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Editor's Note

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This is the first “Editor’s Note” I have written for *Biography*, as the task has usually fallen to Craig Howes, who is currently making good use of a well-earned sabbatical, or to my coeditor Cindy Franklin. I’m happy to do it, as it gives me the opportunity to say what a pleasure it has been so far to serve as Acting Director of the Center for Biographical Research while Craig is away and to be more closely involved in the day-to-day operations of the Center and the journal. This is the second issue of *Biography* our new Managing Editor, Anjoli Roy, and I have seen through the production process from start to finish; the first was our special issue *Caste and Life Narratives*, which arrived from the printer just this past week. The turnaround time on that issue—just under a year since the August 2016 workshop in Honolulu at which the authors and guest editors Charu Gupta and S. Shankar worked together to develop its contents—is a tribute to all the participants’ commitment to the project’s success. We are now in the final stages of preparation for the workshop for our special issue devoted to the Movement for Black Lives, guest edited by Brittney Cooper and Treva Lindsey. These annual special-issue workshops are one of the highlights of the Center’s activities, and this upcoming gathering promises to be as stimulating and productive as all the others have been.

The Center will also be welcoming three long-term visiting researchers in this coming academic year. Qingbiao Liang, who teaches at the Jiangxi Normal University in Nanching City, China, and coedits the *Journal of Modern Life Writing Studies*, will be spending a year with us to pursue a project on political philosophy and national identity as reflected in autobiographical writing. Recently retired from Youngstown State University in Ohio, Gail Okawa will be working on a book about Japanese internment in Hawai‘i during the Second World War. Yoshiro Sakamoto comes to us from the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and will be researching the lives and work of prominent twentieth-century poets and artists in Hawai‘i, including Ștefan Baciu and Jean Charlot, for the next two years. In addition to these scholars, we look forward to hosting several other visitors for shorter stays. The opportunity to exchange ideas with dynamic scholars from around the world has been one of the many perks of my association with the Center.

Copyediting and proofreading for an interdisciplinary journal with a broadly international focus has brought me another kind of joy: the small, sometimes surprising, sometimes even delightful discoveries about how Eng-

lish works. Time-consuming as it can be, pondering the fine nuances of denotation, the possibilities and risks of connotation, and the subtle interactions between logic and syntax has paid off in a deeper appreciation for the richness of the linguistic resources at our disposal and, as often happens, in an enhanced admiration for the dexterity with which contributors to *Biography* are tapping them. Working with translations, as we often do, adds a layer of complexity to these issues. By chance, this issue of the journal brings together three essays that deal with material in languages other than English. Sam Ferguson reflects on the emergence of the genres of autobiography and the *journal intime* in eighteenth-century France, Kathryn Sederberg analyzes a diverse selection of diaries German citizens kept during the final years of the Second World War, and Meliz Ergin examines Jacques Derrida's *Monolingualism of the Other* as an occasion for exploring intersections among autobiography and philosophy, subjectivity and language, and identity and writing in Derrida's thought. As we worked through these fine essays, Anjoli and I sometimes paused to consider how best to accommodate material in the original language the authors wanted to include while optimizing the accessibility of the articles for all readers. Every academic editor faces these challenges, but because at *Biography* we are aiming to step up our longstanding commitment to linguistic diversity and international scope, these small-scale editorial considerations are feeding into larger plans for more extensive representation of scholarship in other languages. Our annual International Year in Review, which launched in our Fall 2016 issue, makes one step toward this goal by inviting authors to contribute essays in whatever language they think will make their reviews most valuable for their particular audiences.

It seems fitting to me that an issue made up of articles focused on texts in German and French, including a study of Derrida, should also feature two tributes to Barbara Harlow, who passed away in January of this year and whose influential contributions to the study of life writing in connection with political struggle and human rights will be familiar to many of our readers. An accomplished comparatist and translator, Barbara worked on sources in several languages in the course of her career—among them German, French, Spanish, Italian, and Arabic—and translated a number of important texts, including Derrida's *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles/Éperons: Les Styles de Nietzsche*, criticism by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, and short stories by the Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani. In this issue Laura E. Lyons and S. Shankar, both of whom earned their doctoral degrees under Barbara's direction at the University of Texas at Austin, offer accounts of Barbara's engagement with life writing from the perspective of

scholars whose own work has been shaped by her critical imagination. As a member of the same cohort of UT-Austin graduate students, I was fortunate to have been a student in one of Barbara's seminars on literary theory, and even that small dose of her brilliance as a scrupulously close reader of an astonishingly wide range of texts has had lasting benefits. I want to thank both Laura and Shankar for sharing their thoughts about Barbara with us, and I join them in saying farewell to a deeply respected and inspiring teacher.

John David Zuern