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## Thank You, Tony E. Adams, Stacy Holman Jones, and Carolyn Ellis, for Offering the Handbook of Autoethnography

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## Thank You, Tony E. Adams, Stacy Holman Jones, and Carolyn Ellis, for Offering the Handbook of Autoethnography

### Abstract

I offer this review on autoethnography for various social science disciplines for readers, writers, and novice and experienced researchers. The second edition of the *Handbook of Autoethnography*, edited by Tony E. Adams, Stacy Holman Jones, and Carolyn Ellis (2022b), includes contributions from more than 50 authors representing more than a dozen disciplines and writing from different parts of the world and published on year 2022. The book attempted to develop, enhance, and broaden qualitative research and autoethnographic inquiry. This review is based on the section on *Doing Autoethnography*, which provides examples of diverse, considerate, practical, innovative, and applied autoethnography. I tried to explore definitions of autoethnography, identify and illustrate key features of autoethnography, and engage the philosophical, relational, cultural, and ethical foundations of autoethnographic practice in addition to providing some information about the book. I recommend reading this book to gain more knowledge about “autoethnography” in general and “doing autoethnography” in particular.

### Keywords

autoethnography, social science, refine, autoethnographic inquiry, ethical foundations

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## **Thank You, Tony E. Adams, Stacy Holman Jones, and Carolyn Ellis, for Offering the *Handbook of Autoethnography***

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### **Introduction**

#### **What Was in the First Edition of the *Handbook of Autoethnography*?**

In the comprehensive reference of the first edition of *Handbook of Autoethnography*, nearly fifty top researchers and practitioners in autoethnographic studies—representing four continents and a dozen disciplines—discuss the autoethnographic goals, opportunities, and difficulties. The chapters discuss representational and writing issues, the personal and relational concerns of the autoethnographers, and the relationship between the researcher and social justice. The book discusses the theory, history, and ethics of autoethnographic practice. Thirteen examples demonstrate the application of theory, history, and ethics of autoethnographic practice. The first edition of the *Handbook of Autoethnography* (Holman Jones et al., 2013) includes all the critical components of autoethnography, as one of the most widely used types of qualitative research over the past 20 years.

#### **What Is in the Second Edition of the *Handbook of Autoethnography*?**

The book was intended as the *Handbook* for a primary resource for anyone interested in autoethnography, with contributions from more than 50 authors representing more than a dozen disciplines. Doing autoethnography, representing autoethnography, teaching, evaluating, and publishing autoethnography, challenges and the future of autoethnography, and autoethnographic examples formed the five sections of the volume. Contributors examine

various definitions of autoethnography in Section 1, *Doing Autoethnography*, identify and illustrate key aspects of autoethnography (such as reflexivity, subjectivity, and collaboration), and discuss the philosophical, relational, cultural, and ethical underpinnings of the practice. Contributors to Section 2, *Representing Autoethnography*, discuss the methods and forms for developing autoethnographic projects, utilizing a variety of media (such as writing, music, art, and performance) in/as autoethnography, and marking and making visible specific identities, knowledges, and voices. The emphasis of the contributors in Section 3, *Teaching, Evaluating, and Publishing Autoethnography*, is on assisting and overseeing these endeavors. Additionally, the section provides viewpoints on publishing and assessing the work we do. Contributors to Section 4, *Challenges and Futures of Autoethnography*, discuss current issues that autoethnography faces, including how to view it as a feminist, post humanist, decolonizing practice, and a way to examine texts, translations, and traumas. Section 5, *Autoethnographic Exemplars*, which includes 16 classic and modern texts that can be used as examples of autoethnographic scholarship, concludes the collection. The practices, commitments, opportunities, and essential issues surrounding autoethnography are illustrated in these chapters. Several authors also consider their earlier published works and the subsequent lives of these works. All the chapters contribute to my understanding of autoethnography in intellectual and emotional, practical, and evocative, poetic and political ways, and the authors show how to live, write, and represent research lives in nuanced, vulnerable, ethical, and just ways. As editors stated in the first edition, readers should view the discussions provided as maps of important debates in autoethnographic inquiry and representation that they can access and use on their autoethnographic research journeys rather than as definitive typologies.

## Review

### Doing Autoethnography

I am writing this review, as a scholar, academic, and teacher of research methods and methods to undergraduate and graduate students, as well as a supervisor and examiner, and as a user of autoethnographic approaches and other various qualitative approaches (Dahal, 2023). From my master research project in 2013 (see Dahal, 2013; Dahal et al., 2019), I am familiar with the most challenging and healing methodology—autoethnography (Dahal & Luitel, 2022). Autoethnography is a qualitative research method that explores cultural phenomena through personal experience. It is a method of writing about the self to understand the self's position in the world. Adams et al. (2022a) added that “*Autoethnography* consists of three characteristics or activities: the “auto,” or self; the “ethno,” or culture; and the “graphy,” or representation/writing/ story” (p. 3). So, a potent method of self-exploration and understanding the world around us is autoethnography. It can help autoethnographers in forming relationships with people who have had similar and/or different experiences to their own and in developing new perspectives on the world. My career as university lecturer started in 2018 as course tutor of research methodology II (Qualitative). I wisely utilized the class time to discuss autoethnography by connecting lives and research (Dahal et al., 2022) as one of the healing methodologies in educational research sphere by considering the self-narration is the ethics of autoethnography. Laurel Richardson, Art Bochner, Carolyn Ellis, and many others using autoethnographic approaches were some of the common names in my time and still common in this time. Likewise, I still remember the questions posed by some of the research committee members during my master project defense— how does your desire to hear and tell personal stories (doing personal stories) relate to your research? and what are the significant of your work? Though, I received positive support from my supervisor as I enjoyed it. I realized with the spirit of Ellis (2013) that doing autoethnography is more than a methodological approach

and “autoethnography is not simply a way of knowing about the world, it has become a way of being in the world, one that requires living consciously, emotionally and reflexively.” (p. 10). The practices that offer a means of interrogating what being may involve as we live through contextualized experiences. Bochner (2020) added “the autoethnographic way of life originates in doubt and uncertainty. To be alive is to be uncertain ... Autoethnography allows a person to lean into uncertainty rather than struggle against it.” (p. 6). With above spirit on the book, Adams and Herrmann (2020) added:

Intentionally to illuminate and interrogate cultural beliefs, practices and identities (“ethno”). At its core, autoethnography assumes that personal experience is infused with social norms and expectations, and autoethnographers engage in rigorous self-reflection— often referred to as “reflexivity”—in order to identify and interrogate the intersections between self and cultural life. The “ethno” component . . . also requires manuscripts to engage the purposes and practices of ethnography, such as referencing/critiquing extant research, identifying patterns of talk and action, interviewing others, doing fieldwork in “natural settings,” analyzing popular discourse and grand narratives about a topic, describing meaningful epiphanies and aesthetic moments, and/or providing insider access to contexts in which cultural outsiders and other research methods could never provide. (p. 3)

As a reviewer, I found that the handbook of autoethnography provides a solid foundation for the profession. I was especially moved by the section, *Doing Autoethnography*, which covers seven different chapters from eight authors. Those chapters were (1) Meditations on the Story I Cannot Write: Reflexivity, Autoethnography, and the Possibilities of Maybe, (2) Sketching Subjectivities, (3) Individual and Collaborative Autoethnography for Social Science Research, (4) Autoethnography as Acts of Love, (5) Frank and the Gift, or the Untold Told: Provocations for Autoethnography and Therapy, (6) Border Smugglers: Between Bodies Making Knowledge and Expanding the Circle of Us, and (7) Self and Others: Ethics in Autoethnographic Research. In this review, seven chapter contributors takes into account of reflexivity, autoethnography, and the possibilities of maybe, subjectivities, individual and collaborative autoethnography, autoethnography as acts of love, provocations for autoethnography and therapy, knowledge and expanding the circle of us, and ethics in autoethnographic research.

### Conclusion

This review is an attempt to help autoethnographers (1) foreground particular and subjective knowledge; (2) illustrate sensemaking processes; (3) make contributions to existing research; (4) challenge norms of research practice and representation; and (5) engage and compel responses from audiences to bring autoethnography discourse even more into the mainstream of qualitative research. In my own institution, the Kathmandu University School of Education, Nepal, autoethnography is becoming increasingly prevalent in educational research. In the international scenario, autoethnographies communities have also had the opportunity to present their research at prestigious conferences and annual meetings in order to advance the field and provide opportunities to share their ideas autoethnographically. Even though I shared my appreciation for the “*Doing Autoethnography*,” I read seven chapters carefully and would recommend this book to other readers who want to learn more about the methods and practices of autoethnography in social sciences research. All the above, the book gave a wider range of Western perspectives and practices on autoethnography. Next, I'm

looking forward to hearing perspectives and voices from all over the world and different fields on the methods and practices of autoethnography. Finally, I want to thank Tony E. Adams, Stacy Holman Jones, and Carolyn Ellis (2022b) for offering the *Handbook of Autoethnography*.

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