17, no. 3: 261–275.
- Cheney, Theodore A. Rees. 2001. *Writing Creative Nonfiction: Fiction Techniques for Crafting Great Nonfiction*. Berkeley: Ten Speed.
- Clifford, James, and George E. Marcus, eds. 1986. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cohen, Marilyn, ed. 2013. *Novel Approaches to Anthropology: Contributions to Literary Anthropology*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Collins, Peter, and Anselma Gallinat, eds. 2010. *The Ethnographic Self as Resource: Writing, Memory and Experience into Ethnography*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Daniel, Valentine, and Jeffrey M. Peck, eds. 1996. *Culture/Contexture: Anthropology and Literary Studies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dawson, Andrew, Jenny Hockey, and Allison James, eds. 1997. *After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Praxis in Contemporary Anthropology*. London: Routledge.
- De Angelis, Rose, ed. 2002. *Between Anthropology and Literature: Interdisciplinary Discourse*. London: Routledge.
- Dennis, Philip A., and Wendell Aycock, eds. 1989. *Literature and Anthropology*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press.
- Doyle, Roddy. 1987. *The Commitments*. London: Vintage.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2006. *Engaging Anthropology: The Case for a Public Presence*. Oxford: Berg.
- Evans-Pritchard, EE. 1965. *Theories of Primitive Religion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- . 1980. "Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought." *American Scholar* 49, no. 2: 165–179.
- . 1988. *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Ghodsee, Kristen. 2011. *Lost in Transition: Ethnographies of Everyday Life after Communism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ghosh, Amitav. 1992. *In an Antique Land*. New York: Vintage.
- Gottlieb, Alma, and Philip Graham. 1993. *Parallel Worlds: An Anthropologist and a Writer Encounter Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gusterson, Hugh, and Catherine Besteman, eds. 2010. *The Insecure American: How We Got Here and What We Should Do about It*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Handler, Richard, and Daniel Segal. 1990. *Jane Austen and the Fiction of Culture*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Hannerz Ulf. 1993. "Mediations in the Global Ecumene." In *Beyond Boundaries*, ed. Gísli Pálsson. Berg: Oxford.
- . 2013. "A Detective Story Writer: Exploring Stockholm as It Once Was." *City and Society* 26, no. 2: 260–270.
- Hemer, Oscar. 2005. "Writing the World." In *Media and Global Change*, ed. Oscar Hemer and Thomas Tufte. Göteborg: Nordicom.
- . 2012. *Fiction and Truth in Transition: Writing the Present Past in South Africa and Argentina*. Berlin: LIT Verlag.
- Jackson, Michael. 2012. *The Other Shore: Essays on Writers and Writing*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kelty, Christopher M., et al. 2008. "Anthropology of/in Circulation: The Future of Open Access and Scholarly Societies." *Cultural Anthropology* 23, no. 3: 559–558.
- Marcus, George E., and Michael MJ Fischer. 1986. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Miller, Daniel., ed. 2009. *Anthropology and the Individual: A Material Culture Approach*. Oxford: Berg.
- Narayan, Kirin. 2007. *My Family and Other Saints*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2012. *Alive in the Writing: Crafting Ethnography in the Company of Chekhov*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Orin, Starn, ed. 2012. *Current Anthropology* 27, no. 3, special issue on 25th anniversary of *Writing Culture*.
- Rapport, Nigel. 1994. *The Prose and the Passion: Anthropology, Literature and the Writing of E. M. Forster*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- . 1997. *Transcendent Individual: Towards a Literary and Liberal Anthropology*. London: Routledge.
- Reed, Adam. 2011. *Literature and Agency in English Fiction Reading: A Study of Henry Williamson Society*. Manchester: Manchester University Press & University of Toronto.
- Routledge Innovative Ethnographies Series [InnovativeEthnographies.net/digital drama](http://InnovativeEthnographies.net/digital-drama).
- Savage Minds: Notes and Queries in Anthropology SavageMinds.org.
- Skinner, Jonathan, ed. 2012. *Writing the Dark Side of Travel*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Stankiewicz, Damien. 2012. "Anthropology and Fiction: An Interview with Amitav Ghosh." *Cultural Anthropology* 27, no. 3: 535–541.

- Stoller, Paul. 1999. *Jaguar: A Story of Africans in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2008. *The Power of the Between: An Anthropological Odyssey*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stoller, Paul, and Cheryl Olkes. 1987. In *Sorcery's Shadow: A Memoir of Apprenticeship among the Songhay of Niger*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Street, Brian V. 1997. *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tedlock, Dennis. 2002. Electronic Center Poetry. Buffalo, NY. epc.buffalo.edu/authors/tedlock/.
- Turner, Victor. 1976. "African Ritual and Western Literature: Is a Comparative Symbolology Possible?" In *The Literature of Fact*, ed. Angus Fletcher. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Uimonen, Paula. 2012. *Digital Drama: Teaching and Learning Art and Media in Tanzania*. London: Routledge.
- Van Maanen, John. 1988. *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Volos, Andrei. 2005. "Ivachev's arv." In *Hurramabad*. Uppsala: Ruin.
- Waterston, Alisse, and Maria D. Vesperi, eds. 2009. *Anthropology off the Shelf: Anthropologists on Writing*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- White, Jenny. 2007. *The Sultan's Seal*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Wulff, Helena. 1994. "Balett – ett språk som alla kan förstå." *Svenska Dagbladet*. 5 September.
- . 1997–98. "Das Leben nach dem Tanz: Der Wechsel zur zweiten Karriere." *Parallax* December/January 5: 8–15.
- . 1998. *Ballet across Borders: Career and Culture in the World of Dancers*. London: Berg/Bloomsbury.
- . 2003. "Frusna rörelser." *Axess* 5, no. 2: 36–40.
- . 2008a. "Ethereal Expression: Paradoxes of Ballet as a Global Physical Culture." *Ethnography* 9, no. 4: 519–536.
- . 2008b. "Literary Readings as Performance: On the Career of Contemporary Writers in the New Ireland." *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 17: 98–113.
- . 2012a. "An Anthropological Perspective on Literary Arts in Ireland." In *Blackwell Companion to the Anthropology of Europe*, ed. Ullrich Kockel, Máiréad Nic Craith, and Jonas Frykman. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- . 2012b. "Instances of Inspiration: Interviewing Dancers and Writers." In *The Interview: An Ethnographic Approach*, ed. Jonathan Skinner. London: Berg/Bloomsbury.
- . 2013. "Ethnografiction and Reality in Contemporary Irish Literature." In *Novel Approaches to Anthropology: Contributions to Literary Anthropology*, ed. Marilyn Cohen. New York City: Lexington Books.
- Zenker, Olaf, and Karsten Kumoll, eds. 2010. *Beyond Writing Culture: Current Intersections of Epistemologies and Representational Practices*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.