Encyclopedia of Life Writing

Autobiographical and Biographical Forms

Edited by
Margaretta Jolly

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF

Life Writing

Autobiographical and Biographical Forms

Volume 1

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Volume 1
A–K

Editor
Margaretta Jolly

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To my parents

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Aims, Scope, and Selection of Entries

The writing of lives is an ancient and ubiquitous practice. Biographies have been important as genealogical, religious, and didactic forms since the start of recorded literature. Autobiography, diaries, and personal letters have been widespread since the 18th century. But in the postmodern era the story of a life has seemed to demand explanation in a new way. As the individualism unleashed by capitalism cracks and reshapes in the fire of globalization and the communications revolution, a literature that foregrounds the shape of a single life and its span seems to focus the anxieties of the age. Life writing is now being explored in literary criticism, anthropology, sociology, psychology, history, theology, cultural studies, and even the biological sciences in order to explain an apparent dissolution of life into story. Just as busy is the investigation into our continuing need for stories that confirm or reinvent a reference to lived experience. The academic imagination has been galvanized by the challenges this has offered to its own epistemological traditions and by the democratizing of knowledge that life writing so charismatically represents.

As the first encyclopedia to provide a map of the field across discipline and region, this book reflects the excitement and idealism that characterises its scholarship. But a word of warning must be offered to those who expect any final definition of its topic. While the conception of any encyclopedia involves a measure of foolhardy ambition, the hope of describing fully a subject of such celebrated ambiguity and disciplinary iconoclasm is certainly vain. In fact, it would not only be undesirable but also impossible to offer a final account of this immense and protean literature, that some might argue encompasses virtually all forms of narrative. This book rather aims to provide a guide to a fast-changing terrain, which adopts a historical and reflexive approach to definition. The term "life writing" itself, recorded in the 18th century, and gaining wide academic acceptance since the 1980s, has been chosen for the title because of its openness and inclusiveness across genre, and because it encompasses the writing of one's own or another's life. (Readers will also find the term "auto/biography" used frequently by contributors as a convenient way of indicating a scope that is both autobiographical and biographical.) On this basis, it is also appropriate to shelter under life writing's umbrella several entries on life story originating outside of the written form, including testimony, artifacts, reminiscence, personal narrative, visual arts, photography, film, oral history, and so forth.

Within these terms, the aims of the book are four-fold: to offer an overview of its central genres and themes; to provide international and historical perspective through accounts of life writing traditions and trends from around the world, from Classical times to the present; to summarise the significance of outstanding individual writers and works in the field; and to reflect the main social, political, religious, and academic contexts in

which life writing is fertilized and analysed. A particularly important feature is the focus on life writing in popular and everyday genres and contexts – from celebrity and royal biography to working-class autobiography, letter writing, interviews, and gossip. There has also been a special effort to map non-Western interests in the field and to promote comparative approaches that give nuance to over-easy generalisations that can be made about autobiography as a Western genre. The entries on life writing in relation to world religions and religious contexts is one response to this. A variety of disciplinary approaches has also been encouraged – from an experimental psychologist on "Children's Life Writing" to a literary critic on "Childhood and Life Writing". In this regard, the entries should be read as critical essays as well as sources of reference, very often written with the personal engagement characteristic of the study of life writing. They reflect the rich diversity of terms in the debate, while a number of entries trace the course of the different disciplines that have led the enquiry into life writing, as well as examine the history of life-writing theory and criticism within and without the academy. The crucial influence of Women's Studies, Cultural Studies, African-American, and Postcolonial Studies has also prompted the inclusion of entries on political contexts that have inspired life writing, for example "Disability and Life Writing", "Lesbian and Gay Life Writing", "Trauma", and "Testimony".

The selection of entries was made by the editor in consultation with the Advisers (listed on page xiii) and the Commissioning Editor, Mark Hawkins-Dady. The entries were originally conceived of within five flexible working categories: (1) genres, (2) common themes in life writings, (3) contexts and criticism, (4) regional surveys, and (5) writers and works. It should be noted that in the latter category, there are more autobiographers than biographers, diary, letter or travel writers. This is in part because the study of autobiography is the most long-standing and sophisticated branch of analysis in the field; but in the case of biography, it is also for pragmatic reasons, to keep the criteria for inclusion the form and the skill in the writing – rather than the fame of the life recounted, which often governs perceptions of biography. An effort to balance the emphasis on autobiography, however, has guided the regional and historical surveys, which often cover biography and the less canonical genres of letter and diary writing. Finally, there are many aspects of this wide-ranging field, not to mention regions of the world, where life-writing scholarship remains in its infancy, or has yet to emerge. In this respect and in general, it is hoped that the *Encyclopedia* will be read as an indication of, and inspiration for, work still to be done.

Arrangement of the Entries

Entries appear in alphabetical order, and a complete list can be found in the "Alphabetical List of Entries" (p. xix). There are other means of access to the contents of the *Encyclopedia*, as follows:

1. **Thematic List** (p. xxv). This provides the reader with classifications of the entries, according to chronological, regional, and subject areas. The categories therefore often, and intentionally, overlap: for example, the 18th-century Afro-British slave writer Olaudah Equiano appears in the "18th Century", "Africa and the Middle East", "Britain and Ireland", "United States and Canada", "Social and Political Contexts", and "Writers" categories.

2. **Cross References**. At the end of many of the entries on topics and themes there are *See also* references to other relevant entries of a similar type.
3. **Index** (p. 983). This gives page numbers for proper names, titles, and selected key life-writing terms. This index is intended to be particularly useful for (a) locating coverage of individuals who do not have their own entries, and (b) locating titles of life-writing works when the author is not known or remembered by the reader.

Format within Entries

All entries contain a signed descriptive and critical essay, and a list of "Further Reading". Each entry on an individual writer also contains a biographical sketch of the entrant (primarily known facts rather than commentary) and a list of "Selected Writings" by that individual, which gives – in chronological order of publication – those works considered as life writings, including English translations where appropriate. Frequently there are more items in "Selected Writings" than are discussed in the accompanying essay. This is because the essayist's aim was to highlight important or representative works, while the "Selected Writings" list was intended to be as reasonably comprehensive as possible within the generic boundaries.

Dates attached to the titles of books and articles are generally their first known publications, usually in book form; occasionally dates are those of composition, normally indicated as such.

In the essays, where an English-language translation is known to exist for a foreign-language work, this is given in parentheses after the date of the original work, in the following manner:

> . . . *Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée* (1958; *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*)

Where no published translation has been located or verified, the essayist has very often provided – and especially for non-Western European languages – a literal translation, in square brackets and without italic, for example:

> . . . *Istoriia moego znakomstva s Gogolem* [1855; A History of My Acquaintance with Gogol] . . .

Acknowledgements

This project has grown out of so many hands, minds, and hearts, that befitting acknowledgement would require another volume in itself. However, in the space available, I would like first to offer my thanks to the distinguished Board of Advisers who so kindly guided the book. The editor is extremely grateful for their insights and support for a project that in some ways was an unknown quantity. My special thanks must go to Craig Howes, Philippe Lejeune, and Julia Watson who consistently and generously supported a tome as capacious and capricious as Virginia Woolf said a diary should be. Zhao Baisheng added an invaluable contribution with his vision of auto/biography studies in China. Their humour and enthusiasm were very much appreciated. I would also like to thank the nearly 400 scholars who contributed to the book, whose imagination and

patience with the collaborative process went far beyond the call of duty. My thanks also to the Mass-Observation Archive at the University of Sussex. This unique collection of life writings is run by a uniquely supportive group of women, whose Director, Dorothy Sheridan, not only offered help as an Adviser but took me on as Honorary Research Fellow for the duration of the *Encyclopedia*'s construction. The years of intellectual stimulation and practical help I have received from Dorothy and her colleagues are much treasured. I also offer thanks to the School of Cultural and Community Studies at the University of Sussex and the School of English at the University of Exeter, which provided me with warm and congenial academic environments within which to work. Working with Alistair Thomson at the Centre for Continuing Education was another delight at Sussex. Many thanks to him and to the Brighton Women's Workers' Educational Association, with whom I learned so much about life history work. I would also like to acknowledge Jenny Bourne Taylor and Treva Broughton, inspirational supervisors of my studies in the field, along with Julia Swindells, who started me off on the prickly trail of autobiography before I know what is was. I thank her for a timely prod regarding the politics of encyclopedia-making. Thanks must also be given to Lydia Fakundiny at Cornell University who found a moment at the very beginning of the project to encourage a young stranger. I owe heartfelt thanks to the freelance editorial staff whose work is so crucial to any book of this nature: Delia Gaze (editorial compilation); Martha Bremser, Delia Gaze, and Richard Shaw (copy editing); Caroline Howlett and Cathy Johns (research); Caroline Howlett and Alison Worthington (proofreading); Patrick Heenan (indexing); Nina Bunton and Helena Lyons (text preparation); as well as to Daniel Kirkpatrick at the FDP London office. Finally, an immeasurable thank-you to my Commissioning Editor, Mark Hawkins-Dady. His unfailing calm, humour, judgement, and above all his light-handed, scholarly touch have made this work a joy to do.

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Indonesia and the Malay World
Japan: Heian Period (800–1200)
Japan: Medieval Period (1200–1600)
Japan: Tokugawa/Edo Period (1600–1868)
Japan: Kindai Period (1868–1945)
Japan: Modern Period (1945 to the Present)
Jung Chang
Korea
Liang Qichao
Lu Xun
Mehta, Ved
Mishima Yukio
Murasaki Shikibu
Naidu, Sarojini
Narayan, R.K.
Nehru, Jawaharlal
Ouyang Xiu
The Philippines
Sahgal, Nayantara
Shen Fu
Shimazaki Tōson
Sima Qian
Sorabji, Cornelia
Suleri, Sara
Tagore, Rabindranath
Thailand
Vivekananda, Swami
Xie Bingying
Yu Dafu

Australasia

Australia: 18th- and 19th-Century Auto/biography
Australia: 18th- and 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
Australia: 20th-Century Life Writing
Australia: Indigenous Life Writing
Australian Dictionary of Biography

Conway, Jill Ker
Dictionary of New Zealand Biography
Edmond, Lauris
Facey, A.B
Frame, Janet
Horne, Donald
Morgan, Sally
New Zealand and Polynesia: 19th Century
New Zealand and Polynesia: 20th Century
New Zealand and Polynesia: Indigenous Life Writing
Park, Ruth
Porter, Hal
Sargeson, Frank
White, Patrick

Britain and Ireland

Aubrey, John
Behan, Brendan
Boswell, James
Britain: Medieval Life Writing
Britain: Medieval Letters
Britain: Renaissance Life Writing
Britain: 17th-Century Life Writing
Britain: Restoration and 18th-Century Auto/biography
Britain: Restoration and 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
Britain: Romanticism and Life Writing
Britain: Travel, Exploration, and Imperialism
Britain: 19th-Century Auto/biography
Britain: 19th-Century Diaries
Britain: 19th-Century Letters
Britain: 20th-Century Auto/biography
Britain: 20th-Century Diaries
Britain: 20th-Century Letters
Brittain, Vera
Bunyan, John
Burney, Frances [Fanny]
Byron, George, Lord
Canetti, Elias
Carlyle, Thomas
Cavendish, Margaret [Duchess of Newcastle]
Charke, Charlotte
Chaudhuri, Nirad
Chesterfield, Earl of
Chesterton, G.K.
Churchill, Winston
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor
Crisp, Quentin
Darwin, Charles
De Quincey, Thomas
Dictionary of National Biography
Equiano, Olaudah
Evelyn, John
Fox, George
Froude, J.A.
Gaskell, Elizabeth
Gibbon, Edward
Gosse, Edmund
Graves, Robert
Hakluyt, Richard
Hazlitt, William
Hume, David
Huxley, T.H.
Ireland
Isherwood, Christopher
James, Henry
Jameson, Anna Brownell
Johnson, Samuel
Keats, John
Kempe, Margery
Kilvert, Francis
Kingsley, Mary
Kipling, Rudyard
Lessing, Doris
Lewis, C.S.
Lister, Anne
Lockhart, John
Martineau, Harriet
Mill, John Stuart
Morris, Jan
Muir, Edwin
Munby, Arthur and Hannah Cullwick
Naipaul, V.S.
New Biography
Newman, John Henry
O'Brien, George
O'Casey, Sean
Oliphant, Margaret
Orwell, George
Osborne, Dorothy
Park, Mungo
Pepys, Samuel
Picaresque Novel
Rhys, Jean
Rowlandson, Mary
Ruskin, John
Sancho, Ignatius
Sassoon, Siegfried
Sayers, Peig
Scotland
Steedman, Carolyn
Stevenson, Robert Louis
Strachey, Lytton
Symons, A.J.A.
Thompson, Flora
Tone, Wolfe
Wales
Walpole, Horace
Walton, Izaak
Wells, H.G.
Wesley, John
Who's Who
Wilde, Oscar
Woodforde, James
Woolf, Virginia
Wordsworth, Dorothy
Wordsworth, William

Working-Class Writings
Yeats, W.B.

Europe: East, Central, and Southeast

Bethlen, Miklós
Bulgaria
Canetti, Elias
Classical Greece and Rome
Czech and Slovak Life Writing
Déry, Tibor
Gombrowicz, Witold
Greece, Modern
Havel, Václav
Herling-Grudziński, Gustaw
Hoffman, Eva
Hungary
Kafka, Franz
Kassák, Lajos
Kazantzakis, Nikos
Miłosz, Czesław
Niemcewicz, Julian Ursyn
Pasek, Jan
Poland
Szász, Béla
Széchenyi, István
Turkey
Vas, István
Wiesel, Elie
Yugoslavia and Former Yugoslav Territories

France and the Francophone World

Abélard, Peter and Héloïse
Africa: North
Africa: West and Central (Francophone)
Amiel, Henri-Frédéric
Autofiction
Bâ, Amadou Hampâté
Barthes, Roland
Bashkirtseff, Marie
Beauvoir, Simone de
Biographie universelle; Dictionnaire de biographie française
Canada: French Canadian Life Writing
Caribbean: Francophone
Casanova, Giovanni Giacomo
Chateaubriand
Crèvecoeur, Michel-Guillaume Jean de
Dictionary of Canadian Biography / Dictionnaire biographique du Canada
Diderot, Denis
Duras, Marguerite
Fontenelle, Bernard de
France: Medieval Life Writing
France: 16th-, 17th-, and 18th-Century Memoirs
France: 16th-, 17th-, and 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
France: 18th-Century Autobiography
France: 19th-Century Auto/biography
France: 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
France: 20th-Century Auto/biography
France: 20th-Century Diaries and Letters
Gaulle, Charles de
Gide, André
Goncourt, Edmond and Jules
Green, Julien
Leduc, Violette
Leiris, Michel
Lévi-Strauss, Claude
Malraux, André
Martin, Claire
Montaigne, Michel de
Perec, Georges
Pfalz, Liselotte von der
Proust, Marcel
Richelieu, Cardinal, Duc de
Rolland, Romain
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques
Roy, Gabrielle
Saint-Denys Garneau, Hector de
Saint-Simon
Sand, George
Sarraute, Nathalie
Sartre, Jean-Paul
Sévigné, Madame de
Stendhal
Tocqueville, Alexis de
Voltaire
Wiesel, Elie

Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Low Countries

Amiel, Henri-Frédéric
Andersch, Alfred
Arnim, Bettina Brentano-von
Benjamin, Walter
Bernhard, Thomas
The Bildungsroman
Canetti, Elias
Carossa, Hans
Döblin, Alfred
Eckermann, Johann
Erasmus, Desiderius
Fontane, Theodor
Frank, Anne
Freud, Sigmund
Frisch, Max
Germany, Austria, Switzerland: Medieval and Renaissance Life Writing
Germany, Austria, Switzerland: 17th- and 18th-Century Auto/biography
Germany, Austria, Switzerland: 17th- and 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
Germany, Austria, Switzerland: Romanticism and Life Writing
Germany, Austria, Switzerland: 19th-Century Auto/biography
Germany, Austria, Switzerland: 19th-Century Diaries and Letters

Germany, Austria, Switzerland: 20th-Century Life Writing
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von
Gottsched, Luise
Grillparzer, Franz
Hebbel, Christian Friedrich
Heine, Heinrich
Herder, Johann Gottfried
Hitler, Adolf
Jünger, Ernst
Jung, C.G.
Kafka, Franz
Kepler, Johannes
Luxemburg, Rosa
Mann, Heinrich
Maximilian I
Netherlands and Belgium (Flanders)
Neue Deutsche Biographie
Nietzsche, Friedrich
Pfalz, Liselotte von der
Plessen, Elisabeth
Rilke, Rainer Maria
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques
Schweitzer, Albert
Seuse, Heinrich
Toller, Ernst
Varnhagen, Rahel Levin
Weiss, Peter
Wieland, Christoph Martin
Wolf, Christa
Zuckmayer, Carl

Iberian and Hispanic World

Arenas, Reinaldo
Barnet, Miguel
Barrios de Chungara, Domitila
Brazil
Díaz del Castillo, Bernal
García Márquez, Gabriel
Goytisolo, Juan
Guevara, Ernesto ["Che"]
Hispanic American Life Writing
Jesus, Carolina Maria de
Juana Inés de la Cruz, Sor
Latin America: 15th to 18th Centuries
Loyola, Saint Ignatius of
Menchú, Rigoberta
Mesonero Romanos, Ramón de
Neruda, Pablo
Pérez de Guzmán, Fernán
Perón, Eva
Picaresque Novel
Poniatowska, Elena
Portugal: Autobiography
Portugal: Diaries and Letters
Semprún, Jorge
Spain: to 1700
Spain: 18th and 19th Centuries
Spain: 20th Century
Spanish America: 19th Century
Spanish America: 20th-Century Autobiography
Spanish America: Indigenous Life Writing
Teresa of Avila, Saint
Testimony
Torres Villaroel, Diego de
Zorilla y Moral, José

Italy

Alfieri, Vittorio
Aurelius, Marcus
Casanova, Giovanni Giacomo
Cellini, Benvenuto
Cicero
Classical Greece and Rome
Croce, Benedetto
Dante Alighieri
Garibaldi, Giuseppe
Ginzburg, Natalia
Goldoni, Carlo
Gozzi, Carlo
Italy: Medieval and Renaissance Life Writing
Italy: 17th- and 18th-Century Auto/biography
Italy: 17th- and 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
Italy: 19th-Century Auto/biography
Italy: 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
Italy: 20th-Century Auto/biography
Italy: 20th-Century Diaries and Letters
Leopardi, Giacomo
Levi, Carlo
Levi, Primo
Pavese, Cesare
Pellico, Silvio
Petrarch
Pliny the Younger
Plutarch
Suetonius
Vasari, Giorgio
Velluti, Donato
Vico, Giambattista

Russia and Scandinavia

Aksakov, Sergei
Avvakum
Bashkirtseff, Marie
Blixen, Karen
Brandes, Georg
Denmark
Dolgorukaia, Natali'ia
Dostoevskii, Fedor
Ewald, Johannes
Finland
Ginzburg, Evgeniia
Ginzburg, Lidiia
Goldman, Emma
Goldschmidt, Meïr
Gor'kii, Maksim
Heiberg, Johanne Luise

Herzen, Aleksandr
Holberg, Ludvig
Jørgensen, Johannes
Kallas, Aino
Kierkegaard, Søren
Latvia
Leonora Christina
Mandel'shtam, Nadezhda
Mandel'shtam, Osip
Nabokov, Vladimir
Nexø, Martin Andersen
Norway
Oehlenschläger, Adam
Päätalo, Kalle
Russia: to 1700
Russia: 18th Century
Russia: 19th Century to Revolution
Russia: Revolution to the Present
Shklovskii, Viktor
Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr
Strindberg, August
Sweden
Tolstoi, Lev
Tsvetaeva, Marina
Zoshchenko, Mikhail

South America and the Caribbean

Arenas, Reinaldo
Barnet, Miguel
Barrios de Chungara, Domitila
Brazil
Caribbean: Anglophone
Caribbean: Francophone
Díaz del Castillo, Bernal
García Márquez, Gabriel
Guevara, Ernesto ["Che"]
Jesus, Carolina Maria de
Juana Inés de la Cruz, Sor
Kincaid, Jamaica
Latin America: 15th to 18th Centuries
Lionheart Gal
Menchú, Rigoberta
Naipaul, V.S.
Neruda, Pablo
Perón, Eva
Poniatowska, Elena
Seacole, Mary
Spanish America: 19th Century
Spanish America: 20th-Century Autobiography
Spanish America: Indigenous Life Writing
Testimony

United States and Canada

Adams, Henry
Addams, Jane
African American Life Writing
Agee, James
American Civil War Writings
Angelou, Maya
Asian American Life Writing
Barnum, P.T.
Black Elk
Canada: Auto/biography to 1900
Canada: Diaries and Letters to 1900
Canada: 20th-Century Auto/biography
Canada: 20th-Century Diaries and Letters
Canada: French Canadian Life Writing
Canada: Aboriginal Life Writing
Carr, Emily
Chesnut, Mary Boykin
Crèvecoeur, Michel-Guillaume Jean de
Dictionary of American Biography
Dictionary of Canadian Biography / Dictionnaire biographique du Canada
Dillard, Annie
Douglass, Frederick
Du Bois, W.E.B.
Edel, Leon
Edwards, Jonathan
Ellmann, Richard
Emerson, Ralph Waldo
Equiano, Olaudah
Franklin, Benjamin
Gilman, Charlotte Perkins
Goldman, Emma
Green, Julien
Grove, Frederick Philip
Hellman, Lillian
Hispanic American Life Writing
Hoffman, Eva
Hughes, Langston
Hurston, Zora Neale
Isherwood, Christopher
Jacobs, Harriet
James, Alice
James, Henry
Jameson, Anna Brownell
Jewish American Life Writing
Kazin, Alfred
Keller, Helen
Kincaid, Jamaica
Kingston, Maxine Hong
Lorde, Audre
McCarthy, Mary
Malcolm X
Martin, Claire
Momaday, N. Scott
Moodie, Susanna
Nabokov, Vladimir
Native American Life Writing
Nature Writings, American
Nin, Anaïs
Ondaatje, Michael
Pioneer and Captivity Writings, American
Rodríguez, Richard
Rowlandson, Mary
Roy, Gabrielle
Saint-Denys Garneau, Hector de

Slave Narratives
Stanton, Elizabeth Cady
Stein, Gertrude
Suleri, Sara
Thoreau, Henry David
Traill, Catharine Parr
Twain, Mark
United States: 16th- and 17th-Century Life Writing
United States: 18th-Century Auto/biography
United States: 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
United States: 19th-Century Auto/biography
United States: 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
United States: 20th-Century Auto/biography
United States: 20th-Century Diaries and Letters
Vietnam War Writings
Washington, Booker T.
Wharton, Edith
Whitman, Walt
Wiesel, Elie
Wright, Richard

OTHER

Age- and Life-Stages

Adolescence and Life Writing
Age and Life Writing
Childhood and Life Writing
Children's Life Writing
Family Relations and Life Writing
Fatherhood and Life Writing
Genealogy
Motherhood and Life Writing
Old Age and Life Writing

Biography

Agee, James
Arabic Biography
Aubrey, John
Australia: 18th- and 19th-Century Auto/biography
Australian Dictionary of Biography
The Bible
Biographical Dictionaries
Biographie universelle; Dictionnaire de biographie française
Biography: General Survey
Biography and Fiction
Biography and History
Biography and Poetry
Boswell, James
Brandes, Georg
Carlyle, Thomas
Chesterton, G.K.
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor
Dictionary of American Biography
Dictionary of Canadian Biography/Dictionnaire biographique du Canada
Dictionary of National Biography
Dictionary of New Zealand Biography
Eckermann, Johann
Edel, Leon
Ellmann, Richard
Emerson, Ralph Waldo
Ethics
Evelyn, John
Exemplary and Model Lives
Fontenelle, Bernard de
Freud, Sigmund
Froude, J.A.
Gaskell, Elizabeth
Goncourt, Edmond and Jules
Gor'kii, Maksim
Gosse, Edmund
Hu Shi
Johnson, Samuel
Kingston, Maxine Hong
Liang Qichao
Literary Biography
Lockhart, John
Musical Biography
Neue Deutsche Biographie
New Biography
Oliphant, Margaret
Ouyang Xiu
Pérez de Guzmán, Fernán
Plutarch
Religious Biography
Rolland, Romain
Sahgal, Nayantara
Sartre, Jean-Paul
Sima Qian
Strachey, Lytton
Suetonius
Symons, A.J.A.
Vasari, Giorgio
Walton, Izaak
Who's Who
Women's Biographies
Woolf, Virginia
Zoshchenko, Mikhail

(Note: many of the broader regional entries also discuss biography)

Diaries

Amiel, Henri-Frédéric
Australia: 18th- and 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
Bashkirtseff, Marie
Bashō

Britain: Restoration and 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
Britain: 19th-Century Diaries
Britain: 20th-Century Diaries
Burney, Frances [Fanny]
Byron, George, Lord
Canada: Diaries and Letters to 1900
Canada: 20th-Century Diaries and Letters
Carossa, Hans
Chesnut, Mary Boykin
Diaries and Journals: General Survey
Dostoevskii, Fedor
Emerson, Ralph Waldo
Evelyn, John
Fox, George
France: 16th-, 17th-, and 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
France: 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
France: 20th-Century Diaries and Letters
Frank, Anne
Frisch, Max
Germany, Austria, Switzerland: 17th- and 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
Germany, Austria, Switzerland: 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
Gide, André
Gilman, Charlotte Perkins
Ginzburg, Lidiia
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von
Gombrowicz, Witold
Goncourt, Edmond and Jules
Green, Julien
Grillparzer, Franz
Guevara, Ernesto ["Che"]
Hebbel, Christian Friedrich
Heine, Heinrich
Herder, Johann Gottfried
Herling-Grudziński, Gustaw
Hu Shi
Italy: 17th- and 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
Italy: 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
Italy: 20th-Century Diaries and Letters
James, Alice
Japan: Heian Period (800–1200)
Japan: Medieval Period (1200–1600)
Jesus, Carolina Maria de
Jünger, Ernst
Kafka, Franz
Kallas, Aino
Kierkegaard, Søren
Kilvert, Francis
Leiris, Michel
Lister, Anne
Lorde, Audre
Lu Xun
Munby, Arthur and Hannah Cullwick
Murasaki Shikibu
Ngugi wa Thiong'o
Nin, Anaïs
Pepys, Samuel
Portugal: Diaries and Letters
Rilke, Rainer Maria
Rolland, Romain
Ruskin, John
Saint-Denys Garneau, Hector de
Sand, George
Sassoon, Siegfried
Strindberg, August
Széchenyi, István
Thoreau, Henry David
Tocqueville, Alexis de
Tolstoi, Lev
Travel Diaries, Journals, Log Books
Tsvetaeva, Marina
Twain, Mark
United States: 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
United States: 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
United States: 20th-Century Diaries and Letters
War Diaries and Journals
Wesley, John
Women's Diaries and Journals
Woodforde, James
Woolf, Virginia
Wordsworth, Dorothy
Xie Bingying

(Note: many of the broader regional entries also discuss diaries)

Disciplines, Professions, Practices

Anthropology and Life Writing
Archives
Autoethnography
Business Auto/biography
Case Histories
Computers and Life Writing
Ethnography
Film
Genealogy
Hagiography
Handbooks and Guides
Historiography
Interviews
Journalism and Magazines
Literary Autobiography
Literary Biography
Medical Autobiography
Military Autobiography
Musical Autobiography
Obituaries
Oral History
Pedagogy and Life Writing
Philosophical Autobiography
Philosophy and Life Writing
Photography
Psychology and Life Writing
Religious Autobiography
Religious Biography
Reminiscence and Life Story

Scholarship, Academia, and Autobiography
Scholarship, Academia, and Biography
Science and Life Writing
Scientific Autobiography
Sociology and Life Writing
Sporting Auto/biography
Television and Life Story
Visual Arts and Life Writing

Genres and Types

Africa: Auto/biographical Fiction
Africa: Autobiographical Poetry
Apologias
Autobiography: General Survey
Autobiography and Biography: Their Relationship
Autobiography and the Essay
Autobiography and Poetry
Autoethnography
Autofiction
The Bildungsroman
Biographical Dictionaries
Biography: General Survey
Biography and Fiction
Biography and History
Biography and Poetry
Business Auto/biography
Case Histories
Celebrity Autobiography
Celebrity and Popular Biography
Children's Life Writing
Collaborative Autobiography
Collective Lives
Conduct Books
Confessions
Conversations, Dialogues, and Table Talk
Criminal Autobiography
Criminal Biography
Diaries and Journals: General Survey
Drama and Life Writing
Elegies
Epistolary Fiction
Epistolary Poetry
Epitaphs
Ethnography
Exemplary and Model Lives
Exploration Writings
Film
Genealogy
Gossip
Hagiography
Handbooks and Guides
Holocaust Writings
The I-Novel
Immigration Writings, American
Interviews
Letters: General Survey
Literary Autobiography
Literary Biography
Medical Autobiography
Memoirs
Military Autobiography
Mock and Parodic Life Writings
Musical Autobiography
Musical Biography
Nature Writings, American
New Biography
Obituaries
Personal Narrative
Philosophical Autobiography
Photography
Picaresque Novel
Pioneer and Captivity Writings, American
Prison Writings
Religious Autobiography
Religious Biography
Royal Biography
Scandal
Scientific Autobiography
Slave Narratives
Sound Recording and Life Writing
Spiritual Autobiography
Sporting Auto/biography
Television and Life Story
Testimony
Travel Diaries, Journals, Log Books
Travel Narratives
Vietnam War Writings
Visual Arts and Life Writing
War Diaries and Journals
Working-Class Writings
World War I Writings
World War II Writings

Letters and Epistolary Forms

Abélard, Peter and Héloïse
Arnim, Bettina Brentano-von
Australia: 18th- and 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
Australia: 20th-Century Life Writing
Britain: Medieval Letters
Britain: Restoration and 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
Britain: 19th-Century Letters
Britain: 20th-Century Letters
Byron, George, Lord
Canada: Diaries and Letters to 1900
Canada: 20th-Century Diaries and Letters
Chesterfield, Earl of
Cicero
Computers and Life Writing
Crèvecoeur, Michel-Guillaume Jean de
Croce, Benedetto
Diderot, Denis
Dostoevskii, Fedor
Epistolary Fiction
Epistolary Poetry
Erasmus, Desiderius
Fontane, Theodor

France: 16th-, 17th-, and 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
France: 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
France: 20th-Century Diaries and Letters
Germany, Austria, Switzerland: 17th- and 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
Germany, Austria, Switzerland: 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
Gide, André
Gilman, Charlotte Perkins
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von
Gottsched, Luise
Gramsci, Antonio
Havel, Václav
Hebbel, Christian Friedrich
Herder, Johann Gottfried
Holberg, Ludvig
Italy: 17th- and 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
Italy: 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
Italy: 20th-Century Diaries and Letters
Kafka, Franz
Keats, John
Kipling, Rudyard
Letters: General Survey
Lu Xun
Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley
Naidu, Sarojini
Newman, John Henry
Osborne, Dorothy
Petrarch
Pfalz, Liselotte von der
Pliny the Younger
Portugal: Diaries and Letters
Rilke, Rainer Maria
Saint-Denys Garneau, Hector de
Sancho, Ignatius
Sand, George
Seuse, Heinrich
Sévigné, Madame de
Shklovskii, Viktor
Strindberg, August
Tagore, Rabindranath
Tocqueville, Alexis de
Tolstoi, Lev
Traill, Catharine Parr
Twain, Mark
United States: 18th-Century Diaries and Letters
United States: 19th-Century Diaries and Letters
United States: 20th-Century Diaries and Letters
Varnhagen, Rahel Levin
Vivekananda, Swami
Voltaire
Walpole, Horace
War Letters
Wesley, John
Wieland, Christoph Martin
Wilde, Oscar
Women's Letters
Woolf, Virginia

(Note: many of the broader regional entries also discuss letters)

Popular and Everyday Forms

Africa: Oral Life Stories
Amiel, Henri-Frédéric
Artifacts and Life Writing
Barnet, Miguel
Barnum, P.T.
Barrios de Chungara, Domitila
Black Elk
Business Auto/biography
Case Histories
Celebrity Autobiography
Celebrity and Popular Biography
Charke, Charlotte
Children's Life Writing
Collaborative Autobiography
Computers and Life Writing
Conduct Books
Conversations, Dialogues, and Table Talk
Criminal Autobiography
Criminal Biography
Ethnography
Exploration Writings
Facey, A.B
Film
Frank, Anne
Genealogy
Gossip
Handbooks and Guides
Heiberg, Johanne Luise
Hitler, Adolf
Interviews
James, Alice
Jesus, Carolina Maria de
Journalism and Magazines
Jung Chang
Keller, Helen
Kilvert, Francis
Kuzwayo, Ellen
Lionheart Gal
Medical Autobiography
Menchú, Rigoberta
Morgan, Sally
Munby, Arthur and Hannah Cullwick
Musical Autobiography
Musical Biography
Oral History
Orality
Päätalo, Kalle
Pepys, Samuel
Perón, Eva
Personal Narrative
Photography
Pioneer and Captivity Writings, American
Reminiscence and Life Story
Royal Biography
Sayers, Peig

Scandal
Social Class and Life Writing
Sound Recording and Life Writing
Spanish America: Indigenous Life Writing
Sporting Auto/biography
Survival and Life Writing
Television and Life Story
Testimony
Thompson, Flora
Trauma and Life Writing
Visual Arts and Life Writing
War Diaries and Journals
War Letters
Woodforde, James
Working-Class Writings
World War I Writings
World War II Writings
Xie Bingying

See also "Diaries", "Letters and Epistolary Forms", and the various regional categories

Religious Contexts

Abélard, Peter and Héloïse
Augustine, Saint
Avvakum
The Bible
Buddhism and Life Writing
Bunyan, John
Christianity and Life Writing
Confessions
Confucianism and Life Writing
Conversion and Turning Points
Edwards, Jonathan
Erasmus, Desiderius
Exemplary and Model Lives
Fox, George
al-Ghazālī
Hagiography
Hinduism and Life Writing
Islam and Life Writing
Juana Inés de la Cruz, Sor
Judaism and Life Writing
Kempe, Margery
Kilvert, Francis
Lewis, C.S.
Loyola, Saint Ignatius of
Newman, John Henry
Religious Autobiography
Religious Biography
Repentance and Life Writing
Revelation and Life Writing
Seuse, Heinrich
Spiritual Autobiography
Teresa of Avila, Saint
Vivekananda, Swami
Wesley, John
Woodforde, James

Social and Political Contexts

Addams, Jane
Agee, James
American Civil War Writings
Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Life Writings
Archives
Aung San Suu Kyi
Aurelius, Marcus
Barnet, Miguel
Barrios de Chungara, Domitila
Bethlen, Miklós
Breytenbach, Breyten
Brittain, Vera
Censorship and Life Writing
Chateaubriand
Churchill, Winston
Cicero
Criticism and Theory since the 1950s: Feminism
Criticism and Theory since the 1950s: Postcolonialism
Déry, Tibor
Díaz del Castillo, Bernal
Disability and Life Writing
Döblin, Alfred
Douglass, Frederick
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A

Abélard, Peter 1079–1142

French philosopher and letter writer

Héloïse *c.*1100–1164

French abbess and letter writer

The extent and nature of the correspondence between Peter Abélard and Héloïse continue to be the subjects of new research and great debate. On the one hand, computer-assisted stylistic analysis in the 1980s spawned controversial allegations that Abélard composed the four famous "Personal Letters" himself, although two are supposedly by Héloïse. On the other hand, the scholar Constant Mews has ascribed a further 113 letters to the pair, from the early stages of their relationship, and Bonnie Wheeler has brought together a collection of essays devoted exclusively to Héloïse. While it is likely that, at the beginning of the 21st century, we are going to have to re-envision our conceptions of Abélard and Héloïse in the light of this new research, we can at least represent here the content of the four central "Personal Letters" and the influence they have had to date.

The "Personal Letters" letters tell a remarkable story of great intellect, intense passion, disputed marriage, sexual mutilation, suffering, separation, and, after some years, a new relationship of brother and sister in Christ, working for the formation of a religious community. Written after the lovers' physical relationship ended with Abélard's castration, they are models of both the public and the private styles in Latin composition. The self-analysis and rhetorical skill are remarkable. This celebrated love affair of the Middle Ages has inspired admiration and imitation, and opposition, for centuries; and today's historians and critics continue the debate, particularly with readings informed by gender theory.

Abélard was the greatest Western logician of the 12th century, a much admired teacher who was influential in moving education from the monastery to the cathedral schools that led to the formation of universities, and an opponent of Bernard of Clairvaux. Héloïse, a brilliant young woman, was about 17 years old when she became the pupil of Abélard, who was in his 30s, by the arrangement of her uncle Fulbert, a canon at Notre Dame. She was already widely read in the classics, skilled in Latin and Greek, and perhaps Hebrew, and a master of dialectic – in fact a female counterpart to Abélard's classical ideal of the philosopher as one who is set apart from and above human ties. After the catastrophe both of them entered religious communities – Abélard chose this refuge and Héloïse, as always, obeyed his wish. He was at St Denis, St Gildas de Rhuys in Brittany, Cluny, and continued his philosophical and some theological writing; she excelled as prioress at Argenteuil and then as abbess at the Convent of the Paraclete, given to her by Abélard, whose students had built it for him. This story is revealed in their life writings, his initial letter to a friend, and then two exchanges of letters between them, "The Personal Letters" and the "Letters of Direction" which concern the Paraclete community and the religious life.

Abélard's *Historia calamitatum* (composed *c.*1133; *The Story of My Misfortunes*) is subtitled in the best manuscripts "Abélard's letter of consolation to his friend". It is an autobiography in which Abélard presents the "trials" of his life, the pain and horror, as an example that will comfort his friend; the writing is also an occasion for self-exploration and explanation of his actions. Like Augustine's *Confessions,* the *Historia* is both personal and intellectually poised. Abélard surveys details of his life, but stresses Héloïse's argument against marriage because it would interfere with the philosopher's life and his career in the church, and the drastic shift in his fortunes, a loss of reputation more painful than physical misery. There is much about the challenges to his teaching at a Council at Soissons, and of his struggles in Brittany among violent and unsympathetic monks, who even tried to kill him. Such a life offers consolation to the nominal addressee; the *Historia* is also a philosopher's formal defence.

The "Personal Letters", two ostensibly by each lover, are sharply contrasted in manner and have often been compared as examples of male and female discourse. Abélard's are coolly logical, and he urges religious consolation, never losing his own self-concern. Héloïse's are humble but relentlessly argumentative. Her passion is expressed, her lover's appeal identified – a skill in composing verse and song and in manhood "grace of mind and body" – and it is affirmed that she has obeyed him before God in all things. Her longing for him is palpable. Her first letter comments upon Abélard's letter of consolation, which came to her by chance, and she chides him for not having any contact with her. A discussion of proper forms of address shows them both applying dialectic. Abélard's longest letter urges that the end of their lust has been a grace to lead them to Christ, and that Héloïse should relinquish her role of dedication to Abélard to become the bride of Christ. Interlaced with feelings about their love are Héloïse's thanks to Abélard for the gift of the

Paraclete and a plea for his help in leading the community of nuns. The "Letters of Direction" amply fulfil this request, as Abélard establishes a Rule to assist Héloïse as abbess at the Paraclete and to devote herself to monasticism. A letter from the abbot of Cluny, Peter the Venerable, praises her exemplary achievement. Another of Abélard's letters exalts women, particularly nuns, a form of praise of the new Héloïse, the final perfection of his direction.

The letters, which Héloïse probably kept at the Paraclete, became public only when Jean de Meun translated them and included a version of Héloïse's diatribe on marriage in his completion of the *Roman de la Rose* (1269–78; *Romance of the Rose*), one of the most influential medieval texts. Chaucer refers briefly to Héloïse, but Petrarch shows more interest. The Latin texts were published in France at the start of the 17th century and in England in the 18th century, which also saw Alexander Pope's *Eloisa to Abélard* (1717), with a neoclassical romantic heroine. In this century the medieval loves have spawned novels – George Moore's *Héloïse and Abélard* (1921) and Helen Waddell's *Peter Abelard* (1933) – and a West End play, Ronald Millar's *Abélard and Héloïse* (1970), as well as numerous biographical and critical studies centred on the life writings.

VELMA BOURGEOIS RICHMOND

Biographies

Peter Abélard was born in Le Pallet, near Nantes, Brittany, 1079, into a noble Breton family. His father was a knight in the service of the Count of Brittany. Studied under Roscelin de Compiègne at the age of 15. Héloïse was born into a noble French family, *c.*1100. Became the ward of her uncle, Fulbert, canon of Notre Dame in Paris. Abélard moved to Paris by 1100, and attended lectures by William de Champeaux, head of the cathedral school of Notre Dame. Won a debate with William, which led to his leaving Notre Dame and setting up his own school, first in Melun, 1102, then in Corbeil and Sainte-Geneviève, all near Paris. Went home to Brittany to settle the family estates after his parents decided to enter religious life, 1111. Studied theology under Anselm of Laon. Appointed lecturer at the cathedral school of Notre Dame, 1112 or 1113; pupils included John of Salisbury. Invited to lodge with Canon Fulbert of Notre Dame and to become tutor to Héloïse, who was then aged 17, 1117. Became her lover. Discovered by Fulbert and evicted; left with Héloïse for Brittany, where their son was born. Returned to Paris and married her secretly. Removed Héloïse to a convent at Argenteuil for safety. Castrated by Fulbert and some companions. Gave up his post at Notre Dame and retired to the abbey of Saint-Denis, near Paris, where he became a monk, *c.*1119. Ordered Héloïse to become a nun. Condemned for heresy at the Council of Soissons, 1121. Became a hermit at Nogent-sur-Seine near Troyes. Built a monastic school there, the Paraclete, helped by his pupils. Wrote *Sic et non*, concerning faith and reason, *c.*1123. Elected abbot of St Gildas-de-Rhuys, Brittany, 1125. Gave the Paraclete to Héloïse and her community of nuns, *c.*1128. She was expelled from Argenteuil with the rest of her community when the convent was recovered by the abbot of Saint-Denis, 1129. Was offered Abélard's hermitage of the Paraclete near Troyes and settled there with her community as abbess. Corresponded with Abélard, 1130–39. Abélard composed *Historia calamitatum* (*The Story of My Misfortunes*), *c.*1132. Moved to Mont-Sainte-Geneviève and taught large numbers of pupils, *c.*1135. Condemned for heresy at the Council of Sens, at the instigation of Bernard of Clairvaux, 1140. Retired to Cluny Abbey, then to the priory of Saint-Marcel, near Chalon-sur-Saône, Burgundy. Died at Saint-Marcel, 21 April 1142. Héloïse had Abélard's remains buried at the Paraclete, 1142. She died at the Paraclete, 16 May 1164.

Selected Writings

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Adams, Henry 1838–1918

American historian, autobiographer, and biographer

Henry Adams's great-grandfather, who helped draft the Declaration of Independence, was the second president of the United States. His grandfather was the sixth. His father was minister to

England during the civil war and largely responsible for keeping England, which was sympathetic with the confederacy, out of the conflict. But Henry Adams, who served as his father's personal secretary during that time, lived in an embattled relation with his pedigree. He was a man at odds with his environment, seeing the dynamo – the coal-powered generator of electricity – as emblematic of an evolving world that wanted only, as R.P. Blackmur noted, "the aggregation of force in the form of wealth", a world in which Adams could only feel an alien.

In his reaction to this world Adams anticipated the postures of modernism. He looked on the world with irony and cynicism, at times with bitterness – perhaps even with a willing "acceptance of a fragmented self in a fragmented universe", as Jackson Lears once put it (cited in Burich). The book for which he is principally remembered, and the text that has secured him a place among modern life-writers, is *The Education of Henry Adams*, a deeply insightful, ironic book of memoir, social criticism, political philosophy, religious and scientific reflection, and autobiography written in the third person – a point of view that lends the narrative voice a detached quality, a kind of authority that belongs more properly to the novel and to biography. First published privately in 1907, it was issued publicly in 1918, after Adams's death, with the unauthorized subtitle "An Autobiography". It was received to great acclaim from the start. "For mere stuff", wrote an anonymous reviewer in *The New Republic*, "the book is incomparable". The following year it was awarded a Pulitzer Prize, and to this day it is regarded by some as one of the very few great books written in America before World War I. Adams himself conceived of it as a companion volume to his *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* (1904), in which he had attempted – again in the voice of an assumed persona – to show not what happened in the Middle Ages but what they *felt* like. He regarded the first as "a study of thirteenth-century unity" and the second as "a study of twentieth-century multiplicity". The *Education* is not quite autobiography masquerading as biography, but it is an artfully contrived narrative that may be fruitfully compared to Adams's letters, since they and the *Education* do not always agree on particulars.

Part of the *Education*'s great appeal is its quotable nature, its glib and memorable style. Adams defined a schoolmaster as "a man employed to tell lies to little boys". Professional men he treated with good-natured acerbity: "No man, however strong, can serve ten years as schoolmaster, priest, or Senator, and remain fit for anything else"; like all public servants, he will first acquire "the habit of office" and then lose "the faculty of will". English society of the 1860s "had no unity; one wandered about in it like a maggot in cheese". The English and their food fared no better: "Every one, especially in young society, complained bitterly that Englishmen did not know a good dinner when they ate it, and could not order one if they were given *carte blanche*", and some of them, like the poet and sculptor Thomas Woolner, could be courteous only by "supernatural effort". Such scientists as Sir Charles Lyell (whom Adams knew personally) could apparently be as lax as theologians and "assume unity from the start", so Adams himself could be "a Darwinian for fun", for "[o]ne could not stop to chase doubts as though they were rabbits".

The tone was not entirely new. Benjamin Franklin in his *Autobiography* had always strategically placed his tongue in his cheek. Adams was conscious of the precedent. He aligned his *Education* with Franklin's *Autobiography* but also with the *Confessions* of both Augustine and Jean-Jacques Rousseau and, by virtue of his mannequin image "on which the toilet of education is to be draped in order to show the fit or the misfit of the clothes", with Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. In addition to these specific predecessors, as Couser points out, Adams had before him the tradition of Old Testament prophets and the Puritan models of personal narrative. He also had the jeremiad; his in a "modernist version ... urging lessons but not solutions" (O'Brien). The tendency among autobiographers to work by selection and exclusion was exaggerated in Adams, most notably in the twenty-year gap after 1871, a period that included his years as assistant professor of medieval history at Harvard, the publication of his nine-volume *History of the United States During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*, and the death by suicide of his wife, Marian Hooper.

The anxiety occasioned by the force and variety of his inheritance alone might account for Adams's self-deprecation and irony were it not for the fact that Adams felt acutely that things fall apart. His view of the civil war may serve as an example. Adams wrote of it wryly and with acid, remarking that: "the lesson in education was vital to these young men" of college age, whether New Englanders or Virginians, "who, within ten years, killed each other by scores in the act of testing their college conclusions". The civil war prompted doubts of his own "on the facts of moral evolution". He himself, "with Heaven knew how many Puritans and Patriots behind him", had "an education that had cost a civil war".

As the title of the book implies, education is the point, autobiography the vehicle or host, and the author returns again and again to the point. Indeed, Adams's view of life itself is that all experience should tend toward education, and education must, as Blackmur says, fit the mind with skills and tools "for intelligent reaction in a given context". Adams complained that formal education was worthless: "Four years of Harvard College, if successful, resulted in an autobiographical blank, a mind on which only a water-mark had been stamped." Looking back from the prospect of old age, Adams said that seventy years of education had "no moral and little incident", adding that "the practical value" remained "to the end in doubt". In short, the story of his education was a story of failure.

Much ink has been spent on this, one critic remarking that Henry Adams's definition of failure is written "in about the brightest and most intelligent style we shall ever read" (Cox). Another comments on those who "have felt that his thesis of failure would be contradicted by an account of success enough for several lifetimes" (Bishop). Blackmur comments astutely:

> The failure is not of knowledge or of feeling. It is the failure of the ability to react correctly or even intelligently to more than an abbreviated version of knowledge and feeling ... It is the failure the mind comes to ultimately and all along when it is compelled to measure its knowledge in terms of its ignorance. Most failures we have the tact to ignore or give a kinder name. That is because we know by instinct at what a heavy discount to put most proffered examples of failure. There was no effort of imagination in them and only private agony, where for great failure we want the most unrelenting imagination and impersonal agony of

> knowledge searching the haven of objective form … A genuine failure comes hard and slow.

Blackmur concludes aptly: "Failure is the appropriate end to the type of mind of which Adams is a pre-eminent example: the type which attempts through imagination to find the meaning or source of unity aside from the experience which it unites."

The source of unity was to come from within. "Adams, evidently frightened by the enormous increases in the use of energy in the nineteenth century and particularly by their extrapolation into the future, propose[d] that man must change: he must get back to thought's controlling force" (Bishop). Adams saw with unmatched clarity the convulsion the world had undergone in the era of the dynamo, and he located his own success in his quest, as Bishop puts it, "for an adequate set of symbols" to unify the fragmented nature of modern life.

JASON R. PETERS

Biography

Henry Brooks Adams. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, United States, 16 February 1838. His grandfather, John Quincy Adams, and great-grandfather, John Adams, were both US presidents. Studied at Harvard College (later Harvard University), Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1854–58 (BA). Studied law at the University of Berlin, 1858–59. Lived in Dresden, 1859–60. Travelled to Italy, writing for the *Boston Courier*, 1860. Worked as private secretary to his father, Charles Francis Adams, when he served in Congress, representing Massachusetts, in Washington, DC, 1860–61, and when he was US ambassador to London, 1861–68. Lived in Washington, DC, and in London, contributing to various American periodicals, 1869. Editor of *North American Review*, Boston, 1870–76, and assistant professor of medieval history, Harvard University, 1870–77. Married Marian "Clover" Hooper, 1872. Settled in Washington, DC, 1877. Wrote two novels, *Democracy* (1880) and *Esther* (1884), and began work on the *History of the United States* (9 vols, 1889–91). Wife committed suicide, 1885. President, American Historical Association, 1894. In later life spent six months every year in France. Wrote *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* (1904), an influential study of the unity of religion and art in the Middle Ages, and *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907), for which he was awarded the Pulitzer prize, posthumously, in 1919. Died in Washington, DC, 27 March 1918.

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Addams, Jane 1860–1935

American social worker, reformer, and autobiographer

The pioneer social worker and social and political reformer Jane Addams described the development of her famous Chicago settlement house in her classic autobiography *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910). Addams's autobiographical sequel, *The Second Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1930), describes the development of relationships between the Hull-House settlement and reform work and national and international reform and progressive political activity during the second and third decades of the 20th century.

Twenty Years at Hull-House is a major text of the mainstream of American autobiography. As in Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* (published complete in 1868), Ulysses S. Grant's *Personal Memoirs* (1885–86), and *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907), Jane Addams blends personal history with an account of an important public life that explores the nature of individual achievement. *Twenty Years at Hull-House* is the great American autobiography of a life of social work, a field in which Addams played a seminal, founding role. It is also a central modern feminist text.

Addams was imbued with a modern cast of mind and was interested in tracing connections between her personal history and her position in life at the top of her chosen field at the time she wrote *Twenty Years*. Growing up in a small town in northern Illinois during and after the Civil War, she greatly admired her father, a widower after his wife's death between Jane's second and seventh years. John Addams had been an active abolitionist, a friend and political ally of Abraham Lincoln, and an eight-term Whig and later Republican state senator. A veteran of the rough-and-tumble postbellum Illinois political

scene remembered him as the only state legislator who had not only never accepted a bribe but had never been offered one: "bad men were instinctively afraid of him", recalled his daughter. Jane Addams's lifelong sense of high moral purpose and ongoing effort to realize her ideals through concrete action is traceable in part to the inspiration of her father.

After graduating from Rockford College in Illinois in 1882 and a brief, unsatisfactory stint in medical school, Addams experienced some years of uncertainty about her future. In a general way, she always knew that she would live among and help the poor. A tour of England, including a visit to the destitute of the East End of London, and meetings with British reform theorists and activists helped to focus her plans. Influential, too, were her studies of positivist philosophy, prompted by the British follower of Auguste Comte, Frederic Harrison. A visit to Toynbee Hall, an East London settlement founded in 1884 by an Oxford University group stimulated by the ideas of John Ruskin and Lev Tolstoii, helped to crystallize Addams's determination "to rent a house in a part of [Chicago] where many primitive and actual needs are found, in which young women who have been given over too exclusively to study, might restore a balance of activity along traditional lines and learn from life itself". Addams's friend and co-founder of Hull-House, Ellen Gates Starr, wrote in 1889 that for Addams settlement work "is more for the benefit of the people who do it than for the other class, that one gets as much as she gives". Among the other mostly white, middle-class young women who joined Addams in the formation of Hull-House was Mary Rozet Smith, who became Addams's companion throughout her life.

The Hull-House settlement, which occupied the former country house of a well-to-do Chicago businessman, was located in what developed into a raw district of thousands of Italian, Greek, German, Russian, and other immigrants. Addams and her colleagues provided social services, childcare, boys' clubs, care for unmarried mothers and battered women, and other benefits to a community subject to the extremely exploitative labour practices of late 19th-century entrepreneurs. In addition to direct social services, Hull-House engaged in political work to institute laws to control child labour, require school attendance, and limit the hours of work for women, as well as efforts for industrial safety and the recognition of labour unions. Following Ruskin and William Morris, Addams believed that there was an important link between art and social reform, and arts programmes, including the Hull-House Players drama group, were integral to her mission.

While *Twenty Years* is laden with information essential to American social history, the autobiography is not only of interest in relation to its public character. Throughout, Addams's unique voice is discernible: gently probing, striving to find connections between personal vision and public outcomes, and, if we listen closely, self-deprecating and witty. The soft intonation of her personal voice, heard behind and blended with her public tone, is ever present in *Twenty Years*, but it is heard more faintly, and sometimes not at all, in *The Second Twenty Years at Hull-House*. Yet this second autobiographical volume provides the essential story of the continued development of Hull-House and the way in which its programmes grew and connected with progressive political and social-reform activity in America and elsewhere.

JAMES ROBERT PAYNE

Biography

Laura Jane Addams. Born in Cedarville, near Freeport, Illinois, United States, 6 September 1860. Her father was John Huy Addams, a Quaker, prominent local businessman, and Republican politician. Mother died while she was an infant. Father remarried, 1868. Educated at Rockford Female Seminary, Illinois (later Rockford College for Women), 1877–81 (awarded degree 1882). Entered Women's Medical College, Philadelphia, 1881, but abandoned medical studies after six months due to ill health. Travelled extensively in Europe, 1883–85 and 1887–89, and became influenced by the views of John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle. Visited Toynbee Hall settlement house in London, a philanthropic project for the underprivileged, with Starr, a close friend. Founded the pioneering Hull-House settlement in a poor neighbourhood of Chicago, in partnership with Ellen Gates Starr, financed partly by a legacy from her father, 1889. Initiated many educational and social-welfare projects at Hull-House, which served as a model for many subsequent settlement houses. Active in politics, women's suffrage campaigns, and labour and social-reform movements in Chicago from 1890. Wrote and lectured widely on these issues, sponsored partly by the Carnegie Foundation. Member of mediation commission of Pullman railroad strike, 1894. Published *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907), and *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910). Member of Chicago School Board from 1905. Participated in founding of Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, 1908. First woman president of National Conference of Charities and Corrections (now National Conference on Social Welfare), 1909. First woman to be awarded honorary degree by Yale University, 1910. Vice-president, National-American Woman Suffrage Alliance, 1911–14. Pro-suffrage columnist for *Ladies Home Journal*, *c.*1910. Took part in the Progressive party's presidential campaign for Theodore Roosevelt, 1912. Refused to support involvement of United States in World War I. Chairman of International Congress of Women, The Hague, 1915. First president of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1919–29. Awarded Nobel Peace Prize (with Nicholas Murray Butler), 1931. Died in Chicago, 21 May 1935.

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Adolescence and Life Writing

Adolescence is usually conflated with the autobiographer's childhood in life writings, both in retrospective accounts and in diaries written during adolescence, as well as in the meagre critical literature on the subject, little of which is devoted specifically to adolescence. The generic label "childhood", as Richard Coe, the most sophisticated critic on the topic, uses it in *When the Grass Was Taller* (1984), applies to life writings that begin early in the author's life – at birth, or during the pre-school or early school years – and extend to a variety of terminal points that indicate maturity. "Adolescence in life writing" is a term for the segment of these works that begins with the onset of puberty and ends when the subject arrives at maturity (itself another variable and debatable term). This is the period of life when the subject concentrates on growing up and coming of age – growing out and away from the family of nurture until some measure of independence and autonomy is reached. Thus this discussion of adolescence in autobiographies extracts this topic from the larger segment of the life span in which it is usually embedded.

Life writings depict the development of the adolescent subject's moral, sexual, social, religious, political, and economic sensibilities, in varying proportions, whether in imitation or defiance of one's parents and culture. Other proofs of maturity that demarcate the end of adolescence (and often, the end of the book) are characterized by some form of motion, of fluid transition from one state to another: leaving home, perhaps never to return – unlike the epic, whose journeying hero always comes home – (Mary McCarthy's *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*, 1957); a break with one's parents (Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, 1976); departure for (or graduation from) college (Frank Conroy's *Stop-Time*, 1967); enlistment in the military or embarkation on one's chosen career (Alice Kaplan's *French Lessons*, 1993); marriage (Russell Baker's *Growing Up*, 1982); parenthood (Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, 1969); coming out sexually (Paul Monette's *Becoming a Man*, 1992); or acknowledging an ethnic or racial heritage (Peter Balakian's *Black Dog of Fate*, 1997). These do not necessarily happen concurrently or in a particular sequence, and may occur at a wide range of chronological ages. The stress and complexity of these maturing processes provide the adolescent's coming-of-age with motifs, narrative structures, and a variety of tones and perspectives; in quality literature – popular perception notwithstanding – these are rarely sentimental.

The extended treatment of adolescence in life writing is a relatively recent form in Western literature, for it could not exist until the culture acknowledged adolescence itself as a specific, definable, and necessary – however problematic – state of human development deserving of notice. Throughout medieval Europe and much of modern Africa, children and adolescents have been regarded as adults-in-training and undifferentiated members of clans or tribes until an initiation ceremony (or perhaps marriage) marked them as adults, not teenagers, a term so recent it has not been cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Adolescent (including Freudian) psychology was – and remains – irrelevant in cultures where youths with "complexes" are treated as social misfits and are unlikely to survive. Religion and philosophy reinforced this sociologically based impatience with the young; in his *Confessions* (written *c.*397–400), St Augustine set the pattern for the next 1400 years by treating his youthful self as the negation of everything he was later to become: "I am loth, indeed, to count [this] as part of the life I led in this world."

Only within the past 150 years has adolescence been treated as a distinctive life stage in life writing, primarily in cultures that value democracy, individuality, and equality: France and Britain, North America and Australia, the emerging Third World, and (surprisingly) Russia. The subject's adolescent years have figured prominently in notable autobiographies spanning the subject's entire life, such as Rousseau's *Confessions* (1782–89), Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* (1791), and Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845; this version, a notable coming-of-age work, expanded as his life continued). In most serial autobiographies, such as those by Douglass, Simone de Beauvoir, and Maya Angelou, the later volumes seldom attain the literary quality of those concerning the adolescent stage, perhaps because in the earliest volume the author has rehearsed the stories and obtained both the self-understanding and the distance from these more remote events to transmute uninformed life into informed art. It may also be that because conversations, characters, and significant details of the author's adolescent life are less readily documented, they lend themselves to greater fictionalizing. Indeed, many of the best treatments of adolescence are written by novelists – for example, Hamlin Garland's *A Son of the Middle Border* (1917), Vladimir Nabokov's *Speak, Memory* (1951, 1966), McCarthy's *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*, John Updike's *Self-Consciousness* (1989), and Tobias Wolff's *This Boy's Life* (1989). Adolescent diaries by thoughtful, introspective writers (most notably, Anne Frank, first published 1947) reveal the creation of a reflective, analytic self who establishes a separate, independent existence within the work even when it is impossible to do so in actual life.

Adolescence as a life stage flourished in 20th-century life writing, and this is not surprising, given the era's emphasis on adolescent psychology, education, and (a particularly Western) media glorification of teenage culture and sensibility. Many of these accounts of growing up are also tales of surmounting family hardships (Baker's *Growing Up*), extreme living conditions (Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*, 1996), racial discrimination (Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, 1945), life-threatening illness (Lucy Grealy's *Autobiography of a Face*, 1994), and dysfunctional families, particularly in the confessional 1990s (Mary Karr's *The Liar's Club: A Memoir*, 1995). Others are more lyrical and idealized (Susan Allen Toth's *Blooming: A Small-Town Girlhood*, 1981, and Annie Dillard's *An American Childhood*, 1987). Adolescence in autobiography lends itself to varied theoretical and pragmatic readings, either as social polemics (Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 1860), or as arguments for or against a particular philosophy (Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger of Memory*, 1982) or way of life (Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*). These autobiographers have re-created their own characters and made them larger than life, suffused with compressed and pungent meaning.

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See also Childhood and Life Writing; Children's Life Writing; Family Relations and Life Writing; Fatherhood and Life Writing; Motherhood and Life Writing

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Africa: North

Various forms of life writing, including autobiographical novels, life stories, and to a lesser extent published diaries and correspondence, came to particular prominence in the Maghreb from the 1950s onwards, with the development of the independence movements, as the colony of Algeria and the protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia sought to liberate themselves from French colonial power. The identity of the individual, of the community, and of the nation in the colonial and postcolonial contexts; debates concerning the language of expression and the relationship between language and identity; and questions of perception and representation of self and other were concerns shared by writers across these three countries, although with variations in emphasis resulting from the different experiences of colonial rule. It is therefore important to consider each country separately, taking into account the historical context, and stressing that the life writings considered here are written in French, a consequence of the school system introduced by the colonial power and necessitating a consideration of the influence of French language and literature. The question of the influence of Arabic literature in North Africa is a complex one, and although it is true to say that the question of the self is important in the development of modern Arabic literature (and that forms of life writing exist also in the classical Arabic tradition), there is little evidence of widespread Arabic literary influence. In addition to this, the influence of the region's oral culture (including Berber and dialectal Arabic) is more important when considering literary forms of autobiographical discourse and its figures and modes of expression. The mixture of writers from Islamic, Jewish, and Christian cultures in North Africa adds to the diversity of life writing. There is remarkable vigour in this desire to speak of the self, although often in order to "represent", in both meanings of the word, the wider social group, given the traditional conduct in Muslim society in which social identity is more valued than the individualism promoted in Western society. Several of these writers contributed to the development of autobiographical discourses in the second half of the 20th century, and the more experimental forms make an interesting parallel to the "new autobiography" in France.

Algeria was colonized in 1830 and achieved independence after a bloody seven-year war in 1962. The French school system was put in place during the 1880s and 1890s, and from the 1920s onwards Algerians began writing and publishing in French. The writers of the period 1920–50 are usually considered, with the exceptions of the overtly nationalist Ali El Hammami and Malek Bennabi, to be culturally and politically assimilated and, while often expressing the need to maintain an Algerian identity, largely accepted the alliance with the colonizer seen as important in the evolution towards modernity. In addition, there is the work of *Pied-noir* writers (people of European origin in colonial Algeria), notably Louis Bertrand and Robert Randau, whose works contain a significant autobiographical element, with Bertrand also writing directly of his experiences in texts such as *Mes années d'apprentissage* [1938; My Apprenticeship Years]. More recently Marie Cardinal with *Les Mots pour le dire* (1975; *The Words to Say It*) and the publication of Albert Camus's final manuscript, an autobiographical novel, *Le Premier Homme* (1994; *The First Man*) have revived interest in the *Pied-noir* experience.

It was from 1945 onwards, under the impact of World War II, including the defeat of France in 1940, and the brutal repression of a demonstration in Sétif on 8 May 1945, that Algerians expressed the need to question in a new way their identity both individually and collectively. A founding text of life writing in this period is Mouloud Feraoun's autobiographical novel *Le Fils du pauvre* [1950; The Poor Man's Son], begun in 1939. It is however less overtly political than the work that would be produced by writers belonging to what the Tunisian Albert Memmi,

one of the most important figures in North African literature and thought, would call the "Generation of 52" writing across the Maghreb. Often, but not always, taking the form of largely autobiographical novels, all of these works were produced in the awareness that the writer is a "witness" with a duty to be a "public" writer, and they are concerned with the effects of colonialism and the war of independence on individuals and on society. The most prominent names are Mohammed Dib, Mouloud Mammeri, Malek Haddad, and especially Kateb Yacine, whose *Nedjma* (1956), an "autobiography in the plural" as he called it, is an essential text in the development of more experimental forms of autobiographical discourse. Important writers who followed, from the 1960s onwards, are the controversial Rachid Boudjedra, Nabile Farès, Tahar Djaout, and Rachid Mimouni. These authors, although often not autobiographical in a direct or traditional sense, share a preoccupation with individual and collective identity and memory, and with the transformation of society under the impact of war and revolution, often expressing disillusionment. Feraoun remained an important figure in life writing until his assassination in 1962 and beyond, with the publication of his diary (1955–62) and his correspondence, *Lettres à ses amis* [1969; Letters to His Friends].

It was in the 1970s and 1980s that women writers came to prominence in the Maghreb, giving voice to the traditional "silence" of women in the public arena. Foremost among these is the Algerian Assia Djebar (b. 1936), who had deliberately turned away from self-reflection in her early novels of the 1950s and 1960s, yet who inaugurated what can be seen as a vast autobiographical project with *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* (1980; *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment*), a collection of short stories, with an important theoretical "postface" on the concept of the look and the other, and especially in *L'Amour la fantasia* (1985; *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*) and *Vaste est la prison* (1995; *So Vast the Prison*). *Ces voix qui m'assiègent* [1999; These Voices Which Besiege Me] is a further meditation on language, identity, and her personal itinerary in literature. In this last text she writes also on the autobiography of an earlier Kabyle Christian woman, Fadhma Aïth Mansour Amrouche, mother of the French-language poet Jean Amrouche and of the woman writer Taos Amrouche, the latter herself an author of several autobiographical novels. Fadhma Amrouche's *Histoire de ma vie* (1968; *My Life Story*), written in 1946, was the first autobiographical text in French by an Algerian woman, and again a founding text of life writing in North Africa.

Jean Déjeux documents in his invaluable study numerous published life stories "often dealing with the experience of the war of independence, political action, incarceration, and exile", for example, Saïd Ferdi's, *Un enfant dans la guerre: Algérie 1954–1962* [1981; A Child in the War] and Hocine Aït Ahmed's, *Mémoires d'un combattant: l'esprit d'indépendance 1942–1952* [1983; Memoirs of a Fighter: The Spirit of Independence 1942–1952], together with details of published correspondence. An identifiable body of life writing beginning in the 1980s concerns the work of writers such as Azouz Begag and Mehdi Charef, who first gave voice to the young immigrant and second-generation immigrant North African populations of the inner cities of France, known as *beurs*, originally a slang term for "arabs" and adopted as an identity for a community caught between two cultures. Finally, a collection edited by the writer Leïla Sebbar, *Une Enfance algérienne* [1997; An Algerian Childhood], brings together the childhood stories of writers and thinkers of different generations and of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian origin.

Morocco became a French protectorate in 1912 and achieved independence in 1956. Since French became the language of political and administrative power, Moroccans realized that in order to take control of the country, the knowledge and practice of that language were necessary, and attendance in French schools increased, especially after 1945. It was in the 1950s that two writers rose to prominence: Ahmed Sefrioui, particularly with the story of his childhood, *La Boîte à merveilles* [1954; The Box of Wonders], and the controversial Driss Chraïbi, with his own work on a traumatized childhood and the figure of the father, *Le Passé simple* (1954; *The Simple Past*). In 1966 Abdellatif Laâbi launched the influential review *Souffles* which rallied together writers and thinkers from across the Maghreb. It was banned in 1972 and Laâbi was imprisoned for eight years; his correspondence from this period is published in *Chroniques de la citadelle d'exil* [1983; Chronicles from the Citadel of Exile]. In the 1960s and 1970s Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine continued the investigation into childhood with texts such as *Moi l'aigre* [1970; Me, the Bitter One]. Abdelkébir Khatibi, who had published theoretical texts in *Souffles*, wrote *La Mémoire tatouée* [1971; Tattooed Memory], "the autobiography of a decolonized man" as he called it, an important text of the more experimental writing in North African literature in French. The correspondence between Khatibi and the Egyptian writer Jacques Hassoun living in France is published under the title *Le Même Livre* [1985; The Same Book], as is a text that the author calls "a personal psychoanalysis", *Par-dessous l'épaule* [1988; Over the Shoulder]. The work of the best-known Moroccan writer, Tahar Ben Jelloun, began to appear in 1973, and constantly treats questions of identity; with *L'Ecrivain public* [1983; The Public Writer] he shows how a child (reminiscent of the author himself) begins to invent stories. In 1983 a writer of a younger generation, Abdelhak Serhane, continued the Moroccan preoccupation with the traumas of childhood with *Messaouda* (1983). The Jewish identity in Morocco is treated by Edmond Amran El Maleh, especially in *Mille Ans, un jour* [1986; A Thousand Years, One Day]. Mention should also be made of the autobiography of Mohamed Choukri, *Le Pain nu* (*For Bread Alone*), translated from Arabic into French by Ben Jelloun and published in 1980.

Tunisia became a French protectorate in 1881 and gained independence in 1956, the same year as Morocco. From the 1920s onwards French was widely taught and necessary in order to work in the administration of the country, and many Tunisian intellectuals acquired two cultures. A literature in French was largely begun by Jewish writers in the 1920s and 1930s. Notable among these was Ryvel (pseudonym of Raphaël Lévy), writing on life in the Jewish ghetto. It was with the autobiographical novel by Albert Memmi, again a Jewish writer and intellectual, *La Statue de sel* (1953; *The Pillar of Salt*) that Tunisia joined with Algeria and Morocco in the political thrust of the writing of the 1950s. Memmi remains an essential figure for North African literature and thought in French, and his whole body of work can be seen as a long meditation on self and the "other" in the contexts of colonialism and postcolonialism. There are fewer writers in French from Muslim backgrounds,

but it is worth noting Hachemi Baccouche with his autobiographical novel *Ma foi demeure* [1958; My Faith Remains]. Abdelwahab Meddeb, who in common with Khatibi in Morocco has an interest in identity, memory, and language, was one of a new generation of writers, publishing the experimental *Talismano* (1979). Among woman writers, the work of Hélé Béji in *L'Oeil du jour* [1985; The Eye of the Day], a meditation on memory and on modern and traditional ways of life, is notable. As with all writers from the Maghreb, work on both the politics and the poetics of identity is in evidence.

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Africa: East

Although East Africa is sometimes defined as including countries farther afield, this survey concentrates on Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, which have historically formed a triad and which constitute a region in which life writing exhibits several distinctive patterns. Exceptions to such patterns necessarily abound in this region, with its long and various histories and its diverse languages and ways of life. The achievement of Shaaban Robert is one such example: a Tanzanian considered to be the first significant modern writer in Swahili, he is author of *Maisha yangu* (1949; *My Life*), as well as the biography of a noted singer of tarab music, *Wasifu wa Siti Binti Saad* (1955; *The Narrative of the Life of Siti Binti Saad*). The patterns described here are intended to serve as starting points for the more intensive study that East African life writing rewards.

Much life writing related to East Africa, and particularly that for which it is best known, has been defined by travel. There are narratives by and about long- and short-term travellers in the region: merchants, explorers, missionaries, settlers, and others. And there are counter-narratives, typically by the Africans affected, and often imposed upon, by their equivocal guests. The life writing of this region is generally marked, indeed often motivated, by this dichotomy.

Early travellers' records of life along the East African coast, where trading centres developed, range from *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (*The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*), attributed to a Greek trader from Egypt in the first century CE, to the *Rihl?t* (*Travels*) of Ibn Batt?ta, dictated by this famous Moroccan pilgrim to Mecca in the early 14th century. There is an important cluster of contemporaneous accounts, some by eyewitnesses, of the experiences of Portuguese mariners who set their fleets down on the coast as they made their way to and from India in the late 1400s and early 1500s, e.g. *Roteiro da Primeira Viagem de Vasco da Gama* (*A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*) and *Livro de Duarte Barbosa* (*The Book of Duarte Barbosa*). But it was in the 19th century, as foreign explorers moved farther inland, that a formula for writing about East Africa, rooted in a Romantic responsiveness to nature, was most assiduously developed and exploited. The typical narrative of this period entwines the traveller's life with the hazards and wonders of the East African landscape that he is describing, e.g.: the confirmation by Johann Ludwig Krapf and Johannes Rebmann, in the 1840s, that snow-capped mountains existed on the African equator, recorded in Krapf's *Reisen in Ostafrika* (1860; *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours During an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa*); the first European ascent of Kilimanjaro, by Charles New, described in his *Life, Wanderings, and Labours in Eastern Africa* (1873); the first crossing of equatorial Africa from east to west by a European, recounted in Verney Lovett Cameron's *Across Africa* (1877). Often, the figure and character of the traveller came – in rhetoric and in the public imagination – to dominate the East African landscape; and each "discovery" or "first" mattered as much for its connection to the traveller's life as for its geological or cultural significance to the region. Richard Burton and John Hanning Speke, the first Europeans to reach Lake Tanganyika, epitomize this phenomenon. Speke, who pushed on to Lake Victoria, which he identified as a source of the Nile (while Burton favoured Lake Tanganyika), published his *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (1863) and *What Led to the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (1864). Among Burton's voluminous literary output were a series of articles entitled "Zanzibar; and Two Months in East Africa" (1858), which were published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and *Lake Regions of Central Africa* (1860), which exhibited his growing antagonism toward Speke. Though Speke has provoked some curiosity, in large part because of the mystery of his suicide or accidental death on the day before he was to debate Burton publicly, it is Burton who has proved most attractive to biographers (e.g. *The Life of Captain Sir Richard F. Burton*, 1893, by his wife, Isabel; *The True Life of Capt. Sir Richard F. Burton*, 1896, by his niece, Georgiana Stisted; Thomas Wright's *The Life of Sir Richard Burton*, 1906; Byron Farwell's *Burton*, 1963; Fawn M. Brodie's *The Devil Drives*, 1967; and Edward Rice's *Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton*, 1990).

They dominated the rhetorical scene, but men like Burton did not encompass life writing in its entirety in East Africa in the 19th century. Though it forms a relatively small category, life writing by women is noteworthy (e.g.: *Sultan to Sultan*, 1892, by May French Sheldon, a wealthy American who adopted the traditionally masculine role of independent explorer in Maasai

country; and *Letters from East Africa*, 1901, by Gertrude Ward – the novelist Mrs Humphry Ward's sister-in-law – who was a medical missionary in Tanzania). Women's lives, it should be noted, were often also written into narratives by others (e.g.: Samuel White Baker's wife, Florence, who travelled with him, shares the stage in his *The Albert N'yanza*, 1866; and oblique, but still vital and interesting, glimpses of the lives of a variety of East African women – leaders, servants, slaves, converts, and many others – can be derived from descriptions of individuals, though often unnamed, whom authors encountered). Emilie Ruete's *Memoiren einer arabischen Prinzessin* (1886; *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess*) offers an unusual account – first published in Germany – by an East African woman, a daughter of the Sultan of Zanzibar.

The explorer Henry Morton Stanley's arrangement with Mutesa I (who figures importantly in Stanley's *Through the Dark Continent*, 1878, as well as in Speke's work) to accept missionaries into his kingdom opened the way for interconnected life stories of missionaries and their converts in Uganda. The *Last Journals of Bishop Hannington* (1888) – diary entries by the Anglican bishop who, along with his African companions, was abducted and killed in 1885 by representatives of Mutesa's successor – include a poignant variety of life writing, the cartoons in which James Hannington depicted his travels for his children left at home. Albert B. Lloyd, who went to Uganda in 1894, describes his missionary work and travels in *In Dwarf Land and Cannibal Country* (1899) and *Uganda to Khartoum* (1906). In *Apolo of the Pygmy Forest* (1923) Lloyd tells the story of Apolo Kivebulaya, an African convert who ministered in western Uganda. Two more converts of the Church Missionary Society – Apolo Kagwa, the katikiro (or prime minister) of Buganda, and Ham Mukasa, his secretary – were invited to the coronation of King Edward VII of Britain. Mukasa's *Uganda's Katikiro in England* (1904) has been translated from the original Luganda and published in several editions, most recently in 1998. It is useful to mention here that the continuing and changing history of the traditional Ugandan kingdoms provided a theme for autobiography in the 20th century (for example, Prince Akiki K. Nyabongo's *The Story of an African Chief*, 1935; Mutesa II's *The Desecration of My Kingdom,* 1967; and Elizabeth of Toro's *African Princess*, 1983).

For Europeans and Americans the most pervasive images of East Africa and of lives led in East Africa are probably those created by writers who were tourists and settlers in the first half of the 20th century. In the mid-1930s, the novelist Ernest Hemingway travelled under the guidance of big-game hunter Philip Percival and shaped the real events of his safari for literary effect in *Green Hills of Africa* (1935). The image of the white adventurer in East Africa that Hemingway made fashionable, and which still endures, was not an entirely original one. Hemingway had modelled his own travels on those of Theodore Roosevelt who, after leaving the American presidency, had gone on safari in 1909, also guided by Percival, and written *African Game Trails* (1910). Game-hunting – with gun or camera – is a theme of numerous memoirs of this period. Winston Churchill's *My African Journey* (1908) describes his travels in Kenya and Uganda; Martin Johnson's *Camera Trails in Africa* (1924) is as remarkable for its depiction of his wife, Osa, a hunter whose avidity seems at odds with their naturalist enterprise, as it is for Martin's lyrical renderings of the landscape; Osa Johnson's *I Married Adventure* (1940) also touches on this American couple's film-making in East Africa; Philip Percival's *Hunting, Settling, and Remembering* has been published in a limited edition (1997). Bror von Blixen-Finecke, Percival's Danish partner in the safari business, produced a memoir, *Nyama* (1936; *African Hunter*), laden with the often bureaucratic details of the life of a big-game hunter. His wife, Karen Blixen – using her pseudonym Isak Dinesen – wrote *Den afrikanske farm* (1937; *Out of Africa*) and a sequel *Skygger på graesset* (1960; *Shadows on the Grass*), in which she related the now famous events attending the failure of her coffee plantation in Kenya's Ngong Hills. Particularly since its reissue in the 1980s, Beryl Markham's *West with the Night* (1942) – which describes Markham's childhood in Kenya, her careers as an equestrian and an aviatrix, and the activities of the same settler community that Blixen lived within – has garnered admiration, and also controversy. Hemingway greatly admired Markham's book; others contended that the book had been ghostwritten.

The lives of the European explorers of the 19th century and the white hunters and settlers of the 20th are often most attractively described in narratives that evoke lost eras of adventure and romance. The significant and complex set of narratives that counter this view of colonialism's impact is perhaps best represented by the wide range of life writing that surrounds the so-called Mau Mau Rebellion, the organized resistance to British rule in Kenya in the 1950s. Jomo Kenyatta, who became Kenya's prime minister, and then its president, after the rebellion, early on connected life writing to political aims (for instance, his important study of the Kikuyu, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 1938, combines autobiography with ethnography). R. Mugo Gatheru's *Child of Two Worlds* (1964) – which has been described as "somewhat derivative" of *Facing Mount Kenya* – is the autobiography of a Kenyan who was studying abroad during the Emergency, as it was called. Gatheru connects the story of his own education to the history of his country's struggle for independence. Some accounts focus on women's lives during Mau Mau (e.g. Muthoni Likimani's *Passbook Number F. 47927* (1985), named for the author's own identity card; Wambui Waiyaki Otieno's *Mau Mau's Daughter* (1998), by a woman active in the Mau Mau movement). But this genre's focus is typically a masculine one. Marshall S. Clough points out that "memoirs of the counterinsurgency" (e.g. William Baldwin's *Mau Mau Manhunt*, 1957; Ian Henderson's *The Hunt for Kimathi*, 1958, which concerns Dedan Kimathi, a leader of the rebellion; and Frank Kitson's *Gangs and Counter-Gangs*, 1960) bear disturbing similarities to the memoirs of the big-game hunters. Autobiographies by the rebels themselves (e.g. Josiah Mwangi Kariuki's *Mau Mau Detainee*, 1963; Karari Njama's *Mau Mau from Within*, 1966; and Waruhiu Itote's *Mau Mau General*, 1967) provide first-hand details of Mau Mau, from early experiences that shaped the authors' attitudes toward the British to later experiences in the British detention camps. These Mau Mau memoirs typically attempt both to dispel gossip surrounding the rebels' practices – the taking of oaths, for instance – and to place the rebellion in historical context. They are contemporary records of a modern political event, and they provide a local pattern for life writing. Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Githae Mugo co-wrote the play *The Trial of Declan Kimathi* (1976). *Mau Mau Detainee* served as a model for *Detained* (1981), the "prison diary" by Ngugi, whose co-

authorship and production of a play in Kikuyu led to his imprisonment in Kenya in the late 1970s. Here are new patterns, but they are nonetheless shadowed and shaped by memories, still alive in East Africa, of "the great days before the Europeans came", as Kariuki calls them.

AMBER VOGEL

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Africa: Southern

Southern African life writing is characterized by an engagement with the tumultuous history of colonialism and the violent struggle for liberation in the region, and it is unsurprising that dispossession, resistance, imprisonment, exile, and redemption are its recurring themes. While white explorers and settlers left early accounts of exploration and travel narratives, the central tradition of black life writing has characteristically taken the form of testimonials, protest writings, and prison memoirs. South Africa, with the longest period of European contact, has the longest history of writing in sub-Saharan Africa, and its literature is certainly the best known in the English-speaking West. This dominant literary history has subsumed the writing efforts of its neighbouring countries. The establishment of Fort Hare College in 1912 by members of the South African Native National Congress encouraged many black South African students who would later record their lives. Literary activity became more prolific in the 1950s when the educated elite began to write their personal experiences in response to independence movements, so that modern writing became closely linked with liberation efforts and independence throughout the region. Indeed, the first generation of black writers such as the South Africans Peter Abrahams (b. 1919) and Ezekiel Mphahlele (b. 1919) emerged around this time, and were teachers of those involved in nationalist politics. Likewise, the independence period brought an unprecedented quantity of writing from those who would otherwise have been unable to write under oppressive regimes. Southern African life writing emerged in a truly modern voice across the region, one that engages with the often violent history of colonialism, and liberation struggle, often in the language of its former colonizer.

Early life writing in southern Africa was largely defined by travel and exploration, and the letters and diaries of European travellers and explorers who recorded their lives were numerous. *The Letters of Lady Anne Barnard to Henry Dundas from the Cape and Elsewhere, 1793–1803* (1973) records Barnard's correspondence with Henry Dundas, secretary for war and the colonies, and provides a glimpse of the first British occupation of the Cape region. Other early writings were by missionaries and hunters, seeking to promote colonial causes, with one notable exception: the missionary writings of Frances Colenso, a bishop's wife, depict an anti-colonial stance in some 300 letters on life in Natal between 1865 and 1893 (collected in *Colenso: Letters from Natal*, edited by W. Rees, 1958).

A wave of British and Irish settlers arrived in 1820 in South Africa as part of a scheme by the British government to ensure the colony's survival and growth. These settlers were eager to record their new lives, and provided a start to South African literary production, resulting in, for example, Thomas Pringle's *African Sketches* (1834), Jeremiah Goldswain's *Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain* (1946, 1949), and the Revd H.H. Dugmore's *The Reminiscences of an Albany Settler* (1871). These settler accounts often discussed the hardships of economic survival rather than political or racial views, while others, such as M.B. Hudson's *A Feature in South African Frontier Life ... A Complete Record of the Kafir War* (1852), present stereotypical relations between the European settlers and the natives. The late 18th and early 19th centuries brought an unprecedented number of explorers to South Africa, many of whom wrote about their travels, in such accounts as the *Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain* (1949) and the *Diary of Henry Francis Fynn* (1950). Life writings provide the reader with details of early life in the settlement and were often eyewitness accounts of historical events, such as George Mwase's *A Dialogue of Nyasaland: Record of Past Events, Environments and the Present Outlook within the Protectorate* (1815), an account of a peasant uprising in colonial plantations, which includes a biography of the Revd John Chilembwe, its leader. Mwase's work is believed to be the first extended writing in English by a Malawian author.

The real efflorescence of life writing, apart from such accounts of settler life and colonial administrations, was not to take place until much later in the region, in the dying days of colonialism and in the emerging independent states.

In South Africa, the special case of apartheid rule imposed by the Nationalist government provoked a profusion of autobiographies by ordinary citizens who framed their stories as testimony, including Naboth Mokgatle's *Autobiography of an Unknown South African* (1971), Mark Mathabane's *Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa* (1986), and Michael Dingake's *My Fight against Apartheid* (1987). Black and white writers alike felt an obligation to illustrate the suffering of the black and coloured populations. The popularity of life writing to call attention to oppression and injustice naturally extended across the region; the experiences of ordinary Angolans under Portuguese rule were recorded by Don Barnett and Roy Harvey in *The Revolution in Angola* (1972).

In an area plagued with political turmoil, it is unsurprising that biographies and autobiographies of the region's political leaders abound, including the former Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda's own *Zambia Shall Be Free* (1962), Nelson Mandela's autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* (1994), and Iain Christie's *Samora Machel: A Biography* (1988) on the Mozambican leader. The autobiography of the Nobel Peace

Prize winner and Zulu chief Albert Luthuli, *Let My People Go* (1962), was translated into eight languages and describes his message of non-violence in the struggle against apartheid. It is interesting to note that Kaunda's, Luthuli's, and Mandela's life stories were written at the height of their careers. Publication of political autobiographies has proved to be a crucial step in the creation of a national consciousness, and of promoting a political leader as a national figure. The genre has also been useful as a means to communicate a leader's political agenda in terms easily understood by the average citizen.

Exiled writers were prolific producers of life writing. Authors whose work had been banned in their respective countries, somewhat ironically, found a wider and more receptive audience in the West. Bloke Modisane's *Blame Me on History* (1963), along with Mary Benson's *A Far Cry: The Making of a South African* (1989), Ezekiel Mphahlele's *Down Second Avenue* (1959), and N. Chabani Manganyi's *Exiles and Homecomings* (1983), are personal literatures of exile as well as political struggle. Bessie Head's autobiographical writings in *A Woman Alone* (1990) detail her alienation and breakdown as a South African refugee in Botswana. Her psychological trauma is further documented in *A Gesture of Belonging: Letters from Bessie Head 1965–1979* (1991). Perhaps it is Lewis Nkosi's collection of autobiographical essays, *Home and Exile* (1965), that best illustrates the predicament of exiled writers when he writes, that "to be a black South African means to live in perpetual exile from oneself". The emerging theme of South African autobiography of the late 20th century is alienation from the land, resulting in both a physical and emotional exile.

A special mention should be made of the life writing produced by migrant workers, who have contributed important testimonial works that illustrate their difficulties in the workplace. The discovery of gold in the Transvaal region of South Africa, as well as the institutionalized forced-labour scheme in Angola and Mozambique, gave rise to protest accounts of the harsh working conditions and the collapse of family units. Alfred Qabula's autobiography, *A Working Life: Cruel Beyond Belief* (1989), depicts his life as a factory worker turned cultural worker. Qabula's work distinguishes itself: going beyond a mention of injustices perpetrated against black workers, it provides an examination of black oppression and viable ways to resolve it. Protest literature also appeared in verse: Benedict Wallet Vilakazi wrote Zulu poems that chronicle the plight of the migrant labourer. His early efforts represented a turn from traditional African verse, which previously treated topics such as religion extensively, and avoided controversial ones such as politics.

Realism became the dominant style of creative expression among Southern African writers, and it could be argued that the modern African novel itself owes its roots to the life-writing process. It is a widely held belief that João Dias's *Godido* (1952), a collection of autobiographical short stories published posthumously, inspired the birth of Mozambican prose writing, and paved the way for Luis Bernardo Honwana's successful book *Nos matamos o Cao-Tinhoso* (1964; *We Killed Mangy Dog and Other Mozambique Stories*), which became the first Lusophone work published in the popular Heinemann's African Series. The novels by the Zimbabweans Charles Mungoshi (*Waiting for the Rain*, 1975) and Tsitsi Dangarembga (*Nervous Conditions*, 1988) both include characters with autobiographical resemblances to their authors, the latter qualifying as a feminist *Bildungsroman*. The prominent novelist Ndabezinhle S. Sigogo wrote novels – *USethi Ebukhweni Bakhe* (1962) and *Gudlindlu Mntanami* (1967; *Rub around the Hut, My Son, and Disappear*) – in his native Ndebele using themes based on his own life. His principal objective was to present an alternative to rigid Ndebele traditions. The purpose of his writing was didactic – a way to adapt to new behavioural guidelines in a changing society. A highly creative style of life writing also manifested itself in poetry, as shown by Lusophone poets from Angola and Mozambique, including Orlando de Albuquerges in his *Estrela perdida* (1951; *Lost Star*) and Alberto Lacerda in *Poemas* (1955; *Poems*). And poetry influenced prose: the South Africans Ezekiel Mphahlele and Peter Abrahams are two writers whose use of poetic language resulted in highly metaphorical, imagistic, and lyrical autobiographies in *Down Second Avenue* (1959) and *Tell Freedom* (1954) respectively.

Writing by political prisoners forms another distinctive subgenre in the troubled region. Ruth First's *117 Days* (1965) and *The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs* (1966) are two early and particularly literary examples by white Jewish anti-apartheid activists. Among other contributions are Hugh Lewin's *Bandiet: Seven Years in a South African Prison* (1974), D.M. Zwelonke's *Robben Island* (1973), Caesarina Kona Makhoere's *No Child's Play: In Prison under Apartheid* (1988), and Breyten Breytenbach's autobiography, *The True Confession of an Albino Terrorist* (1984), written while incarcerated for several years. Important in this subgenre is Ellen Kuzwayo's autobiography, *Call Me Woman* (1985), which depicts her life as a schoolteacher in Soweto and her subsequent imprisonment for political activism. Her work has often been compared to prison writing across the continent, including Wole Soyinka's *The Man Died* (1972) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Detained* (1981), whose testimonial writing style closely resembles her own.

Life writing by women in the region has been especially encouraged in recent years. In Zimbabwe, the organization of publishers and writers, including the Mambo Press and the Zimbabwe Women Writers group, has encouraged the inclusion of women's writing into the national literature. Wide support of this group enabled the publication of anthologies of their lives. Magazines and journals have also encouraged new writers, including *Drum, Fighting Talk, New Age, Ngoma*, and especially *Staffrider*, which specifically sought out the literary voices of young, inexperienced writers. Autobiographical sketches, collected life stories, and interviews with women have been compiled by researchers and academics, often white. These include *Sibambene: The Voices of Women at Mboza* (1987), which recounts the lives of illiterate rural black women in north-eastern Natal; Lesley Lawson's *Working Women: A Portrait of South Africa's Black Women Workers* (1985); Caroline Kerfoot's *We Came to Town* (1985); and Sue Gordon's *A Talent for Tomorrow: Life Stories of South African Servants* (1985). These stories portray the doubly colonized status of southern African women, not only through race, but also gender, with a notable exception. Edited by Marjorie Shostak, an American anthropologist, *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* (1981) depicts the life of Nisa, who led an independent lifestyle among the !Kung of Botswana, a society that enjoyed a uniquely egalitarian structure. Collected life stories and autobiographical sketches have proven to be a particularly useful

genre in capturing the life stories of those who traditionally have been unrepresented and voiceless.

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See also Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Life Writings

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Africa: West and Central (Francophone)

Francophone West and Central Africa encompasses the 14 sovereign nations that were French colonies and the three formerly occupied by Belgian authorities. Since the colonial powers drew national boundaries in accordance with their own political and economic interests without regard to the history of the area, the inhabitants of any one nation belong to different ethnic groups speaking a variety of languages. Most of the 170 million inhabitants of the region neither read nor write, and communicate in their particular native tongues. Rivalry between indigenous languages is strong; French, though not understood by all, is the only common language.

Under these circumstances it is a matter of controversy whether the literature of the area should be subdivided into national literatures. Opponents of this, such as Sembène Ousmane (Senegal) and Guy Ossito Midiohouan (Benin), contend that such a fragmentation would sanction European cultural domination, and that the cultures of the region rather form a single rich mosaic, as can be seen from the designs of textiles and pottery. An examination of life writing proves them right. In different parts of the region, African autobiographers accentuate equally the importance of community, and perceive ties between their personal memories and the collective memory.

Because of this pervasive viewpoint Europeans and North Americans, conditioned by centuries of individualism in autobiography, sometimes question the validity of including African life writing in studies of autobiography. Some argue that autobiography, as a genre, does not exist in Africa, because the individual does not view himself or herself as separate from his or her extended family, present, past, and future; others think that for this very reason African writing is always autobiographical. Actually, both these representations are unsubstantiated, particularly since there is no single universally accepted definition of autobiography. One could require a declaration by the author that the work is autobiographical, or agree with the critic Philippe Lejeune who leaves it up to the reader to decide what is autobiographical: "I will call autobiographical all fiction in which the reader may have reasons – on the basis of resemblances which he sees – to suspect identity between the narrator and the author, even though the author may have denied this identity, or at least has failed to avow it" [my translation].

A chronological survey can best illustrate the evolution of sub-Saharan autobiographical writing in French. Except for an important filiation in *Weltanschauung*, it owes little to oral literature. It has no ties to early 20th-century French-language African life writing that was sponsored and edited by French teachers and administrators, and which uniformly reflected French values. Also French, rather than African in spirit, are the earliest autobiographical novels, Bakary Diallo's *Force-Bonté* [1926; Strength-Goodness] and Ousmane Socé's *Karim* (1935).

To find the first elements of African autobiography in the region one must turn to the seminal work of a group of blacks in Paris, who in the 1930s and 1940s formulated Négritude. Their foremost spokesman was Léopold Sédar Senghor (b. 1906), whose poems were vehicles for his ideology. While an admirer of French culture and stylistically influenced by French poets, Senghor was deeply devoted to his own heritage. He sought to

restore African dignity compromised by colonialism, to win recognition for African culture, and to prove that the distinct emotional contribution it made to humanity was no less important than Europe's rational superiority. He published collections of poems (1945–61), mostly based on his personal history, summoning up the splendours of childhood in his native Joal and invoking the magic of Senegalese landscapes and sounds. Autobiographical details are also present in his other poems and in prose passages published in *Liberté* (5 vols, 1964–93), which he wrote as president of Senegal and member of the Académie Française.

Partly inspired by Senghor's viewpoint and lyricism was the earliest and most important avowed autobiography, *L'Enfant noir* (1953; *The Dark Child*) by the Guinean Camara Laye (1928–80). In two voices, that of the child protagonist speaking in the past tense, and that of the narrator in the present, Camara recalls his childhood and adolescence. The author in his twenties, cold and lonely in Paris, was primarily seeking consolation in memories. He wrote about the sense of belonging given to him by his village and his parents, about the latter's magic powers symbolizing the continuity between generations, the communal harvest, and the solidarity among boys facing the fear and pain of initiation. He acknowledged that all these had made him what he was, yet, as his education progressed, he had moved away in ever-widening concentric circles from this security, finally leaving for France. He questions whether he had made the right choice by leaving, particularly in leaving before he had gained a full understanding of the secrets of his culture. The recurrence of this question indicates an additional motivation for writing this autobiography and for returning to the genre in his later, less successful, book *Dramouss* (1966; *A Dream of Africa*).

Also introspective is the Senegalese writer Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *L'Aventure ambigüe* (1962; *Ambiguous Adventure*), which traces the spiritual development of a boy raised in a deeply religious Islamic community and the conflict he faces when sent to France to complete his education. Written in the third person by a narrator who rarely intervenes, the novel is not presented as an autobiography. The only hint is the fact that the name of the hero Samba Diallo is Kane's own name in his native language. However, in a recent interview Kane stated: "*Ambiguous Adventure* is the story of the first part of my life" (*Orange Light*, May–June 1999). He added that his *Les Gardiens du temple* [1982; The Guardians of the Temple] is to a certain extent an account of what followed, and that he hoped to complete this trilogy.

As the ferment for independence increased in the 1950s, autobiographers expressed their eagerness to bear witness to colonial abuses and to encourage revolt. Relevant writings came from a variety of countries: from Cameroon there were Ferdinand Oyono's *Une vie de boy* (1956; *Houseboy*) and *Chemin d'Europe* (1960; *Road to Europe*); from Mali came Mamadou Gologo's *Le Rescapé d'Ethylos* [1963; The Survivor of Ethylos], and from the Côte d'Ivoire/Ivory Coast Aké Loba's *Kocoumbo, l'étudiant noir* [1960; Kakoumbo, the Black Student] and Bernard Dadié's *Climbié* (1956), followed by Dadié's travel observations in *Un Nègre à Paris* [1959; A Negro in Paris] and *Patron de New York* (1965; *One Way: Bernard Dadié Observes New York*), and his journals from prison – to name just a few.

Autobiographical writings abounded during this period, probably because African writers were experimenting with a new undertaking: the creation of a written African literature in the form of novels, for which there was no precedent to follow or to rebel against. They did what beginning novelists often do: they relied on what they knew best, namely their own memories, thus fulfilling at the same time their needs to create and to be socially relevant.

Independence in 1960 did not immediately change the tone of life writing; only later in the decade did autobiography, while still framed by the community, reveal concern with self-definition and a quest for personal freedom. By the mid-1970s male writers were moving away from autobiography, though there are two important recent life writings by men: Amadou Hampaté Bâ's *Amkoullel, l'enfant Peul* [1991; Amkoullel, the Peuhl Child], from Mali, and Birago Diop's five volumes of *Mémoirs* (1978–91) beginning with *La Plume raboutée* [1978; End to End Writings].

For the most part the genre was taken over by female writers, and flourished as it had among men 20 years earlier. The reasons usually given for this lag are social and cultural. Education was expensive, and even families that sent boys to school tended to keep girls at home as helpers and to train them in what they considered important for women, i.e. to be wives, mothers, and housekeepers. The delay is also attributed to the hold of tradition, according to which women were expected to be submissive and silent. Not allowed to speak, they could not conceive of publishing their words.

When the Senegalese writer Nafissatou Diallo (1941–82) broke the silence with her autobiography *De Tilène au Plateau: une enfance dakaroise* (1975; *A Dakar Childhood*), she felt that she had to justify her undertaking by explaining that she meant to perpetuate the past for the younger generation. Except for this, her book parallels Camara Laye's earlier *L'Enfant noir*. Both writers saw themselves as representative cases, and as the titles of their autobiographies indicate, both portrayed happy childhoods and expressed their love for their parents. Diallo's world is also depicted in autobiographical poems by her compatriots Kiné Kirama-Fall and Ndèye Couba Diakhaté. Other auto/biographies of the time are of a political and historical nature: the Malian Aouta Kéita's *Femme d'Afrique* [1975; African Woman] and the Ivoirian Henriette Diabaté's *La Marche des femmes sur Grand Bassam* [1975; The Women's March on Grand-Bassam] are the best known of these.

The tone of women's autobiographies changed rapidly, as can be seen in comparing Diallo's autobiography with that by the Guinean Kesso Barry, *Kesso – Princesse Peuhle* [1988, Kesso: Peuhl Princess]. Like Diallo, Barry proclaimed that her purpose in writing was to preserve a part of the history of her country for young people, but Diallo's modesty is gone, and this is a striptease that exposes intimate details of Barry's life, including excision.

Autobiographies still place the individual squarely within the societal framework, but the focus is increasingly personal. Writers are inspired by a love-hate relationship with tradition and by a growing feminist consciousness. From Senegal came Amica Sow Mbayé's *Mademoiselle* [1984; Miss], Maïmouna Abdoulaye's *Un Cri du coeur* [1990; A Cry from the Heart], Marie Ndiaye's *Quant au riche Avenir* [1988; As for a Rich Future] and *En Famille* (1991; *Among Family*); from the Ivory Coast there were Simone Kaya's *Les Danseuses d'Impé-eya*

[1976; The Dancers of Impé-eya], Akissi Koumadio's *Un impossible amour* [1983; An Impossible Love], Lydie Dooh-Bunya's *La Brise du jour* [1973; The Morning Breeze], and from the Congo Ago Léonie's *Femme du Congo* [Congolese Woman] published in 1991 – to name just a few. Short stories from Senegal by Mariama N'Doye-Mbengue appeared in 1991 and 1995, and poems by the Burkinabe Sandra Pierette Kanzié in 1987, and by the Congolese Marie Léontine Tsibinda in 1988.

The best-known contemporary female autobiographer is the Senegalese Ken Bugul (b. 1948, real name Mariétou Mbaye) who was forced to assume this pseudonym, which means "nobody wants" in the Wolof language, because her book *Le Baobab fou* (1982; *The Abandoned Baobab*) was considered too scandalous for publication under her real name. She told about her search for identity, her unhappy childhood without a supportive family, her stay as a student in Belgium leading to disappointment, drugs, and prostitution, and her return to the baobab. Bugul followed this up with *Riwan, ou, le chemin de sable* [1999; Riwan or the Sandy Path], in which she described aspects of her life after her return to Africa, maintaining a deliberate ambiguity about herself, the narrator, and the protagonist. She claims to be all three, and thereby to portray the ambiguity inherent in life.

Indicative of the difficulties of genre definition of this region are the novels of the Congolese Henri Lopes. When discussing the widely held opinion that his *Le Chasseur d'Afriques* [1990; The Hunter of Africas] is autobiographical, Lopes stated:

> I feel more at ease when I am writing with a character that resembles me somewhat … My "technique" is actually a very simple one … Starting with the rudiments of myself I create wholly imaginary characters and then slip inside them for the period during which I am writing. These characters are no longer me … Superficial readers detect the tone of my voice in some of my characters, they think they have discovered me. They forget that every real author is a liar.

By Lejeune's definition of autobiography, Lopes belongs in this survey, and so does Mariama Bâ's celebrated *Une si longue lettre* (1979; *So Long a Letter*), notwithstanding this author's assertion that the book is not autobiographical.

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Africa: Oral Life Stories

Oral life story traditions have a unique place in the lives of the 700 million inhabitants of Africa. Oral tradition, as it is more popularly referred to in the scholarly literature, continues to form the basis for much contemporary knowledge, research, and cultural and political capital. Indeed the linguistic and cultural heterogeneity (with more than 1000 languages and dialects) of much of the continent is such that one can safely assert that oral history has a place of unrivalled supremacy in the cultural fabric of sub-Saharan African lives. Conversely, the hegemony of Arabic writing in North Africa for more than a millennium has significantly eroded the status of the oral tradition north of the Sahel.

Oral traditions reach back centuries and take numerous forms, most commonly cosmologies, genealogies, king-lists, conflict, migration, and settlement narratives, and hero epics. Since their medium is largely one of verbal transmission, rendering traditions into a literary format is a central methodological concern. African languages ignore international boundaries, and, somewhat ironically, the arrival and entrenchment of European languages has partly served to deepen cultural awareness and dependency on oral traditions. An analysis of the scholarly debate on the value of oral life-story traditions can best illustrate the role they continue to play in African cultures. The main debate concerns the veracity of the oral narratives, methods employed to decipher stories of the past from those of the present, how to enlarge on the information supplied by the narratives, and concerns for cross-referencing evidence with other historical sources.

Africanists are indebted to the scholar Jan Vansina for a coherent methodology that established the legitimacy of oral

tradition as a source of historical knowledge about the pre-colonial past, a past for which there exists no written documentation. He dis-established the prejudiced, colonial stranglehold on oral traditions, characterized by Claude Lévi-Strauss, which had interpreted them only as myth and legend with no inherent cultural, historical value. Vansina cautioned the postcolonial generation of Africanists to scrutinize the performers (*griots*) of traditions, by uncovering whether or not they are specialists; to be sensitive to the frequency, time, and place of a performance; to be sensitive to intent, to mnemonic devices, to the ways that traditions are learned, to issues of authenticity, and to problems caused by improvization and chronologization. When interpreting the testimony, a researcher must approach the form and structure (episode, plot, setting, imagery, characters, symbols, genres) as they influence the expression of content; then one should analyse meaning on the literal and the intentional levels. Successive scholarly literature on oral tradition can be viewed as two debates: one surrounds the main evidential claims of Vansina's cohort, while the other concerns specific ways of improving the reliability of sources collected, of verifying material via cross-referencing, and of eliminating inaccuracies in data collection.

Vansina's work on the Kuba people of the savanna of central Africa established a detailed historical map of the centuries before the European invasion based on hundreds of interviews. In *Oral Tradition* (1965) he states that oral traditions are documents of the precolonial past which can be read as pure and factual texts. The evidence he examined included memorized speech; group, personal and hearsay accounts; creation myths and chronologies; epics; and proverbs and sayings. He argued that unconscious statements could be just as informative as conscious statements about history. His later *Oral Tradition as History* (1985) significantly alters this position, a response to the criticisms of structural anthropologists. He accepted elements of the theories of Lévi-Strauss and others that argued that oral traditions were solely expressions of the present. His revised methodology held that oral traditions are documents of both the present and the past and are influenced by both. Oral traditions reflect both a process (of transmission) and a product (of historical messaging). Both process and product as a unit can be divided into two dimensions of knowledge, as news and interpretation: news has a contemporary relevance, such as an eyewitness account, while interpretation, including reminiscence and commentary, stretches deeper into the historical past.

Feierman's study, *The Shambaa Kingdom* (1974), illustrates how the methodologies of Vansina developed. He attempted to write Shambaa history in Shambala words via recorded oral traditions in a style he described as sympathetic, because it expressed a desire to understand the Shambaa *Weltanschauung*, and how the Shambaa organized their "environmental universe". Despite this determination, Feierman maintains a distance from the oral testimony in order to elaborate on economic and social phenomena beyond the boundaries of Shambaa. The value of Feierman's approach is its capacity to analyse the local and global by collecting two different types of oral data from one location. His methodology shows an awareness of five limitations of oral traditions – lacunae, lies, silences, corruption, and conflicting lineage accounts.

Henige offers a thorough critique of the value of one particular form of oral traditions, namely king-lists and chronologies, in *The Chronology of Oral Tradition: Quest for a Chimera* (1974). He holds that while there is value in oral traditions *per se*, a series of tests and cross-examination of chronologies reveals that as the most easily distorted form of time indicators in non-calendrical societies, they are themselves of little worth in, for instance, attempting to date the formation of African states. The greatest deficiency of oral tradition is that it yields inexact dating. Henige revisits a primary concern of structural anthropologists when he states that his underlying assumption is that one's view of the past, including its duration, is more the product of the exigencies of the present than of a dispassionate desire to portray past events as they actually occurred. By exploring synchronisms, "telescoping of time", and artificial lengthening, Henige argues that achronicity is one of the concomitants of an oral non-calendrical society.

Scholars such as Webster maintain that precise dating of the pre-colonial history of a region for which no documentary sources exist is possible with solely oral testimony. This has been criticized as an optimistic vision of African chronology, and a more cautious, pessimistic approach is espoused by most Africanists. For the colonial and postcolonial period, however, individual life stories have revealed detailed and accurate landscapes of the African past that are supported by written documentation. The epic narrative of Baba of Karo is the most famous example of a branch of oral life-story traditions that include reconstructing the life of slave refugees (see Wright), the rural peasantry (see van Onselen), and women's performance collectives (see Mirza and Strobel). Much of this creative reconstruction of the personal past is illustrative of the pervasive influence of feminist theory in contemporary Africanist scholarship (see especially Personal Narratives Group, *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives*).

In *The African Past Speaks*, Joseph Miller *et al.* respond to some of the counter-charges made by structuralist and functionalist anthropologists that questioned the veracity of oral traditions. Miller explains that functional criticism allowed scholars to wedge open the peculiarities of individual traditions, whether cosmologies or genealogies or otherwise. This post-functionalist methodology can partly be categorized as concentrating as much on the oral historian who provides the narrative as on the completed artifact, the tale as told. The salient characteristics of oral traditions then emerge as products of the way people in oral cultures think and talk about the past, which in turn depend partly on the oral mode of communication employed. Emphasis falls here on listening and understanding, in addition to careful reconstruction of chains of transmission. Moreover, every "piece" of history requires confirmation from another source.

Miller's most important contribution is the concept of historical time as an "hourglass". This metaphor refers to a narrator's tendency to locate much of the information at his or her disposal in a single period of "origins" and then by-pass the succeeding "middle period". Scholars instinctively want to emphasize this "middle period" because it is there that they find gradual increments of change which they feel they must place between "origins" and the recent past. Extended personal recollections expand the information available from the recent past, so that scholars who do not distinguish between oral traditions and personal reminiscences perceive clusterings of information at the beginning and the end of the past, with a near void in the intervening years. Miller *et al.* also employ the concept of "layering".

Oral life-story narrators structure their versions of the past in ways that often give it the appearance of a layered composite of elements originating at various times but all existing together in the heterogeneous institutions of the present.

Metaphors and analogies continue to be important in explaining the value of oral life-story traditions. David Cohen turns to the traditional Luo servant figure of the "pim" to explain a further development in the methodology of oral narrative collection in "Doing Social History from Pim's Doorway" (1985). The "pim" traditionally came into the Luo household from a considerable social and geographical distance, living with children of both sexes until adolescence. Boys departed from the compound earlier than girls, who often left directly for marriage. From this social and cultural role through which the essential social intelligence of Luo society is transmitted, and through which elderly Luo women protected themselves from "social death", Cohen constructs a metaphor for conducting research into the role of oral traditions from the "bottom up". As "pim's" nurturing was an almost invisible crucible of Luo culture and society, its critical activity is neglected. Scholars have attended to the form and implication of "larger", "masculine" structures and segmentary processes. Until recently the historical process of the development of Luo society had been seen as a process of repetitive, methodological budding, branching, and expansion of segments of patrilineal units, a steady segmentation process from a narrow base. But the recognition of the role of "pim" and comparable oral-traditional roles in other societies will substantially alter this view.

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See also Oral History; Orality

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Africa: European Exploration and Travel Writings

French-Algerian writer Hélène Cixous's comment that "the 'Dark Continent' is neither dark nor unexplorable" refutes the traditional idea of Africa as "other" that has made it a foil to European self-conceptions. Much like the "plot" of traditional male autobiography, the conflicts and conquests that constitute the traditional plot of travel narratives in so-called darkest Africa have been thought to reveal the sojourner's true self, a self subsequently confirmed through public consumption of that self's travel narrative. Europe's Africa has produced travellers as rational, dominating, autonomous; at the same time, the continent has acted as a metaphor for the person(al) whose exploration and mapping constitute much of the excitement of "masculine" life writing.

The reference in Herodotus' *Historiai* (*The Histories*) to a three-year circumnavigation of Africa by "a Phoenician crew" under Egyptian King Neco (610–595 BCE) documents the earliest known exploration of the continent. Hellenistic interest in what Herodotus knew as "Libya" is reiterated in the 2nd-century CE *Geōgraphikē' hyphēgēsis* (*Guide to Geography*) of Ptolemy, which places the Nile's source in the Lunae Montes (Mountains of the Moon). The 14th-century *Rihlah* (*Travels*) of Ibn Battūta, the 16th-century *Descrittione dell'Africa* (*A Geographical Historie of Africa*) of Spanish traveller Leo Africanus, some accounts of Ethiopia, and records of coastal explorations (typically emphasizing commerce and navigation), subsequently provided Europe with its main literary access to sub-Saharan Africa until the 18th century. The continued strength of classical misconceptions is evident in these early accounts; in John Lok's 1554 voyage to West Africa, for instance, Herodotus and Pliny are recalled in the declaration that "there are also people without heads … having their eyes and mouths in their breast".

The 18th century marks the start both of sustained first-hand accounts of interior Africa and of characterizations that would influence African travel literature (and European self-conceptions) into the 20th century. Forces influencing these characterizations included: a burgeoning slave trade justified by

depictions of Africans as savages who would benefit from the constraints of slavery; the taxonomy of Carol von Linné [Carolus Linnaeus] (1707–78), which not only fixed Africans lower on the "natural" order of things than Europeans but also gave explorers increasing epistemological control of Africa's flora, fauna, and peoples; Jean-Jacques Rousseau's notion of the "noble savage" apparent in descriptions of African nobility (typically distinguished by more "European" physiognomies); and anti-slavery movements that argued not that Africans were equal to Europeans but that "improvement" would best occur through commercial intercourse. Perhaps most influential was the Enlightenment belief in universal reason (defined as "European" reason) which produced travellers unable to explain African cultural differences (such as an apparent disinterest in material wealth) in ways other than imputing a childish lack of direction and self-control.

Despite fantastic descriptions, an openness to Africans as similar but different persists until the 18th century. For instance, the English title of Peter Kolb's 1719 *Caput Bonae Spei hodiernum* includes "A Particular ACCOUNT of the several NATIONS of the HOTTENTOTS: Their Religion, Government, Laws, Customs, Ceremonies, and Opinions; Their Art of War, Professions, Language, [and] Genius" (1731 translation) – thus announcing its intention, writes Mary Louise Pratt, to understand Africans "in terms of the full array of categories through which Europeans recognize other societies as real and human". But by the end of the 18th century, books like James Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (1790) and Mungo Park's *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799) are the norm. These post-French-Revolution texts reveal an increasing emphasis on both the traveller and on the dehumanization of Africa whose underlying logic culminates in the "tabula rasa" assumed by Richard Burton (1821–90) in the title of his work, *First Footsteps in East Africa* (1856). The explorer's hardships and triumphs become the themes of books not so much about Africa as about the superiority of Europeans as evidenced in each author.

Somewhat ironically, it is poor Irish (Daniel Houghton) and Scotsmen (such as Bruce, Park, Walter Oudney, Hugh Clapperton, and Alexander Gordon Laing) who "represent" Britain in early 19th-century expeditions. Similarly, destitute Frenchman René Caillié took on the guise of a Muslim trader to become, in 1828, the winner of the French Geographical Society's prize for the first European known to enter Timbuktu. Despite increasing heroization, the small size of early 19th-century enterprises provides an intimacy missing from the huge and well-financed expeditions of the mid-19th century. Nationalism helps the authors to maintain a sense of self; in 1820 the "more dead than alive" British traveller, George Francis Lyon, enters Tripoli singing "God Save the King". In 1830 Richard Lander paddles the Niger singing "Rule Britannia".

In addition to geographical explorers, missionaries entered Africa. Probably because of the difficulty of religious conversion and the prestige of discovery, however, missionaries – like Scotsman David Livingstone (1813–73) in southern and central Africa – neglected the creation of mission stations for the lure of exploration. Nearly all 19th-century traveller-writers, however, justified their involvement, and wrote about themselves in Africa under the banners of supposed progress and bringing light to a "dark" continent.

The inception in Britain of the African Association (1788) – which evolved into the Geographical Society – as well as the increasingly lucrative business of selling African travel narratives produced larger expeditions. Africa became a place to "find" things – Livingstone himself (who had disappeared), or the sources of the Niger or Nile, or ancient cities. Africa became the arena in which men and, metonymically, nations competed to prove themselves. This (auto)biographical element is illustrated in the narratives of Richard Burton: their scope and detail bring a British order to a "humanitarianism" whose definition disallows the validation of other ways. The European traveller in Africa inscribes a standard against which "African" is judged and "European" is confirmed.

After the division of Africa among European powers at the Berlin Conference in 1884–85 (the "Scramble for Africa"), literature increasingly addresses colonial concerns of control, infrastructure, and the salubriousness of a European presence. For many late 19th-century young men, the 18th century's Europeanizing "Grand Tour" was replaced with African travel as the preferred means to full manhood.

But the men were not alone. During the 1890s Mary Kingsley (1862–1900) made two trips to West Africa, and her recollection in *Travels in West Africa* (1897) showed not only that English etiquette, including "a good thick skirt", could be maintained in "the African forest", but that grit and courage were not the sole domains of men. More importantly, Kingsley proved herself a sympathetic ethnographer attuned to detail and to the lives of women. After Kingsley, and into the 20th century, women wrote as travellers (Mary Hall, Rosita Forbes, Dervla Murphy), expatriate entrepreneurs (Karen Blixen), colonialists (Anne Louise Dundas), anti-colonialists (early Isabelle Eberhardt), daring pilots (Beryl Markham), and reporters (Katherine Fannin).

Kingsley was also precursor to the more eccentric travellers of the 20th century. As the continent became less "dark" to European eyes, and there was less, ostensibly, to be discovered, the nature of the travelling itself achieves greater prominence in many writings. The introduction into writings of camels, donkeys, bicycles, and even a wheelbarrow as modes of transport produced narratives whose diminished need to distance "European" from "African" indicates both a reduced individual (and national) hubris and comic relief from the often pedantic self-importance of 19th-century narratives. And discovery of self, especially hitherto unknown aspects, also increases. Following the murder of French priest Charles de Foucauld in the Sahara (1916), the austere spirituality of the desert drew travellers like Geoffrey Moorhouse who, in *The Fearful Void* (1974), is "a man ... in search of himself". After Joseph Conrad (notably the short story *Heart of Darkness*, 1902) and Sigmund Freud, Africa becomes more clearly a trope for the self and the plumbing of one's depths in – to borrow the title of Graham Greene's 1936 West African travel narrative – "a journey without maps".

But the 20th century also produced increasingly sensitive and critical travel narratives that not only attempted to explore African cultures in appreciation of their diversity and integrity – Geoffrey Gorer's *Africa Dances* (1935) and Mark Hudson's *Our Grandmothers' Drums* (1989) – but also the injustices of both colonialism – André Gide's *Voyage au Congo* (1929; *Travels in the Congo*) – and neocolonialism – Ryszard

Kapuściński's *Jeszcze dzien Zycia* (1987; *Another Day of Life*). Both developments indicate a diminishing degree of "masculinist" and Eurocentric assumptions. But although different from 19th-century narratives, so confident in the justice of their "civilizing mission", 20th-century narratives continue to explore and produce identities of writer, nation, and European through conceptions of the Euro-African encounter, albeit increasingly less superior or judgmental in tone.

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Africa: Auto/biographical Fiction

Life writing, in all its guises, presents a complex knotting of truth and fiction that tests reader and critic alike. The critical term "auto/biographical novel" springs from that testing ground, and serves to describe novels so like autobiographies or biographies that they might be mistaken for the real thing. The key term, then, is verisimilitude, rather than mimesis. Novels do not imitate reality directly, as a performance genre might; rather, they present a convincing likeness of reality that relies on narrative structures rather than on referentiality (see Riffaterre).

For some critics, this immediately disqualifies the term "auto/biographical novel", since the pact established between reader and text affirms the fictionality of the novel, rather than the narrative's veracity (see Lecarme and Lecarme-Tabone). For others, the borders between novel and autobiography are quite artificial; what matters is the author's attempt to impose a personal order on chaotic experience (see Olney, 1972, and Eakin's two books). In fact, a continuum seems to exist even for the intransigent few who see no place for the term auto/biographical fiction.

This critical debate has largely bypassed African literatures. Yet the fact remains that readers perceive auto/biographical elements in an unusually large number of works of African fiction. The contest for narrative veracity that can oppose African novelists to the colonial document or to the Africanist specialist often tilts the balance in favour of the auto/biographical novel. In the context of this contest for the right to represent Africa, the auto/biographical narrative perspective underlines the importance of the author's lived experience.

Fictional responses to the colonial ethnographic document have purported to give a life story that sets the record straight. The classic novel by the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), is a good example of this current of biographical fiction. It tells the story of the writer's Igbo grandfather, who suffered and died tragically under the impact of colonialism. The francophone writer Paul Hazoumé's historical novel *Doguicimi* (1938), which bears the name of the faithful female protagonist, also attempts to set the record straight on Dahomey (Benin) and its history, which is distorted in colonialist documents. Ethnography, history, and biography mingle in these works, blurring the line between fact and fiction. The pseudo-ethnographic novel has been so popular as a response to alienating European depictions of African societies that it would be a challenge to name all the novels that fit this model. Camara Laye's auto/biographical *L'Enfant noir* (1953; *The Dark Child*) is a classic example.

The strategy survived in later years as writers urged African youth not to assimilate to European cultures. Examples from this category in the francophone tradition are three novels by Senegalese writers, Ousmane Socé's *Karim* (1935), Abdoulaye Sadji's *Maïmouna* (1958), and Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* (1961; *Ambiguous Adventure*). They all concern the horrors of assimilation and seek to dissuade young people from leaving their own culture by presenting auto/biographical accounts of the bitter failures of assimilation.

These novels present yet another critical twist, since many of them are clearly fictional biographies. Others, however, bear such a close resemblance to the lives of the authors that critics have assumed that they are auto/biographical in the typical sense: that is, that they are mimetic, referential works that do not stray far from the "truth" of the writer's own experience. Cheikh Hamidou Kane has admitted that his novel *Ambiguous Adventure* presents his own life story. Dambudzo Marechera's *Black Sunlight* (1980) and *The Black Insider* (1990) are verifiably auto/biographical novels, as is most of his fiction. This is also true of Bessie Head's fiction, especially the novel *A Question of Power* (1974). Ayi Kwei Armah's *Why Are We So Blest?* (1972) tells the story of a young man remarkably similar to the

author and his bitter encounter with the West. Although the novel is not strictly auto/biographical, many of the basic elements of the story do seem to be taken from the novelist's life. This type of auto/biographically based novel is common: a few prominent examples include Mongo Beti's *Mission terminée* (1957; *Mission to Kala*), Laye's *L'Enfant noir* and *Dramouss* (1966; *A Dream of Africa*), Bernard Dadié's *Climbié* (1956), Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy* (1966), Henri Lopès's *Le Chercheur d'Afriques* [1990; The Searcher of Africas], and Ken Bugul's novels *Cendres et braises* [1994; Ashes and Embers] and *Riwan, ou, le chemin de sable* [1999; Riwan, or, The Sandy Path] are other examples of the auto/biographical novel that can be linked to the author's life.

The contest for the right to represent African realities continued after formal independence, which has had variegated effects on African literatures. In some cases, as in southern Africa, formal independence did not end colonial rule, for discriminatory policies continued within South African apartheid, as they did in Rhodesia until the conclusion of the war for liberation that led to the creation of Zimbabwe (1980). We might look to Mongane Wally Serote's *To Every Birth Its Blood* (1981) or Miriam Tlali's *Muriel at Metropolitan* (1975) for more clearly referential accounts of life under apartheid, while fictionalized auto/biographies such as J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986) and *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) give allegorical and poetic versions of life in South Africa. Alan Paton's *Too Late the Phalarope* (1953) and Nadine Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter* (1979), *The Late Bourgeois World* (1966), and *A World of Strangers* (1958) depict apartheid South Africa from a first-person fictional perspective, as do many of André Brink's novels.

After formal independence, neocolonialism replaced colonialism, which led writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o to conclude that the struggle must continue on a narrative level. His *Matigari* (1987), an allegorical and collective biography of the people of Kenya, expresses his ideological stance towards neocolonialism. Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy* (1985) is an example from Nigeria on a similar allegorical plane. Using a directly auto/biographical style, Nuruddin Farah criticizes the authoritarian state in *Maps* (1986), as well as the cruelties of patriarchal authority.

Other writers choose to write auto/biographical fiction in order to depict patriarchal systems in a less allegorical style, focusing on polygamy or excision, as Mariama Bâ did in *Une si longue lettre* (1980; *So Long a Letter*), and as Mariama Barry has done in *La Petite Peule* [2000; The Little Fulani Girl]. The Nigerian novelist Buchi Emecheta has produced several auto/biographical novels, of which the clearest examples are perhaps *Second-Class Citizen* (1974), *Double Yoke* (1982), and *Kehinde* (1994). The biographical novel has also played a role here; Nawal al Sa'dāwī's *Woman at Point Zero* (originally 1975, translated 1983) is the classic example of a feminist biographical novel from Africa.

al Sa'dāwī's novel, which was translated from Arabic, is indicative of the post-independence interest in the issue of language. Although all postcolonial writers face the issue, North African writers in particular have chosen to use auto/biographical fiction in order to create a new poetics that allows them to appropriate the language of the colonizer. Assia Djebar's novels – *L'Amour, la fantasia* (1985; *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*), *Ombre sultane* (1987; *A Sister to Scheherezade*), *Vaste est la prison* (1995; *So Vast the Prison*), and *Le Blanc de l'Algérie* [1995; The Erasure of Algeria] – offer the best example of this poetic appropriation of language in autobiographical fiction. Given this need to appropriate the language of the colonizer, it is no surprise that many African writers of the post-independence period have experimented with narrative strategies in writing auto/biographical fiction. Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) presents a narrative situation in which the author does not resemble the narrator, but the cousin she describes (see Veit-Wild). And Alex La Guma's *The Stone Country* (1967) is regarded by many critics as an auto/biographical novel, even though it is narrated in the third person.

The example of La Guma, who writes realist fiction, shows us how blurred the line is between fiction and reality in the African auto/biographical novel, and particularly so in the light of experimental fictions and postmodernist strategies. Lewis Nkosi's *Mating Birds* (1983), a South African response to Albert Camus's *L'Etranger* (1942; *The Outsider*), uses the postmodernist strategy of rewriting a canonical work. We can see other postmodernist fictions in the works of Coetzee and Marechera. Magical realism has been another response to the problem of depicting fictional realities. Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard and His Dead Palm-wine Tapster in the Dead's Town* (1952) and *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1954) are classic examples of first-person narratives that employ this strategy to tell truths that cannot be shared in clearly referential narrative. Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* (1991) is a more recent example of magical realism. Collectively, such postmodern works reiterate the dependence in so much African writing on fictional techniques to set the record straight about African life.

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Africa: Autobiographical Poetry

African autobiographical poetry is heterogeneous and tends to reveal the fluidity of the autobiographical genre. The pioneers of the genre are the "vernacular" colonial and pre-independence poets who wrote poetry committed to the emancipation of Africa, politically, culturally, and morally, largely in the first half of the 20th century. It has been argued that they were only partly successful, because of their "incompetence and inexperience" (Nwoga, 1977), in adapting lessons learned from European poetry to their kind of poetry that had its roots in African oral tradition. More modern practitioners are mainly independence and postcolonial poets who have written since the 1950s, although some of them began writing much earlier. The modern poets set out to invent a new poetry whose vision, tone, high imaginative intensity, and artistic competence are striking, insightful, and original; they arrest the emotions.

A survey of various "autobiographical" poems by pioneers – such as the Southern Africans B.W. Vilakazi, H.I.E. Dhlomo, and J.J.R. Jolobe, and the West Africans Dennis Osadebay, Michael Dei-Annang, Raphael Ernest Grail Armattoe, and Gladys Caseley-Hayford – and later practitioners – such as the Southern Africans Dennis Brutus and Arthur Nortje; the West Africans Wole Soyinka, John Pepper Clark-Bekederemo, Christopher Okigbo, Gabriel Okara, Kofi Awonoor, Lenrie Peters, Atukwei Okai, Leopold Sedar Senghor, and Bernard Dadié; the East African Taban lo Liyong; the Madagascans Jean-Joseph Rabéarivelo and Jacques Rabemanajara; the Central African Tchicaya U Tam'si, and the North Africans Mohammed Dib, Malek Haddad, and Anna Geki – can be typologized as five sub-genres: tom-tom/childhood poetry, travel poetry, prison poetry, war poetry, and personal, "neurotic" poetry that ranges from the confessional to the less autobiographically inflected lyric.

In tom-tom/childhood poetry – which was mainly the kind that the pioneers engaged in – there is admiration for the natural beauty of Africa that the colonizers, who were the masters at the time that the pioneers were writing, had spoiled and exploited. In this highly meditative and reflective poetry, the poets, now adults, look back to the life and world they knew before the coming of the whites and express their sense of loss and feelings of distress at the impoverishment and devastation of the once rich and great land. For example, Vilakazi's *Zulu Horizons* (1973), Dennis Osadebay's *Africa Sings* (1952), Michael Dei-Annang's *Cocoa Comes to Mampong and Some Occasional Verses* (1970), and R.G. Armattoe's *Between the Forest and Sea: Collected Poems* (undated) contain poems of various autobiographical hues, which express the personal pains and cries of the poets at the vicissitudes that had befallen their Africa. The nostalgia that modern poets such as the Francophones Senghor and Dadié clearly give vent to in their poems is not very apparent in the works of the pioneers, but Osadebay's, Vilakazi's, Annang's, and Armattoe's poetry is full of patriotic fervour, and their tom-tom poetry assumes a public voice. And even when one of them, the Nigerian Osadebay, seems to reject aspects of the African value systems in pursuit of European ones, as he suggests in the poem "Young Africa's Explanation" (1952), he does so in the hope that this will bring about a regeneration that will help the restoration of the continent. The remarkable simplicity of diction in the poem has its roots in African oral poetry.

As already indicated, modern writers also engage in this kind of autobiographical poetry. Senghor in *Poèmes* [1973; Poems], Dadié in *Legendes et poèmes* [1966 and 1973; Legends and Poems], and Rabéarivelo in *Poèmes-presque-songes* [1934; Poems-Almost-Dreams] and *Traduit de la nuit* [1935; Drawn from the Night] dwell so lovingly on their childhood that their tom-tom poetry, in which the homeland (in Senghor's and Dadié's poems in particular) is draped in the garland of *négritude*, and has a special autobiographical significance. (Rabéarivelo is also notable for having moved from writing in French to his native tongue, Malagasy, playing with bilingualism. He also left famous diaries written to just before his suicide in 1937.) Their evocation of their childhood of dreams and reverie is nostalgic politically as well as personally, retreating to a "sheltered innocence before Africa fell victim to the twin evils of colonialism and modernism" (see Nkosi). This element contrasts with the Anglophone modernist poet, the Gambian Lenrie Peters, who also dwells on childhood poetry, for instance in *Katchikali* (1971). Though the dreamlike setting of the title poem "Katchikali" recalls Dadié or Senghor, it lacks the *négritude* nostalgia of either poet. Peters is not particularly tied to things African and as he indicated in "One Long Jump" (from *Satellites*, 1967), the purity and joys of childhood are lost in one long jump through maturity to the grave. Peters thus does not necessarily blame the collapse of the world of his childhood on the birth of the new world of colonialism and modernism, but on the gain and loss of growing up, as discernible in William Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode" (see Egudu, 1977). Peters can be likened to Gabriel Okara, who in *The Fisherman's Invocation* (1978) expresses a sense of growing old and nostalgically wishes to reclaim the "artlessness and innocence of childhood" (see Goodwin). Peters and Okara also differ from the Rimbaudian Tchicaya's U Tam'si's *Le Mauvais Sang* (1955; *Bad*

Blood) and *A triche-coeur* (1960; *A Game of Cheat Heart*) whose childhood imagination is acutely sensitive to the experiences of hostility, despair, self-pity, and alienation.

In travel poetry, travel experiences are exploited to produce what can be defined as "autravographical" poetry in which the poet is inclined towards introspection, as evident, for example, in: John Pepper Clark's verses in *America, Their America* (1964) and *A Reed in the Tide* (1965); Soyinka's "Immigrant" poems and "Telephone Conversation" (*Idanre and Other Poems*, 1967); Brutus's poems in Part 3 of *A Simple Lust* (1973); several of Arthur Nortje's and Lenrie Peters's poems in *Dead Roots* (1973) and *Satellites* and *Katchikali*, respectively; Okigbo's "Heavensgate", "Limits", and "Distances" (*Labyrinths*, 1971); Senghor's "New York" and several poems from *Ethiopiques* (1956); Awonoor's *Rediscovery* (1964), *Night of My Blood* (1971), *Ride Me, Memory* (1973), and *The House by the Sea* (1978); Mohammed Dib's "Printemps" [1961; "Spring"] of *Ombre gardienne* [1961; Guardian Shadow], and Malek Haddad's "Début d'exil" [1966; "Beginning of Exile"] from *Ecoute, je t'appele* [1966; Listen as I Call on You]. The poetic journey often reflects a sense of exile, alienation, and loneliness.

Generally, most of these poets, who are all men, composed their travel poems in foreign lands (especially Europe and America) in an attempt to respond to their homesickness and protest against their sad and unsalutary experiences abroad, where they went in quest of one form of education or another. But Dennis Brutus journeyed – to Europe and America in particular – simply to escape from the harsh conditions in his homeland of South Africa, and to report apartheid South Africa to the world. It is interesting to note that there is no significant quantity of travel poetry composed by African writers travelling within Africa, at least in written form.

Other types of autobiographical poetry in which modern African poets reflect on their lives include prison poetry, autobiographical war poetry, and "neurotic" poetry. Brutus's *Letters to Martha* (1968), Soyinka's *A Shuttle in the Crypt* (1972), the second half of Awonoor's *The House by the Sea*, and Anna Geki's "Bonheurs interdits" [1963; "Forbidden Pleasures"] are notable exponents of the first type, while Clark's *Casualties* (1970), U Tam'si's *Le Ventre* [1964; The Belly], the "Massacre" sequence in Soyinka's *Idanre*, and several of Okara's obvious war poems in *The Fisherman's Invocation* are important examples of the second. Taban lo Liyong's *Frantz Fanon's Uneven Ribs* (1971), *Meditations* (1978), and *Another Nigger Dead: Poems* (1972); Jacques Rabemanajara's *Antsa* (1961); and Atukwei Okai's *Oath of the Fantomfrom and Other Poems* (1971) and *Lorgorligi Logarithms* (1974) represent the last type.

The prison poems of Brutus, Soyinka, Awoonor, and Geki are, in Soyinka's words, a "map of the course trodden by the human mind" during their years of solitary confinement in their respective countries of South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, and Algeria, under oppressive and brutal governments. The forced introspection of imprisonment is turned to philosophical and autobiographical speculation on the relation between necessity and freedom.

In the sub-genre of war poems, Clark, Soyinka, U Tam'si, and Okara are most successful in reflecting on themselves when they are talking about other people (and events). These are men intimately concerned with social and political life, and they do not portray their lives, as poets, as essentially different in character from those of their fellow men; instead, they demonstrate that they experience what other people pass through, but more keenly, more passionately, and with less subjectivity and prejudice.

With the "neurotic" poets we see the poet as a man or woman engaged in a special way with the world. He or she is the egocentric, zealous, ambitious, and "problematic" artist concerned with him- or herself as a lover, patriot, nationalist, magician, and poet-cantor. Taban lo Liyong, Rabemanajara, Rabéarivelo, and Atukwei Okai are typical examples of African poetic autobiographers who make their poetry the story of their ideas, opinions, viewpoints, music, self-drama, love, passions, and peculiar idiosyncracies. In contrast to the Angst-ridden stereotype of the post-Romantic poet of Western tradition, this kind of poetry is neither common nor popular in Africa.

Finally, it needs stating here that all these well-known and significant African (autobiographical) poets, apart from the Algerian writer Anna Geki (included in the prison poetry type), are men. For a number of reasons – social, cultural, and political – women in general have yet to establish their reputation as serious African poets. However, emerging poets include: the matriarchal Mabel Segun – Nigeria's first woman writer to be published – who is known mainly for her children's books, short stories, and fiction, for example her autobiographical *My Father's Daughter* and *My Mother's Daughter*; Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie, Catherine Acholonu, Toyin Adewale, Chinyere Okafor, Angela Ajali-Nwosu, Chichi Layor, Chinwe Nneka Nzegwu, Lola Shoneyin, and Promise Okekwe. These poets, in varying degrees, write both private and socially focused poems on the themes of love, deculturation, and search for personal and group identities in a modern world (in the context of present-day Africa), where womanhood and motherhood have been debased and desecrated. They write elegies, lyrics, narrative, and witty poems in which they dwell on the past (which they do not romanticize – unlike the tom-tom poets) as well as the present with its political, social, and economic contradictions and paradoxes. They try to make poetry as relevant to their daily realities and experiences as possible. The esoteric metaphors and imageries of Soyinka, the latinate phrases and lines of Okigbo, the Hopkinsian syntax and mannerism of Clark-Bekederemo are generally not pursued in their poetry. In this light, they may be seen to signal an alternative tradition in African poetry written in English. Furthermore, apart from Mabel Segun perhaps, these writers may best be acclaimed as *love* poets, and they are unique in this regard because in the poems where they write about love, they do so with admirable ingenuity that is uncommon in African (autobiographical) poetry.

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African American Life Writing

African American life writing is most strongly represented by autobiography, but essayists and diarists have also contributed to the field. Since the 18th century, black writers have reacted to realities of African American history: minority status in a white-dominated nation, chattel slavery until the civil war, and ongoing economic and social repression. They have produced works that assert the humanity of all African Americans; that explore the difficulties of realizing a positive sense of self in a society so often predisposed to obliterating it; that protest against racism and oppression; and that express longing for the emotional, economic, and legal security promised by the Constitution and the "American Dream".

The Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings and Surprizing Deliverance of Briton Hammon, a Negro Man, published in 1760, marks the beginning of African American life writing. Hammon's brief account also inaugurated a century in which slave narratives dominated African American literature. Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African,* published in 1789 (England) and 1791 (America), became the first bestselling slave narrative. Many others followed. Among the most important are the accounts of William Wells Brown, Henry Bibb, and James W.C. Pennington. Josiah Henson's *The Life of Josiah Henson* (1849) attracted the attention of Harriet Beecher Stowe, who later used Henson as the model for Uncle Tom in her enormously influential novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

The greatest of all slave narrators is Frederick Douglass, whose *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845) and *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855) set the standard for the genre. The *Narrative*, containing all the requisite formal elements of the slave narrative, and exhibiting unmatched stylistic excellence, is both utterly representative of its form and also its most accomplished performance – two facts that make it indispensable reading (see Olney).

Slave narratives established many themes intrinsic to subsequent African American life writing. Through their gruesome detailing of abuses enacted against slaves, they attacked the slave system and called for its destruction. After the legal abolition of slavery, later black writers would carry on the slave narrators' crusade by calling for an end to the "slavery" of segregation laws, economic exploitation, unequal justice, and the curtailment of civil rights. Slave narrators also epitomize the impulse of African Americans to "write themselves into existence". Because literacy was considered a mark of humanity, these narratives were their authors' bid to be recognized as fellow human beings with the same abilities, emotional lives, and aspirations as other Americans.

Male slave narrators often presented themselves as successful American men within a tradition established by Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*. Drawing upon another archetype, these authors present themselves as self-sufficient heroes who escape slavery and run to freedom alone. Thus they claim a place among the mythic company of American frontiersmen, rugged individualists living free from society's laws.

In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), Harriet Jacobs creates a different kind of narrator – the heroic female slave whose dedication to family outstrips even her desire for personal freedom. Jacobs details incredible suffering, including seven years hiding in a tiny attic room. Jacobs's reluctance to escape until she has also secured her children's freedom highlights the female slave's connection to family, in contrast to the male slave narrator's projection as heroic loner. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* also reveals the sexual exploitation of women slaves, which made slavery for women, as Jacobs asserts, much more terrible than it was for men.

The end of the Civil War began a new era in African American life. Slavery was abolished and the Union preserved, but the freedoms promised during Reconstruction proved largely illusory. "Jim Crow" laws assured racial segregation

and legalized blacks' status as second-class citizens. Sharecropping in the South and exploitation of industrial workers in the North kept many in economic bondage. Two autobiographies exemplify strategies that black Americans used to negotiate these terrible years. The journalist, lecturer, and publisher Ida B. Wells-Barnett's *Crusade for Justice* (published 1970) chronicles its author's tireless efforts to combat lynching, inferior segregated schools, economic oppression, and limits on opportunities for women.

Booker T. Washington's famous autobiography *Up from Slavery* (1901) takes a different tack. Choosing to present his life as a black version of the American success story, Washington recounts his birth in slavery, his efforts to obtain an education, and, most importantly, his feat of creating Tuskegee Institute almost from nothing. Washington stresses that African Americans should learn trades, save their money, buy land, and make themselves economically indispensable to their communities. Civil rights, he argues, will come in time – when white America recognizes black Americans' worthiness. *Up from Slavery* thus became the classic text of black accommodation to the status quo. It was, understandably, immensely popular among whites.

African American autobiography during the first half of the 20th century was undertaken primarily by professional writers. Artists associated with the Harlem Renaissance, that flowering of black arts in the 1920s, produced works exhibiting a new sense of racial pride. Noteworthy among them are James Weldon Johnson's *Along This Way* (1933) and Claude McKay's *A Long Way from Home* (1937). Langston Hughes's *The Big Sea* (1940) offers an ironic, detached view of Harlem in the 1920s, the decade in which, as Hughes put it, "The Negro was in Vogue". Zora Neale Hurston's *Dust Tracks on a Road* (1942) is memorable for Hurston's engaging prose style, replete with the vivid verbal imagery Hurston learned during her years gathering Negro folklore throughout the South.

African American autobiography in the 1940s was dominated by one text, Richard Wright's *Black Boy* (1945). This searing portrayal of growing up in what Wright called "Southern Night" has garnered more critical attention than any other autobiography of the period and has loomed larger in the imagination of later writers. Some have approved its bleak depiction of black existence, while others have fought to fashion a different vision of African American life outside of Wright's influence. As a description of an artist's coming of age, *Black Boy* is a model of autobiographical self-fashioning. To create a version of his life that satisfies him as emotionally true, Wright freely creates and arranges scenes, fashions dialogue, and omits facts that do not accord with his vision. *Black Boy* reminds us that its author was also a fiction writer, who skilfully uses novelistic techniques to produce a disturbing autobiography.

In the 1950s and 1960s, African American life underwent profound change, resulting from school desegregation and the gradual erosion of Jim Crow laws in the South, advances achieved through the legal efforts of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and nonviolent social protest organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference under the direction of Martin Luther King, Jr. Other segments of the black community became radicalized, as evidenced by the rise of groups such as the Nation of Islam and the Blank Panther Party. This social ferment brought forth many new autobiographies. Like the slave narratives of an earlier century, these works called attention to the terrible conditions under which millions of African Americans lived – not in legalized slavery, but in the economic and social bondage of America's southern towns and northern inner cities. *Manchild in the Promised Land,* Claude Brown's 1965 best-seller, shocked and fascinated America, much as *Black Boy* had done 20 years earlier, with its unflinching depiction of blighted black lives. As with many of its predecessors, *Manchild* is also an American success story, marking Brown's escape from a life ruled by drugs and crime to one of commitment to helping solve the problems of the black ghetto.

Asserting black alienation and threatening coming racial revolution, Black nationalists alarmed America with their radical politics. Bobby Seale's *Seize the Time* (1970) and H. Rap Brown's *Die, Nigger, Die* (1969) typify many autobiographies of the era through their aggressive stance toward the white establishment. Anne Moody presents a somewhat different viewpoint in *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (1968), which chronicles her involvement with the civil rights movement in the South. Moody describes the unbearable tensions she endured while helping to register voters and organize the black community to fight racial oppression. She also records her ultimate rejection of nonviolence as a viable way of eliminating the nation's racial injustices.

The most important African American autobiography of the 1960s, however, is *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965). Like Douglass's *Narrative,* Malcolm's work skilfully accomplishes one of the requisites of great autobiography – that of tracing the growth of the autobiographical self. Using elements from spiritual autobiography, Malcolm portrays himself as "Homeboy", "Detroit Red", "Satan", and finally, "Minister Malcolm X" as he goes from petty hustler to criminal, to prison inmate, to reborn believer and spokesman for the Nation of Islam. Malcolm's death just as his autobiography was being completed gives special poignance to a life cut short before its protagonist was able to discover and realize another, and perhaps final, version of himself.

The last decades of the 20th century have seen a new outpouring of African American literature, especially from women writers, who have also produced some important autobiographies, among them Maya Angelou's multi-volume work beginning with *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970). Poet and novelist Audre Lorde wrote *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982), a fictionalized account of her early life. Angelou's and Lorde's works are typical of women's narratives from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s in their candid treatment of issues relevant to women, including family relationships, sexual abuse, lesbianism, spirituality, and equal opportunity in a male-dominated world.

Although the full-length autobiography is by far the most common form of African American life writing, both the autobiographical essay and the journal/diary have some distinguished representatives. Besides producing two complete autobiographies – *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (1940) and his *Autobiography* (1968) – W.E.B. Du Bois penned several autobiographical essays, including pieces in his famous *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). Black Power advocate Eldridge Cleaver collected his autobiographical essays in *Soul on Ice* (1968). Many critics today view James Baldwin as the finest essayist America pro-

duced in the second half of the 20th century; among his best autobiographical pieces are "Notes of a Native Son" and "Stranger in the Village", both in his essay collection *Notes of a Native Son* (1955). Also noteworthy is *The Fire Next Time* (1963), comprised of two autobiographical essays. In these pieces Baldwin recounts with exquisite sensitivity and thoughtfulness what it means to be a black writer, a black homosexual, and a black American. Like Du Bois in *Dusk of Dawn*, Baldwin is especially adept at setting his life as an individual black man within the larger historical and cultural contexts of his times.

Among the writers whose diaries and journals offer insight into the daily lives of men and women who contributed in numerous ways to African American life, some few stand out. The diaries of Charlotte Forten Grimke, covering the years 1854 to 1892, chronicle a period of tumultuous change for all Americans. Of particular interest are her entries from 1862 and 1863, when she taught newly freed slaves on the sea islands of South Carolina. Novelist Charles Chesnutt also kept a journal during the years he conceived his goal of being a writer whose mission would be the uplift of white Americans through telling them the truth about the humanity of their black brothers and sisters. Among recent diarists, Audre Lorde should be noted for *The Cancer Journals* (1980), her recollections of how she coped with life-threatening breast cancer.

African American life writing uses forms and themes found in both American and other national literatures. The spiritual autobiography, the story of a rise to fame and fortune from humble beginnings, the account of the artist's coming of age and realization of his or her vocation – these are not uniquely African American. But blacks *have* contributed one new form to world literature. The classic slave narrative perhaps best summarizes the impulses behind African American life writing: to assert one's full humanity and to call upon America to make good its promises to grant all citizens freedom to fashion and live lives of their own choosing.

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Age and Life Writing

"Age" may be viewed as implicit in all life writing, and some age factors become explicit in self writing by the longer lived. "Aging" – when not a euphemism for old age – could be another word for temporality in any narrative that represents a considerable extent of the life course. Yet auto/biography theorists outside humanistic gerontology and narrative psychology pay little attention to age. One reason may be that even to those familiar with gendering and racializing processes, aging and age remain naturalized.

That "age" too is socially constructed, all across the life course, is the unfinished insight of the anti-essentialist revolution, despite the work of (among others) Philippe Ariès on childhood, Patricia Meyer Spacks on adolescence, the present author on the midlife, and Simone de Beauvoir on old age. Whatever happens to the body, people are "aged by culture" from their first socialization. More analytically, they are "aged" through discourses high and low (including the religious, mythical, medical, developmental, legal, demographic, philosophical, literary, conversational, and media-generated), the economic structures of the life course, the maturational processes, generational interaction, history, and custom.

Despite the enormous mass of existing life writing, "not all of it is analyzable in the sense of yielding potentially valuable information about aging and the self" (in the words of Harry J. Berman). Some works can be re-analysed as historians teach us more about self-fashioning in various periods (David Troyansky on 19th-century judges), or as age critics reinterpret self writing (Kathleen Woodward on Freud and de Beauvoir, Dan McAdams on Karen Horney).

One problem for age criticism is that not even autobiographers of later life have heretofore thought to tease apart the sources of their meanings of "age". For what age of audience am I implicitly writing? What influences drive my beliefs about my own aging? Why these particular discursive choices (metaphors, genres)? As Florida Scott-Maxwell discovered, "I am so caught in my experience of age that it occurs to me only now that ... anyone would have the right to ask, 'By what road did you arrive where you are?'" But even she did not consider whether writing *The Measure of My Days* (1968) in London in the ageist mid-1960s had more to do with producing her new state of "hot conviction" than turning 82.

Much life writing about formative experiences still centres on childhood or the stage of youth curiously known as "the coming of age", without wondering: "why does my 'latest self' pick the particular earlier ages and age relationships that it does and ignore others?" What is the age politics of the genre I choose, or

of my favoured age metaphors? When a 20th-century Western autobiographer focuses on a later stage of life (F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Crack-Up", 1936), or contrasts mid-life to an earlier stage (George Orwell's "Such, Such Were the Joys", 1952, or, more implicitly, Nabokov's *Speak, Memory*, 1951), the effect is often that aging involves inevitable decline. Writing the biography of one's mother is harder because this underexamined bias in life writing makes the subjectivity of older women less visible to younger people even in the same family. Narrative of decline forces out elegy, pastoral, tragedy, or other modes; it makes those aged by culture passive in the face of discourses and structures that intervention could change.

Some contemporary American writers (many of them women allied with the positive-aging movement) rebut this decline by writing about conquering an age or stage that is felt to be particularly challenging: say, turning 50 or 60. Some endorse special behaviours – kayaking, fly-fishing, early retirement – held to be conducive to growth at such ages. Such writers reinforce "decadism" (the construction of age decades as a priori meaningful time units) or mid-life-as-crisis, rather than deconstructing them as the effects of a late 20th-century gendered North American culture spreading to men and to other developed countries. Recovery stories – from addiction or illness – may also be structured as progress narratives. With rare exceptions, writers are as tacit about having chosen to write a progress genre as a decline. The recent trend of describing a phase of middle or later life isolated from the rest of the life course (the slice-of-life approach) may correspond to the phenomenon of niche-marketing by age in book publishing and the growing Western emphasis on age grading as much as to increasing efforts to diminish middle-ageism and gerontophobia.

Autobiography that foregrounds age more critically could be the ideal form for asking what counts as "age-related experience", whether through a journal kept and re-read over the years, an exchange of letters between friends, or a personal essay. After participating in writing groups made up of people between 58 and 92, Ruth Ray has shown how they all learned to consider "generational differences on the evolving content and structure of their life stories". Memoir as theory and cultural critique could elevate the subtextual, theorize the body, estrange the self-evident, contextualize spotty memories, weigh competing influences, and convey (as others have done for gender and race) the tremendous impact of age discourses on subjectivity and social relations. Only thinking though the self can unravel such questions, using memory as well as historical, psychological, narratological, economic, and sociological tools.

The social lore about aging that people in different cultures acquire starting as early as childhood can probably be recovered through memory: e.g. their "implicit theories of the life course" (William McKinley Runyon), the attributes of each stage of life, resocialization into becoming or performing the next age the culture decrees. The age lore that contemporary children are learning could be observed and understood in historical context. Younger men as well as women would need to raise their consciousness about the age cues of their time and place. "Age-consciousness" would no longer mean internalizing age cues but identifying them and distancing oneself from the negative ones – as Barbara MacDonald's *Look Me in the Eye* exemplifies. Age beliefs that are socially divisive and/or psychologically abusive would become widely regarded as ethical issues for men and women of all ages, not just as concerns of "aging" feminists.

Age is a component of any of our multiple identities as they change over time (race, gender, class, sexuality, political or spiritual formation, practising a skill or talent, parenting). To focus on one such "age identity" at a time can be useful. To move beyond this focus might require integrating a collection of one's time- and culture-conscious histories. More generally, does life writing tend to overemphasize change at the expense of continuities? Is the current proliferation of memoirs a response in part to postindustrial pressures for adaptive change? Where might new metaphors come from?

The need to understand age is urgent, and interest in the subject is growing. "Age Studies" is a new cross-disciplinary approach that, by merging feminist theory, literary and cultural studies, and critical gerontology, is providing interrogations of existing texts and practices, new concepts and directions. If auto/biography theorists learn to draw what they need from Age Studies, this alliance could eventually influence and inspire novelists, poets, and others concerned with the psyche in culture over time. Life writing becomes the privileged site where narrative self-consciousness and critical age-consciousness converge. A possible name for this form would be "age autobiography".

MARGARET MORGANROTH GULLETTE

See also Adolescence and Life Writing; Childhood and Life Writing; Old Age and Life Writing

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Agee, James 1909–1955

American journalist, screenwriter, and documentary auto/biographer

James Agee won the Pulitzer prize for his posthumously published autobiographical novel *A Death in the Family* (1957), a book that uses his characteristic blend of lyrical, elevated prose and prose-poetry to ruminate about his father's death in a car accident, when the son was only six years old. In addition to this novel and another called *The Morning Watch* (1951), Agee published poetry in *Permit Me Voyage* (1934), other pieces of short fiction, a considerable body of journalistic writing including film reviews and film scripts, and *Letters of James Agee to Father Flye* (1962). Agee is most often remembered, however, for a book he had published much earlier, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941), a nonfictional text ostensibly focused on three tenant-farmer families living in Alabama during the Depression. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* has been difficult for readers to classify since its publication. While the back cover of the revised edition carries the label "literature/sociology", Agee's masterwork has also been regarded as autobiography, memoir, essays, documentary, anti-documentary, case study, confessional, exposé, or a work of postmodern realism, and – because of his collaboration with Walker Evans, whose photographs of the families and their surroundings appear at the book's beginning – as a photo-text. Reviewers of the first edition found Agee himself too much present in a book that they took to be another in a series of documentary studies of poverty before and during the Depression, analogous to Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), Dorothea Lange and Paul Taylor's *An American Exodus* (1939), or Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White's *You Have Seen Their Faces* (1937).

Agee thought of his collaboration with Walker Evans as being a sort of mock-documentary, one that would have the opposite effect from *You Have Seen Their Faces*, which he reviled for its superior tone, sensationalism, exploitation of its subjects, and as celebrating the fame of the photographer and author. Some reviewers of the second edition of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* charged Agee with the same sort of egotism in thrusting himself so often into his text, Erling Larsen's "Let Us Not Now Praise Ourselves" (1961) being a representative example. Agee responded to those who saw him as being too autobiographical, explaining that the people and places he wrote about were real:

> In a novel, a house or person has his meaning, his existence, entirely through the writer. Here, a house or a person has only the most limited of his meaning through me: his true meaning is much huger. It is that he exists, in actual being, as you do and as I do, and as no character of the imagination can possibly exist.

Although Agee chose to use invented names for the three families he was writing about to protect their privacy, he makes it clear that neither the families nor himself are fictional characters. Ironically, only by inserting himself directly into the text as both writer and participant-observer can he demonstrate that the people he celebrates have their meaning outside of the way they are depicted through his perceptions. Finally, then, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* is a sort of meta-biography or quest biography, comparable to such recent works as Ian Hamilton's *In Search of J. D. Salinger* (1988) or Mark Harris's *Saul Bellow, Drumlin Woodchuck* (1980), books that are about their authors' attempts at writing about other lives. Agee's book is as much the story of Agee's attempt at writing about his experiences as it is about those experiences.

Agee includes numerous autobiographical pieces within his study of the lives of the families he calls Ricketts, Woods, and Gudger, such as the narrative of his and Walker Evans's first meeting with the three families and the story of himself as a child getting out of bed on a cold morning to perform his duties as an altar boy. For those who see these autobiographical set-pieces as intruding on the larger story, Agee responds, again within the text, by explaining that in the interests of accuracy and honesty he realizes that his portrait is necessarily relative, filtered through his own eyes. "For that reason and for others", he continues, "I would do just as badly to simplify or eliminate myself from this picture as to simplify or invent character, places or atmospheres".

Timothy Dow Adams

Biography

James Rufus Agee. Born in Knoxville, Tennessee, United States, 27 November 1909. His father came from a farming background, his mother from a family with a strong interest in business, religion, and the arts. Educated at St Andrews School, Sewanee, Tennessee, 1919–24; and Knoxville High School, 1924–25. Studied at Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, New Hampshire, 1925–28; Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1928–32 (BA), where he also edited the *Harvard Advocate*. Reporter and staff writer, *Fortune*, 1932–39. Married Olivia Saunders, 1933 (divorced 1937). Wrote a book of verse, *Permit Me Voyage* (1934). Commissioned by *Fortune* magazine to tour Alabama during the Depression with the photographer Walker Evans, 1936: the results were published as *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941). Married Alma Mailman, 1939 (later divorced): one son. Book reviewer, from 1939, and feature writer and film reviewer, 1941–48, *Time* magazine. Film columnist, *Nation*, 1942–48. Married Mia Fritsch, 1946: one daughter. Became a literary celebrity and was sought after as a scriptwriter by Hollywood: film scripts include *The African Queen* (1951) and *The Night of the Hunter* (1955). Awarded the Pulitzer prize, posthumously, for the novel *A Death in the Family* (1957). Died in New York, 16 May 1955.

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Agency

The poststructuralist attack on the self in the 1960s and 1970s fell with particular force upon autobiography, in which a self appears to be doubly present, as narrator and protagonist. The surge of critical interest in autobiography in the 1980s and 1990s may be understood as an attempt – from many quarters and for different reasons – to preserve the subject as an agent, within and without texts.

Poststructuralists dissolve agency in several ways. Michel Foucault sees selves as the effects of power relations created and maintained by multifarious cultural forces; he associates "author functions" with "legal and institutional systems that circumscribe, determine, and articulate the realm of discourses" ("What is an Author?"). For Roland Barthes, language speaks and acts through writers, who are "never more than the instance writing, just as *I* is nothing other than the instance saying *I*" ("The Death of the Author"). Paul de Man argues that the life discerned in autobiography is just as much a product of the writing as the cause of it; the act of writing produces a textual self that becomes identified, rightly or wrongly, with the anterior producer of the text. Jacques Derrida sees the proper name or signature of the writer as creating autobiography, but only when accepted as such by readers: "The ear of the other says me to me and constitutes the *autos* of my autobiography" (*The Ear of the Other*). Candace Lang maintains that questions about the reference of "I" mean that writing of any sort "can no longer be conceived as an act of singular authority, but must be understood as a process of *collaboration* between an individual consciousness and that Other which permeates it" ("Autobiography in the Aftermath of Romanticism"). Prompted by the effect of these questions on scholarly editorial practices, Jack Stillinger demonstrates that the notion of a single agent for all aspects of texts ignores the influence of others at every stage of literary production – from idea to publication.

Running counter to arguments displacing the self as agent and referent of autobiography is the work of Philippe Lejeune and Paul John Eakin. Lejeune's "autobiographical pact" between writer and reader stabilizes the autobiographical self in an identity of author, narrator, and protagonist, held in place by the quasi-legal force of the name on the title page. In the face of poststructuralist arguments about language's nonreferentiality, Paul John Eakin holds that autobiography cannot but be referential, a position entailing the agency of the autobiographer. For Eakin the act of writing autobiography is "an extension of a lifelong process of identity formation [which] mirrors experiential reality . . . in performance as well as in product. In this respect the making of autobiography belongs to the world of reference that is its subject" (*Touching the World*).

Because it makes lived experience accessible and seems relatively unmediated by literary concerns, autobiographical writing can project a sense of a writer's agency outside the text more directly than other forms of literature. Susan Stanford Friedman defines agency in political contexts as "the assumption of human subjectivities that create meanings and act in negotiation with the systemic conditions of the social order, however circumscribed" (*Mappings*). Autobiographies effectively reveal agency or the desire for agency because they show how meanings are created for people, how people create meanings for themselves, and how people engage the world around them. Thus, autobiography is well suited to support arguments on behalf of people who have been oppressed or traditionally silenced. A recurring issue in discussions of autobiographies by members of minority or oppressed groups is the degree of independence and control that autobiographers have over their own texts. For members of such groups, achieving full and free agency in the writing of one's own life is often difficult, and their struggles to be agents parallel the group's efforts to achieve its political goals. Sponsors and editors may insist that life stories conform to preexisting patterns for narratives of oppression. Cultural stereotypes may inhibit the telling of life stories altogether or severely restrict writers' ability to interpret their own experience freely. Becoming an agent is a goal these writers work for, on their own behalf and on behalf of others.

Resisting the association of agency with individualist ideology as well as masculine autonomy and power, feminist theorists have searched for new understandings of agency. The political scientist Susan Hekman argues that subjects act as agents when they create for themselves "distinctive combinations, that is, individual subjectivities" out of the hegemonic and nonhegemonic discourses around them; agency resides in the "piec[ing] together" of a subjectivity. She likens the process to the way that speakers of a language create unique, distinctive statements from commonly used materials ("Subjects and Agents: The Question for Feminism"). Such creative selection is also similar to the selecting and editing required to construct an autobiography. The literary critic Marianne Hirsch uses a concept of agency as selection in discussing the use of family photographs by four autobiographers. The philosopher Sandra Lee Bartky suggests that the debate over agency is a new version of the problem of free will versus determinism. If so, each way of understanding human action negates the other, and the debate is at an impasse. Bartky's view suggests that understanding agency may finally be a matter of faith and therefore not amenable to rational discussion beyond a certain point.

Reformulating the question of agency in writing as that of causation obviates this dilemma, allowing one to continue trying to understand writers' actions. It also acknowledges the poststructuralists' dispersal of self into various externalized functions while preserving the meaningfulness of writers' actions in generating their own life stories. For example, when applied to autobiography, Aristotle's causes – efficient, material, formal, and final – yield the following analysis. Autobiographers are the efficient cause of the text: they bring it about. Language and

experience are material causes: they form the substance of the work. Ideas about the self, the life course, and genre are formal causes. Autobiography's reason for being, its final cause, is the desire to communicate an understanding of one's life. Positing several kinds of causation allows both self and discourse to be considered agents of autobiography's production.

THOMAS R. SMITH

See also The Self

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Aksakov, Sergei 1791–1859

Russian fiction writer and memoirist

Although he had written some verse and theatre reviews in the 1820s and 1830s, Sergei Aksakov entered the major phase of his career as a writer only after 1845, first with the publication of a book on fishing (based on personal experience), then with works on hunting (also based on experience), and finally on works of a memoiristic nature. The most important of these, *Semeinaia khronika* (final version published 1856; *Family Chronicle*) had its origins in accounts within Aksakov's family about his grandfather, who had settled with his serfs in the newly opened Orenburg area of the southern Urals in the latter part of the 18th century, and about other relatives of that period. In addition, Aksakov drew on his own memories of his parents to complete the story of the two generations preceding his own. (*Family Chronicle* concludes with the birth of Sergei himself, although the family name is altered to Bagrov.) *Family Chronicle* was followed by *Vospominaniia* (1856; literally "Reminiscences", translated as *A Russian Schoolboy*) in which the actual names of Aksakov and his relatives were used, and *Detskie gody Bagrova-vnuka* (1858; literally "Childhood Years of Bagrov the Grandson", translated as *Years of Childhood*). In addition, Aksakov composed a number of memoirs dealing with various literary and theatrical figures he had known during his lifetime, including the poet Gavriil Derzhavin (1743–1816), the writer Nikolai Zagoskin (1789–1852), Nikolai Gogol' (1809–1852), and others, as well as the literary and theatrical life of various periods earlier in the century. (*Istoriia moego znakomstva s Gogolem*, [1855; A History of My Acquaintance with Gogol] is probably the most important.) Although these works were not necessarily written in the order of the internal chronology of the events depicted and differ considerably in their generic affiliations, taken as a whole Aksakov's narrative works provide a fascinating, if somewhat restricted, view of aspects of Russian social and literary life from the later 18th century to the middle decades of the 19th. In this respect, and in their frequent attention to the minutiae of the everyday family life of the Russian gentry in this period, they set the stage for such later work as the depictions of the Rostov and Bolkonskii families in Tolstoi's *War and Peace*.

Of Aksakov's more important works, *Family Chronicle* is the closest to fiction. Although, in so far as can be determined, Aksakov does not radically alter the crucial events in his family's history prior to his own birth, he does cast each chapter (deliberately termed a "fragment" of the *Chronicle*) in a given literary form, whether that is the foundation myth characteristic of the opening of chronicles (the first chapter); the Gothic tale, a typical genre of the late 18th century (the second chapter); or the sentimental romance and family novel (the three subsequent chapters). The self is portrayed in terms of the continuation of

both familial and textual lineages. *Years of Childhood* in large part follows the pattern of a single genre, the childhood narrative, with its characteristic focus on the psychological and social development of the narrator's consciousness. Perhaps most memorable are the introductory section of unconnected memories and the scene of the death of the narrator's grandfather (the same character who dominates *Family Chronicle*), which functions as the moment when the child realizes the horror and finality of death.

Aksakov's most significant other autobiographical text is probably *A Russian Schoolboy*, which deals primarily with his schooldays at the *gimnaziia* in Kazan and then at the fledgling University of Kazan. In the course of the text, Aksakov matures from a timid child, fearful of separation from his beloved (and intensely protective) mother, to a young man on the threshold of departure for adult life in the distant capital of St Petersburg.

Sergei Aksakov stands as the initiator in Russia of literature that presents the self not merely or primarily as a witness of significant events but as a dynamically developing personality, interesting precisely as a consequence of the very ordinariness and universality of its experience.

ANDREW R. DURKIN

Biography

Born in Ufa, Russia, 10 October 1791. His father was a wealthy landowner. Spent his earliest years primarily on the family estates in the region (Orenburg *guberniia*). Educated at home and later at the gymnasium in Kazan, continuing his studies at Kazan University when it was founded in 1804. Left for St Petersburg without graduating, 1807. Worked in government offices and participated in the theatrical and literary life of St Petersburg. Resigned from the civil service, 1811. Moved to Moscow, where he was active as an amateur in literary and theatrical life. Published first verse (anonymously), 1812. Enlisted in the militia, 1812. Married Ol'ga Semenovna Zaplatina, 1816: six sons and eight daughters. Lived mainly on his estate (Aksakovo) in the Orenburg region, 1816–26; thereafter in or near Moscow. Began to publish translations, theatre reviews, and articles, early 1820s. Hosted a weekly social and literary salon, and joined the Society of Lovers of the Russian Word. Served on the Moscow Censorship Committee, 1827–29 and 1830–32; dismissed for negligence in authorizing the publication of a "scurrilous" pamphlet on drunken policemen. Inspector, Grand Duke Constantine School of Surveying, 1833. Wrote the short story "Metel'" [1834; The Blizzard]. First director of the Geodetic Institute after its reorganization in 1835. Finally retired from the civil service in 1838. Managed family estates, to which he added Abramtsevo (near Sergiev Posad) in 1843; here he entertained, among many others, the writers Gogol, Turgenev, and Tolstoi. Despite failing eyesight, worked throughout the 1840s on his angling and hunting "notes" (published 1847–55), based largely on personal experience, then his family history, reminiscences of childhood and school years, and memoirs and biographies of the literary and theatrical figures he had known. Through two of his sons, Konstantin and Ivan, was associated with the Romantic nationalist Slavophile movement, in whose publications many of his works first appeared. Died at Abramtsevo, the family estate near Moscow, 12 May 1859.

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Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 1892–1927

Japanese fiction writer, critic, and autobiographer

Akutagawa's reputation, both inside and outside Japan, rests chiefly on the body of short stories – aloof, elusive, and intensely "literary" – that won him acclaim during his lifetime. Indeed, in the context of Japanese literary history he is distinguished, within his period, for the way in which his work ran counter to the prevailing tendency of fictional writing to take the form of autobiography, or, in many cases, for what was, in effect, autobiography that laid claim to the status of fiction. *Shizenshugi* (commonly translated as "naturalism" for want of a better term) was the creation of a number of provincial writers born in the 1870s who interpreted the critic Tsubouchi Shōyō's call for literature to consist of truth to life to mean the reproduction of their own, minimally disguised, everyday lives. As Kato Shuichi has remarked, "thus began an age when anybody could be a novelist". Even writers such as Arishima Takeo, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, Miyamoto Yuriko, and Akutagawa's mentor Natsume Sōseki, who were not associated with the trend, produced works that could either easily be connected to the details of their private lives, or of which the protagonists were as self-absorbed as those of the naturalists. Though naturalism was never a dominant taste among intellectuals of the period, and despite the fact that the reputations of its more purist practitioners have not worn well, the subsequent influence of the movement on Japanese letters has been profound. That tendency to maudlin egocentricity that characterizes the "I-novel" (*watakushi shōsetsu*), a form that arose in the wake of naturalism, has left a discernible mark on both high and popular Japanese art, and the presuppositions of the genre itself have led to a faith, within literary studies in Japan, in the biographical transparency of the literary text, and a corresponding readiness to conflate an author's life and work, which would surprise the average Western scholar.

As a schoolboy Akutagawa was an admirer of the naturalists, as well as various *fin-de-siècle* Western writers. Later, however, he turned away from naturalism, and his own work, up until 1922 at least, can be seen as a resolute rejection of the crudely autobiographical element then popular in literature. The stories that Akutagawa produced between 1916 and 1922, and on which his reputation now rests, are characterized by a detachment, self-consciousness, and irony that are the antithesis, at least at a surface level, of the confessional. There is a telling moment towards the denouement of *Imogayu* (1916; *Yam Gruel*) in which the previously impersonal narrator suddenly addresses us directly with the dry comment that his protagonist is in the process of losing that appetite "which had hitherto commanded our sympathy for him". The variety of styles and forms Akutagawa employed, and the character of the sources on which he drew for his plots or settings – the weird and grotesque popular illustrated storybooks of the Edo period, collections of medieval Japanese tales and Chinese novels, folk tales, and children's stories – also mark his *oeuvre* as rooted more in literature than in "life". In *Hōkyōnin no shi* (1918; *The Martyr*), based upon early Christian writings, he went so far as to perpetrate a hoax: writing in a deliberately archaic style, supplying a bogus reference for the source, and allowing time, on its publication, for some scholarly discussion of the story's provenance before claiming authorship. Even his best-known story *Yabu no naka* (1921; *In a Grove*), often taken as a meditation on the impossibility of absolute truth, is more easily read as an exploration of the nature of fictional realities, since the "facts" that its three incompatible accounts purport to describe have no existence aside from those accounts. Significantly the Faustian painter of *Jigokuhen* (1918; *Hell Screen*), who disastrously mingles art and life, is, nevertheless, a painter of mythological subjects.

However, Akutagawa's physical and mental deterioration after 1922 – he suffered from depression, insomnia, and hallucinations, and began to use opium in 1926 – coincided with a move towards the autobiographical. It is the intrusion of the personal into his later writings that now appears to be their weakness. Even the comparatively successful satire *Kappa* (1927) suffers, at this distance in time, from being too obviously a *roman à clef*. (Tokyo's literary scene in the 1920s was as factional and self-absorbed as that of Paris during the same period.) Akutagawa's obviously autobiographical texts are *Haguruma* (1927; *Cogwheels*), about his descent into what he perceived as madness, the unfinished *Daidōji Shinsuke no hansei* [1924; The Early Life of Daidōji Shinsuke], and the valedictory *Aru ahō no isshō* (1927; *A Fool's Life*): they are all clearly intended as direct reflections of the author's state of mind, though they retain a distance that the "I-novel" never attempted.

Akutagawa committed suicide in the early hours of 24 July 1927. It was an event prefigured in the suicide of the poet Tok in *Kappa*, hinted at in several of the vignettes and reflections that make up *A Fool's Life*, and directly referred to in the preface, dated 20 June 1927, to the latter work. Or, at least, it appears to be same event. Left with a brilliant body of work and the moving epitaph of *A Fool's Life* it is tempting to feel that in encountering them we are also encountering the man who made them. But there is really no way of knowing whether Akutagawa's suicide is in some way continuous with that *oeuvre*, or whether it represents an absolute break with it – a break that would be the measure of the distance between literature and life, between what can be communicated and what cannot. In *A Fool's Life* a student is described quizzing the narrator:

> "But a desire for work and a desire for life, aren't they the same?" He did not answer. Over the field of the red tufted weed, a volcano. The fiery mountain arousing in him an envy. But just why, he couldn't say ...

If there is an objection that could be made to the tendency to conflate art and life – as such a tendency is embodied in the genre towards which Akutagawa's later work appeared to be drifting, or in the critic's belief in the biographical transparency of literature – it is that it may foster in the reader the illusion that everything about a life can be said.

JAMES KIRWAN

Biography

Born Niihara Ryūnosuke in Tokyo, Japan, 1 March 1892. Adopted by his uncle and given the family name of Akutagawa. Studied English at Tokyo Imperial University, 1913–16. Member of the literary staff of the university magazine *Shinshichō* [New Thought Tides], 1914 and 1916–17. Published his best-known story, *Rashōmon*, 1915. Taught English at the Naval Engineering College, Yokosuka, 1916–19. Married Tsukamoto Fumi, 1918: three sons. Literary staff member of the newspaper *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* [The Osaka Daily], 1919. Travelled through China and Korea for the newspaper, March–July 1921. Had become addicted to opium by 1926. Wrote his masterpiece, the novella *Kappa* (1927). Committed suicide in Tokyo, 24 July 1927.

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Alfieri, Vittorio 1749–1803

Italian playwright and autobiographer

The *Vita di Vittorio Alfieri da Asti* (1806; *Life of Vittorio Alfieri*) is the first major modern autobiography written in Italian. The author, one of the most important writers of the 18th-century Italian theatre, relates the events of his early life from childhood until the last period before his death. Alfieri's tragedies are stylistically very classical and his concept of life strict, so in a certain sense it is surprising to see that he wrote an autobiography that shows him as having all the attributes of a Romantic man. Like many other autobiographies published in the 19th century, it opens with an introduction by the author in which he presents his "autobiographical pact" (to use Philippe Lejeune's term), stating the explicit reasons that induced him to write, and explaining the modalities of the composition of the text. As in all "classical" autobiographical pacts, Alfieri declares that he will not tell the whole truth, but that all that he does tell will be true. His stated reasons for writing are to leave a biography together with his theatrical work, so that no one will tell lies about him, and to try to make a study of the human animal – he does the same thing in his drama – through the description of the man he knows best: himself. As far as the method is concerned, Alfieri promises a text composed of five parts, corresponding to the five periods of human life: childhood, adolescence, youth, maturity, and old age.

The importance he places on childhood, a fundamental element in defining "modern" autobiography, is significant. In fact, it is in his childhood that Alfieri searches for the roots of his identity, of his fears and passions, using a form of psychological research refined for his era. His autobiography is a continuous literary and psychological study of his moral and intellectual evolution, and of his literary conversion. All of Alfieri's theories – elucidated in his 19 tragedies – on the inevitability, the power, and the logical contradictions of human passions are investigated and tested on himself via innovative and brilliant prose, beautiful neologisms, and new syntactical strategies which make the *Vita* still one of the most interesting autobiographies in the Italian corpus.

One of the principal innovations of the *Vita* lies in the reasons the author gives for his writing: autobiography is an act of love directed towards himself, an act of vanity, and this is enough to justify the writing and publication of his own life story. Love for himself is the spring that induces him to give a true image of himself to others, to his "public". Autobiography is for Alfieri a wholly legitimate exercise for everyone; in his case it is not his theatrical work that justifies his *Vita*, but the other way round.

Finished just a few months before his death, the *Vita* is in reality the achievement of a long autobiographical experiment he had begun when he was young. He had read *Le Véritable Mentor, ou, l'éducation de la noblesse* by Caraccioli (1759) and the *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité* by the Abbé Prévost, which inspired him to write a journal during his first youthful travels (Alfieri speaks of it only in 1766, and unfortunately it was destroyed). Following this experiment Alfieri began to take long and detailed notes about the places, people, habits, and customs of the countries he visited. On these notes he based his *Giornali*, which are a real prelude to the autobiography. These journals were written in French in 1774–75, then in Italian in 1777, and, together with other autobiographical material – such as the *Rendimento dei conti*, best known as the *Annali* – converge to become the first manuscript of the autobiography (known as MS. laurenziano 13) written in two months in 1790. At the same time he was influenced by various autobiographical works: the *Mémoires* of Venetian dramatist Cerlo Goldoni (1787) and the *Confessions* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1782 and 1789) were familiar to him. But he made the ideological choice (very important in Italy during the 18th and 19th centuries) of writing his life in Italian, and this is why he was also under certain Italian influences, such as, for example, the *Vita* (1728) of sculptor and goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini.

The first manuscript of the *Vita* was read and perhaps also amended and completed between 1798 and 1803 (this is the version known as MS. laurenziano 24), two months before the death of the author. It is the only signed text and critics do not know how Alfieri amalgamated the different manuscripts. The first edition of the *Vita* (Florence: Piatti, 1806) was a huge success. It was not only read by a very large public, but also by a number of 19th-century Italian writers of memoirs, for whom Alfieri's *Vita* became a model autobiography, and his linguistic choice an act of love for his country.

ANNA IUSO

Biography

Born in Asti, Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia (now part of Italy), 16 January 1749. Educated at the Royal Academy, Turin, 1759–66. Inherited a vast fortune at the age of 14. Served as an ensign, 1766. Abandoned military career to travel throughout Europe, 1767–72 (resigned commission in 1774). Devoted himself to literature after the success of his first play, *Cleopatra* (1775); wrote a series of dramas, including his masterpieces *Saul* (produced 1794) and *Mirra* (produced 1819). Began lifelong relationship with Luisa Stolberg, Countess of Albany, wife of Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie), 1777. Lived with Luisa after the prince's death in 1788. Escaped from revolutionary Paris with her, 1792. Settled in Florence, leaving the city during the French occupation. Died in Florence, 8 October 1803.

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American Civil War Writings

Lives were written in many ways during the American Civil War (1861–65): diaries, journals, letters, stories, biographies, autobiographies, and histories. Soldiers like Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr (1842–1935) and Ambrose Bierce (1842–1914?) wrote often during and after the war. His hold on reality shaken, Holmes could not "keep home, parents and such at the same time as a reality – Can hardly indeed remember their existence". He desperately resolved to shape meaning from absurdly chaotic experiences. Experience became mere fragments of sensation: "Trot to place where boy was shot at – then gallop to where the road bends to right – bang – whiz – 'Halt'." He wrote to compose himself as well as his message. In later years, he noted that facts "rapidly escaped the memory" of an intense sensation in battle, and that he needed, as when he was wounded, a fact around which his "thoughts could crystallize". For Holmes and for Bierce, the product was both the writing and the life. Bierce wrote self-reconstructive essays, including one describing the battle at Shiloh that used fictional devices to shape chaotic experience. On the banks of the Tennessee River, desperate men fled like souls of the damned along the River Styx in Dante's *Divine Comedy*: "black figures, ludicrously like the figures of demons in old allegorical prints of hell". In the midst of horrific events, Bierce abruptly interjected a stabilizing point: "In subordination to the design of this narrative, the incidents related necessarily group themselves about my own personality as a center." He and Holmes both made consciousness out of war's accidents, but consciousness of themselves shaped the world as war.

Civilians, witnessing baffling events, wrote for personal equilibrium. The diaries of two women, one in the South, the other in the North, are examples that recorded such struggles. Sarah Morgan (1842–1909) fled her home in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, for safety in Union-occupied New Orleans. As years passed and war continued, Morgan's writing acquired desperate urgency. Her safety in an enemy city crippled writing as a "compromise between laziness and inclination". Nevertheless, despite growing despair, she kept intact her sense of self by writing "a half way state of existence". With two brothers' deaths in combat at war's end, sickness of soul dissolved her controlled composition into fragments of hopelessness. Morgan universalized her loss of identity as a cry of perplexity: "It is incomprehensible, this change." Beneath a socially confident exterior, Maria Lydig Daly (1824–94), safely living in New York, wrote of insecurities about personal identity as doubts of national integrity. Uncertain of her country's future happiness and having no children, she wrote despite political discouragements, military defeats, and biological infertility. When Union armies achieved victory, she discovered strength of purpose in her husband's writing and in her own. In the aftermath of a Union victory, Daly wrote of her reconstructed identity: "Whilst my husband is with me and loves me, I am independent of the whole world."

Americans too easily found themselves in enemy territory. In 1865, shortly after escaping from a Union prison in the North, Confederate soldier Decimus et Ultimus Barziza (1838–82) wrote of his evolution through loss of national identity. He became indifferent "to future danger" and reckless "to the present". He articulated the resolve of the defeated South to resist forever the conquering Northern power. Barziza acquired his defiance from captivity and escape: he could pass among Northerners by pretending to be one of them, and he learned to write for self-realization, "a favorite occupation" in prison. Susie King Taylor (b. 1848), an ex-slave serving as a laundress in the camps of her "colored" soldier husband in South Carolina, had, like Barziza, life-threatening adventures: "I expected every moment to be killed by a shell." She delayed writing about her life until 1902, after her son had died in 1898: "It seemed very hard, when his father fought to protect the Union and our flag, and yet his boy was denied, under this same flag, a berth to carry him home to die, because he was a negro." Taylor saw "the terrors of that war" and her subsequent experiences prompted her to ask, "was the war in vain?".

There were many retrospective accounts of the Civil War. William Watson, a Scotsman born in 1826, was living in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, when war began. In 1887 he wrote of his life in the Confederate army, confessing no clear reason to fight in a foreign war. He minimized the individual life in war: "The individual soldier is swallowed up in the midst of the turmoil, and ... is supposed to see or know nothing." Writing was an evasive reconstruction of history. Watson had neither "free will or control over his sentiments". He grew insensitive to human, but not animal, suffering: "I felt more pity at seeing the poor horse shot down than at all the slaughter I had seen." Watson, an "alien" in the war, was in turn alienated by it until he nearly lost his identity as a civilized being. John D. Billings (1842–1933) wrote of life in the Union army. The title of his book illustrates the ways Billings, like Watson, diverted attention from life to writing: *Hardtack and Coffee, or, The Unwritten Story of Army Life*. He offered objects as emblems, and he avoided the troubling realities of emotions that were the material of diary writers like Holmes, Morgan, and Daly. Billings posited reality as matter shared by conqueror and conquered alike. His writing exhausted the burning anger expressed by Barziza and Taylor. Like Watson, he reserved feelings for horses and mules: "It was a sad sight to see these animals sacrificed." He recorded scenes of humour at the expense of "negroes", betraying little consciousness of his own complicity. Billings rarely allowed himself to appear at all. Thus the second part of his title, "the unwritten story", was symptomatic of the feelings of many witnesses to the war, who turned from the written to the unwritten as a trope of incomprehension.

RICHARD D. MCGHEE

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Amiel, Henri-Frédéric 1821–1881

Swiss scholar and diarist

Henri Amiel kept his immense diary for 40–odd years. It is commonly called his *Journal intime*; that is, the normal French term for a personal diary, yet here the adjective seems to call for a literal English translation. For Amiel reveals a mind that is intensely inward-looking. External stimuli impinge strongly on him, and he ruminates over them, yet no reader can escape the impression that what matters is not so much what they are in themselves as what they signify to him. An overwhelming sense of incapacity for reaching a decision or taking action combines with an exceptional ability to engender emotion when confronted by experience. Amiel's temperament is, moreover, racked by an acute and abiding moral dissatisfaction at what he perceives as ineradicable personal defects. Such a character, which some might call Hamletic, has affinities with Pascal's portrayal of mankind abandoned in wretchedness by a Jansenist God; and Protestant writers, as early diaries testify, knew the type too. But the malaise of Amiel in the 19th century seems rather to reflect the incompatibilities of a Romantic mind, stirred by events as well as by reading, no less sensitive to all the arts than to the spectacle of nature, conscious that the penalty for superior mental powers is an unremitting and painful consciousness that the intellect will never encompass a superabundance of emotion.

No two days were ever recorded in the same way by Amiel, yet his entry for one Monday, 16 August, reveals much that is typical. Unlike most diarists, who write up the day's events just once, sometimes even a week or more later, Amiel was not content with a single entry. This is significant. The diary, one senses, was always there, offering surrogate companionship for a shy soul who was always lonely in a crowd. As early as ten o'clock in the morning on the first working day of the week, he could not resist beginning by noting "Languor, wretched condition, ennui and weariness". The specific trigger of what was virtually Amiel's constant *cri de coeur* is the book he has just been reading, *Le Peintre de Salzbourg*. That Charles Nodier's epistolary novel, published in 1803 and with no particularly important place in the literary canon, should move Amiel so strongly appears typical of a certain lack of proportion in the diarist. Though he unhesitatingly identifies the cultural context,

hearing, as he writes it, echoes of Goethe's *Werther* and Chateaubriand's *René*, this academic pigeon-holing of the work in a century-old tradition does not afford emotional shelter. Instead he cries out that there is too much of this unhealthy and melancholy literature, as if he cannot lay it aside, perhaps because it still strikes home.

Thirteen hours later, at 11 o'clock at night, Amiel again picks up his diary. First he records the arrival of mail informing him that a friend will arrive shortly. Noting only that he has replied, he adds neither his reaction to the news, nor the smallest personal detail about his correspondent or the person mentioned in the letter. Next comes a cameo of Amiel's professional life. Though duty has compelled him to subscribe to academic journals, he has not been able to bring himself to look at them as they arrive. Now a daunting pile confronts him. Typically he cannot find enough determination to do more than start looking through the material. He is, he says, beginning to get back into the role of a professor, a comment that nicely balances complacency and despair. Amiel turns next to landscape description, evoking a lake-side stroll in the moonlight after supper. But the idyll is interrupted by a choking fit. Reflecting on the dissipation of the sense of nullity that he felt earlier in the day, Amiel observes that society has provided some distraction, suggesting to him the necessity of forgetting the "pit" and the future if one is to enjoy the present. Instead of pursuing the point, he turns instead to woman's place in society in a discussion in which he shows his abhorrence for any sort of superficiality.

This final part of the day's entry is to some extent interesting as a portrayal of the pressures and currents shaping attitudes in the more thoughtful parts of European society in an age of great change. Music critics will for their part pick out many other entries for insight into a mood of criticism that finds access to Romantic and later works in interpreting them as if they were programmatic depictions of varying moods. Yet though Amiel's range of reference is wide, the major interest resides in an ever-anxious depiction of a self that eventually becomes almost mesmerizing.

A partial edition of the *Journal* published by Edmond Scherer in 1884 brought Amiel to the attention of French readers and critics. They soon accorded him a high place among French post-Romantic introspectives. Mrs Humphry Ward's translation introduced Amiel to the English reading public, and the review in *Macmillan's Magazine* by her uncle Matthew Arnold, though not entirely favourable, undoubtedly fanned the flames of interest. Now that the long-awaited, formidably long complete edition of the *Journal* has been published (1976–94), Amiel is likely to be accorded an even higher status among the diarists of the 19th century.

CHRISTOPHER SMITH

Biography

Born in Geneva, Switzerland, 27 September 1821. His parents were prosperous French Protestants whose ancestors had emigrated from France to Switzerland for religious reasons. Orphaned at the age of 12 in 1833. Separated from his two sisters, who were sent to boarding school, and brought up by his uncle. Attended the College or Public School of Geneva. Studied at the Academy of Geneva (later the University of Geneva), late 1830s; influenced by the teaching of the philologist Adolphe Pictet. Stayed for a short time in France, 1841. Lived in Italy, 1842. Contributed art reviews to *Bibliothèque universelle de Genève*, 1842. Moved to Germany, 1844. Studied at Berlin University, 1844–48. Travelled widely in Europe, visiting Scandinavia, 1845; The Netherlands, 1846; Vienna, Munich, and Tübingen, 1848. Started writing the journal for which he became best known, 1847. Returned to Geneva, 1848. Appointed professor of aesthetics and French literature, 1849, professor of moral philosophy, 1854, Academy of Geneva; remained in this position until his death. Had an intense love affair with "Philine", described in his *Journal intime*. Wrote critical essays and several volumes of poetry. Died in Geneva, 11 May 1881.

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Andersch, Alfred 1914–1980

German fiction and prose writer, radio producer, and autobiographer

Just as the life of the young Alfred Andersch was a series of concrete and existential reflexes to the Nazi dictatorship and its aftermath, so was his work – his short stories, novels, sketches, essays, radio plays, and radio essays – a series of reflections on individual possibilities and responsibilities of thought and action to what he termed the "total state", thought and action revolving around ideas of freedom and resistance. In the tension between political constrictions and the personal mandates of physical and psychic survival, one's identity, according to Andersch, is often forged in desperation, and his writing – much of it incognito autobiography – makes possible the full realization of this struggle for the self.

Prior to his defining experience of World War II Andersch partook of the intellectual life of Weimar Germany through his veneration of the novelist Thomas Mann, and through involvement in a Communist youth organization, which led, subsequent to the Nazi takeover, to a three-month imprisonment at Dachau and to continued Gestapo surveillance. Until drafted in 1940 Andersch worked as an office clerk, but his identity sought sanctuary in the aesthetic cocoons of German neo-Romanticism (the writings of Rilke) and existentialism (the philosphy of Heidegger).

With his own experience of war as a draftee, Andersch entered the labyrinthian search for a response to the individual confrontation with authority, dictatorship, and terror. Understanding freedom not as a philosophical idea but as an existential experience, Andersch concluded that, given his situation, only desertion would represent a real emancipation of the self from the death and destruction of ideology and power. In June 1944 he consequently surrendered to US forces at the Italian front.

Andersch's war experiences, which led him inexorably to his "honourable desertion", were captured in his first literary success, the autobiographical novel-memoir *Kirschen der Freiheit* [1952; Cherries of Freedom]. With a quote from André Gide as subscription ("I base my hopes only on the deserters"), the work draws on two cultural traditions, which determined to a large extent its style, structure, and theme.

First, the empiricism and pragmatism of liberal-democratic American society, with its frontier individualism and historical optimism, left their mark on Andersch.

American literary life (Thomas Wolfe, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway) functioned as models for a new, concise, objective realism, all very much evident in *Kirschen*. Second, the moral-existential thought of Jean-Paul Sartre provided Andersch with the philosophical fundamentals for the principle of desertion as a necessary act of existential freedom and as an ultimate and exemplary act of resistance.

After the war, and during his productive and influential career as critic, essayist, journalist, and radio personality, Andersch founded two journals, *Der Ruf* [The Call] and *Texte und Zeichen* [Texts and Signs], participated in the establishment of the well-known writers'organization Gruppe 47, created and produced countless radio programmes, plays, and essays, and played a central role in the German literary life of the 1950s. Throughout, he sought to address issues of the individual in modern German society and of the aesthetic consciousness of the European avant-garde.

His best-known work, the novel *Sansibar, oder, der letzte Grund* (1957; *Flight to Afar*), marked the beginning of his career as a freelance writer. But by posing the questions "What is worth fighting for?" and "What is worth escaping from?" it also recapitulated his autobiographical problematic of freedom and flight, its risks and costs.

In the 1960s and 1970s Andersch continued to expand upon the themes of his earlier works. Comprehending identity as the realization of consciousness through moral action in the concrete, historical world, Andersch's truths lay ultimately neither in personal, romantic subjectivity nor in public, ideological objectivity, but in the existential actions of individuals as they live their lives.

RALPH W. BUECHLER

Biography
Born in Munich, Bavaria, Germany, 4 February 1914. Educated at the Wittelsbacher Gymnasium, Munich, 1924–28. Worked for a publisher, 1928–30. Member of the youth organization of the Communist Party, 1932, and as a result spent three months in Dachau concentration camp, 1933. Office worker, Munich and Hamburg, 1933–40. Married Angelika Albert, 1935 (divorced 1943): one daughter. Served in the German army, 1940–41 and 1943–44: deserted on the Italian front and became a prisoner of war in the United States, where he worked on *Der Ruf*, a prisoners' publication, 1945. Editorial assistant to Erich Kästner, *Neue Zeitung*, Munich, 1945–46; co-editor, *Der Ruf*, Munich, 1946–47. Co-founder, Gruppe 47, 1947. Founder and director of *Abendstudio*, Frankfurt Radio, 1948–50, and of "radio-essays" for South German Radio, Stuttgart, 1955–58. Married Gisela Groneuer-Dichgans, 1950: two sons and one daughter. Founder and editor, *Texte und Zeichen*, 1955–57. Worked as a freelance writer after the success of his novel *Sansibar, oder, der letzte Grund* (1957; *Flight to Afar*). Moved to Switzerland, 1958, and became a Swiss citizen, 1973. Led an expedition to the Arctic, 1965. Died in Berzona, Ticino, Switzerland, 21 February 1980.

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Angelou, Maya 1928–

American autobiographer and poet

Maya Angelou's creative role as an autobiographer is what catapulted her to the fame and eminence she was never able to achieve as a singer in the late 1950s. With the publication of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* in 1969 she embarked on what would become a five-volume serial autobiography delineating her growth as a person and an artist. Throughout these five self-explorations, Angelou appears to the reader as a "phoenix-like heroine" (McPherson) who keeps rising from the ashes of a chaotic existence, first as a child and adolescent, and then as a young woman, always painfully aware of the impositions placed on her as a black female by the "tripartite crossfire of masculine prejudice, white illogical hate and Black lack of power", as she puts it, but always rejecting the black victim status in favour of a self-empowered and warrior self at the centre of her identity.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings covers the author's formative years in rural Arkansas, marked by her abandonment by her divorcing parents, her witness of the humiliation of Southern blacks at school and outside, her rape at the age of eight by her mother's lover, and her pregnancy at the early age of 16. The only positive force in the shaping of the young Maya (whose full name was Marguerite) is her grandmother, "Momma". Indeed, the first part of the book is a hymn to this loving, protective, and nurturing mother figure whose spiritual power and pride at

being black, notwithstanding her conservatism and inflexibility, give the young girl a sense of security and self-confidence that she will lose only as the "outsiders" come back into her life: her father first, who makes her question the worth of being female, and her beautiful but frivolous mother later. Out of this chaos of racism, sexism, rape, and self-imposed silence (traumatized by rape, young Maya stopped speaking for a year), a singing "caged bird" will emerge at the end of the book in the life-affirming scene of giving birth to her son – a scene that can be interpreted also as a devastating way to begin life as an adult.

In *Gather Together in My Name* (1974), which covers her life from the ages of 16 to 19, Angelou reveals the many intimate secrets, mistakes, and feelings of a young woman who is trying to make it as an adult, but fails to achieve the American Dream. During these years of spiritual disintegration in urban California, Maya plays the most sordid and confusing roles while she works as a cook, waitress, dancer, prostitute, clothing seller, restaurant manager, and Madam. Still, Maya matures with these bitter experiences, and mitigates them with her youthful optimism and idealism ("I had no idea what I was going to make of my life, but I had given a promise and found my innocence"). Like so many American autobiographies of education, this volume is intended to be exemplary, and to serve as a warning for young people, as its author has explained: "if by my revelation I can encourage anybody to avoid some of the things I experienced … if I can encourage them to forgive themselves, it's all worth it". The symbolic change of names from Marguerite Johnson to Maya Angelou, so common in life writing in the genre of slave narratives, marks the girl's passage into adulthood and the white world. The period covered in *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* (1976) – stimulated again by Angelou's eschewing of self-concealment or veiled confession – assembles together her initial experiences of marriage (to a white man), divorce, motherhood, and show business and follows her in the international tour of *Porgy and Bess*, which gains her a wider knowledge of the world and of herself.

The fourth instalment, *The Heart of a Woman* (1981), takes us through one of the most formative periods of Angelou's exciting life: her beginnings as a writer and an activist in New York. It portrays a more politicized and communal self, who changes her career and decides to become involved in the civil rights movement of the late 1950s and 1960s. The autobiographer now recounts a more public and historical chronicle of those tumultuous years in which Martin Luther King appointed her the northern coordinator of SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference); here, as Cudjoe writes, "superficial concerns about *individual subject* give way to the *collective subjection* of the group". At the Harlem Writers Guild, the mother to a now-rebellious teenage son starts her writing career and finds the love of an African freedom fighter, whom she marries and follows to Africa. In Egypt, she will become the editor of the *Arab Observer*. The adult self is thus at its prime.

Finally, in *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (1986), Angelou gives her personal recollection of a historical time when Africans were leading their own countries independently after centuries of colonial rule (she is now an expatriate in Ghana, where she has joined a community of black Americans). In this vivid celebration of the sensuousness of Africa, Angelou also explores what it means to be an African American on the mother continent, where colour no longer matters, but where "Americanness" asserts itself in baffling ways. Nostalgically, Angelou finishes this journey into Africa – and into that part of every African American's self that is still wedded to Africa – returning to the United States, only to face the painful truths about black betrayal.

Placing Angelou in the tradition of black autobiography, we can see that she partakes of the general themes of white racism and of black reaction to this racism, and she constructs a life around the mythical patterns of journeys through chaos, quests of identity, and achievements. However, while many black autobiographers speak with a collective "I", portraying themselves less as individuals than as "members of an oppressed social group" (as Butterfield puts it), Angelou speaks quite clearly as an individual who intimates the secrets of a unique life – inevitably influenced by issues of race, class, and gender. As Fox-Genovese makes clear, the black woman's self cannot be divorced from the history of that self or the history of the people among whom it took shape. Moreover, Angelou's contribution to black autobiography is her "self-parody" and use of "comic irony" (McPherson) while celebrating a life in a prose full of lyricism, rhythmic language, and detailed portraiture. Angelou has written that while she speaks to the black experience, she is "always talking about the human condition" so that the universality of her books derives "from black life's traditions seeming to mirror, with extraordinary intensity, the root uncertainty in the universe" (Kent). And so, the destination of her journey to an uncertain self-awareness is brilliantly revealed at the end of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*: "I had gone from being ignorant of being ignorant to being aware of being aware. And the worst part of my awareness was that I didn't know what I was aware of".

ISABEL DURÁN

Biography

Born Marguerite Annie Johnson in St Louis, Missouri, United States, 4 April 1928. Her father was a doorman and naval dietician; her mother worked in various jobs, including nursing. Moved with her parents to Long Beach, California, shortly after her birth. Was sent with her brother to live with her paternal grandmother in Stamps, Arkansas, a poor rural area, after her parents' early divorce: attended public schools there. Was raped while visiting her mother in St Louis, mid-1930s: refused to speak for a year, after the man responsible was killed by her uncles, believing that she had caused his death by testifying at his trial. Moved with her brother to San Francisco, California, to live with her mother, now remarried and running a boarding house, 1940. Educated at George Washington High School, San Francisco. Had son a few months after graduating in 1945. Worked as a cook, waitress, and nightclub singer. Married Tosh Angelos, 1950 (later divorced). Studied dance with Martha Graham, Pearl Primus, and Ann Halprin; drama with Frank Silvera and Gene Frankel. Adopted the stage name Maya Angelou. Worked as a dancer and actress, touring Europe and Africa in *Porgy and Bess*, 1954–55. Lived in a houseboat commune in California, late 1950s. Moved to New York, 1958; joined the Harlem Writers Guild. Appeared in the off-Broadway plays *Cabaret for Freedom* (1960) and *The Blacks* (1961). Served as northern coordinator of Martin Luther King Jr's Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Married Vusumzi Make, a South African dissident lawyer (later divorced), and moved with him to Cairo, Egypt, 1961: associate editor for the English-language newspaper *Arab Observer*, 1962–63. Moved to Accra, Ghana, 1963: assistant administrator at the School of Music and Drama, University of Ghana, 1963–66; writer for the *Ghanian Times*, 1963–65, and the Obanian Broadcasting Corporation, 1963–65; feature editor for *African Review*, 1965–66. Returned to the United States, 1966. Lecturer, University of California at Los Angeles,

1966. Continued to pursue acting and writing careers, appearing in productions of *Medea*, 1966, *Look Away*, 1975, and in the television mini-series *Roots*, 1977. Writer-in-residence, University of Kansas, mid-1970s. Published *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, the first volume of her autobiography, 1969, and subsequently devoted herself to writing projects. Received a Pulitzer prize nomination in 1972 for *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Diiie* (1971), the first of several volumes of verse. Married Paul Du Feu, 1973 (divorced 1981): one son. Visiting professor, Wake Forest University, Wichita State University, and California State University, 1974. Directed the film *All Day Long*, 1974, and the plays *And Still I Rise*, 1976, and *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl*, 1988. Member, American Revolution Bicentennial Council, 1975–76, and National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year. Wrote *The Heart of a Woman* (1981). Reynolds Professor of American Studies, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, from 1981. Wrote and delivered a commemorative poem, "On the Pulse of Morning", at the presidential inauguration of Bill Clinton, 1993.

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Anthropology and Life Writing

The essence of life writing is the representation of an individual self – in Western culture, historically, this happened first in relation to God (Saint Augustine's *Confessions* and the Puritans), then in relation to a (tribal) community, and eventually in relation to oneself (Rousseau). The implicit or explicit extension of life writing from one to all human beings, i.e. the anthropological turn of life writing, is related to the emergence of the human subject from the medieval social order of the "chain of being" into a more autonomous existence. In the context of European culture the first manifestations of an independent individuality are recorded in the Renaissance with regard to individual acts of conquest (Columbus), individual religious beliefs (Martin Luther, Jean Calvin), individual political minds (Thomas More), and men and women of letters, who depict the dangers of self-realization (as Shakespeare does through his character Hamlet). Such conceptions of the individual figured prominently in the autobiographies of Italian Renaissance men, such as Girolamo Cardano's *De propria vita* (written 1575/76) and Benvenuto Cellini's *Vita* (written 1558–66). Michel de Montaigne's *Essais* (1580–88) represent the first instance of the interrelation of life writing and anthropology in the Renaissance, historically coincidental with the etymological origin of the term anthropology as the study of the nature and essence of humankind (in the years 1585–95). Expressive of the era's feeling about the instability of the emergent subject, Montaigne conceived of his three versions of the *Essais* as "a record of the essays of my life". Despite all his criticism of the baseness of human nature he intended to present the individual as a whole, and saw his self-portrait as a reflection of all humankind according to his belief that "each man bears the entire form of man's estate". His early reflections on the cannibals as the barbarians of the New World, in which he defends a natural state of being, makes him a precursor of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Enlightenment project.

The 18th century, the era of the Enlightenment, turned Montaigne's isolated case of anthropological life writing into a full-scale epistemological quest. The focus was now on the nature of man as a combination of body and mind, counteract-

ing their Cartesian separation. The increasing questioning of the existence of God led to the question of the origin of humankind and of universal anthropological features. Johann Gottfried Herder's and Rousseau's essays about the origin and universality of humankind entailed the discussion of primitive tribes in the New World and their natural states of being. The fields of physical and cultural anthropology hence received an ethnographic dimension and emphasized the importance of its literary rendition. The affinity of anthropology to travel writing and autobiography emerged in the second half of the 18th century, and continued into the 20th. Prior to the constitution of anthropology as a scientific field of research in the 19th century, and prior to anthropological autobiographies proper, the connection between anthropology and life writing originated in the ethnographic description of unknown and exotic people before eventually moving to include the discovery of the "other" in oneself, in the Romantic period.

Part of the discourse on anthropology, particularly in France and Germany in the second half of the 18th century, was its relation to literary forms of representation, in which the exploration of an individual self served as a model for the exploration of universal human characteristics. The (auto)biographical novel *Anton Reiser* (1785–90) allowed its author, Karl Philipp Moritz, to continue his philosophical reflections about life in *Beiträge zur Philosophie des Lebens* in a fictional form that turns into a version of literary anthropology, a combination which Herder also favoured until the publication of Rousseau's *Confessions*. The shocking details of Rousseau's life in that work became the basis for a representation of the range of human behaviour. Rousseau's project was not an apologia; rather, his own self served as a sounding board for all humankind. The beginning of the first volume of *Confessions* (1782) announces this project: "Je veux montrer à mes semblables un homme dans toute la vérité de la nature; et cet homme, ce sera moi. Moi seul. Je sens mon coeur et je connois les hommes". With the ruthless description of his wayward behaviour he recognized the deviant within himself which – in the view of Claude Lévi-Strauss – was the beginning of ethnographic description as a source of enlightenment about one's self. At the same time, such a ruthless self-revelation also contained the danger of self-alienation, which is the subject of Rousseau's other autobiographical works, *Rousseau juge de Jean Jacques: Dialogues* (1780) and *Reveries d'un promeneur solitaire* (1782; *The Reveries of a Solitary Walker*), which foreshadow the modern/Freudian disintegration of the self.

From a different perspective, with respect to the nascent American republic, Benjamin Franklin showed the anthropological side of his exemplary life as a success story, leaving out most of the adverse events. In its pragmatic-moralistic orientation, his *Autobiography* (published posthumously in 1791) moves from an individualistic account in Part 1 to a universal scheme (Part 2) encapsulated by the new American republic (Part 3). This correlation of the advancement of the human race and that of national history underpins a number of American autobiographies in the 19th century. Thus, Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) showed the exemplary American individual in the service of the true course of American democracy, in the same way in which Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Representative Men* (1850) traced the history of humankind in a series of biographies, in accordance with his belief that all history was the biography of great men (inspired by Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, 1841). Walt Whitman, in turn, celebrated the individual in the portion of *Leaves of Grass* (1855, first version), later entitled *Song of Myself*, by making the celebration of the subject have communal resonance, to include all races, classes, and genders. This combination of anthropology and race is a theme of African American slave narratives from the creation of the republic to the civil war (perhaps most famously, those mid-19th-century works by Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs).

German writers at the beginning of the 19th century reflected the virulent discussions of natural science and anthropology in their literary works. In continuation of Immanuel Kant's and Herder's considerations of a moral or pragmatic anthropology, and following on from Moritz's *Anton Reiser*, Jean Paul thematized in his autobiographical works the interior reaches of physical experiences. The auto/biographical interaction of the writers was quite productive, as the relations between Moritz, Jean Paul, and Goethe show. Goethe, who had translated Benvenuto Cellini's *Vita* into German (1796) from Thomas Nugent's English version and written a biography of the German art historian Winckelmann (1805), felt that, in view of personal and national crises such as the Napoleonic wars, he had to order his life through writing and had to stress the pragmatic dimension of worldly affairs. *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811–33; *Poetry and Truth*) was the summation of his life studies, which always started with the physical world of science and anthropology, and moved by way of entelechy to spiritual refinement.

Other reflections of Napoleonic and revolutionary times are the autobiographical works of Chateaubriand and Stendhal. Chateaubriand's *Mémoires d'outre-tombe* (published 1849–50) record his flight from revolutionary France to four continents, with a special emphasis on his encounter with the Native Americans, who figure prominently in his fictional work. These encounters with non-European people provided the basis for his anthropological stance, which allowed him to adopt the rhetorical perspective of an individual who looks back over his life and his time from beyond the grave. Stendhal, on the other hand, identified with the revolutionary forces against a royalist France in *Vie de Henri Brulard* (written 1835–36, published 1890; *Life of Henry Brulard*), where he recorded his youth and his participation in Napoleon's incursion into Italy.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Renaissance idea of the individual as a full-blown subject gradually dissolved. This process had been prefigured in life writings by the Romantics, such as Stendhal, who referred to the composite of "Je" and "Moi". Nietzsche and Freud, as well as Wilhelm Dilthey, announced a new development in the anthropological focus of life writing. Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo* (written 1888; published 1908) is the apotheosis of a human being who puts himself in the place of God. It is a celebration of the superman. Freud, in turn, focused on the Id-quality of human beings in his *Die Traumdeutung* (1900; *The Interpretation of Dreams*), which included his own dream life. And Dilthey instituted the human sciences and the hermeneutic method when he declared biography to be the basis of all history, and had his son-in-law Georg Misch work on the *Geschichte der Autobiographie* (from 1907; *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity*). Dilthey's concept of *Geisteswissenschaften* created an opposition between

the human and natural sciences, also represented by the rise of psychology. Consequently, cultural anthropology and ethnography were to come to the fore.

The emigration of German anthropologists like Franz Boas and Alfred Kroeber to the United States at the beginning of the 20th century, and the serious academic interest in Native American languages and cultures reinforced the field trip as a major means of anthropological inquiry. These contacts with the peoples of study are always part of a mutual process of revelation in so far as the understanding of unknown customs is reflective of "white" terminology and "white" methods, and thus often reveals as much about the object of inquiry as the subject. Famous examples of this process are the "as-told-to" autobiographies, in which white ethnographers have written down the life of a tribe given to them – often by way of an interpreter – by a chief or elder. *Black Elk Speaks, Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux* (1932) was recorded by the white ethnographer John Neihardt. American folklorist Zora Neale Hurston's field trips to the Caribbean islands in search of her African heritage are one of the rare examples of non-white anthropological endeavours. An equally interesting, and theoretically appealing, ethnographic account of native people is Claude Lévi-Strauss's *Tristes Tropiques* (1955), an autobiographical record of field trips to the Brazilian Indians in the Amazon region (1935–39), which became the basis for the social anthropologist's kinship studies and his structural anthropology. At the same time the recognition of difference forced the anthropologist to redefine his own self. Similarly, Michel Leiris's avant-gardist project of "the autobiographer as torero" was based on his field trips in Africa and his study of the rituals of possession among Ethiopians in the 1930s, a project that eventually turned into a ritualistic investigation of his own possessions and obsessions (*L'Age d'homme*, 1939; *Manhood*) in the tradition of Rousseau.

This recognition of cross-cultural fertilization through the ethnographical encounter with tribal communities seems to be the position of modern anthropology as defined by the German philosophical anthropologist Arnold Gehlen, who regards the purpose of anthropological research as a process of self-encounter and self-discovery. This position has changed in the postmodern age. Postmodern anthropologists like James Clifford and George E. Marcus have argued that anthropological research is no more the self-discovery through the description of other customs in field trips, but instead the ethnographic description of the "other" in oneself, which might then take on a universal dimension. Gertrude Stein's *Everybody's Autobiography* (1938), written in Paris after an extended visit to her home country which she had not seen in more than 30 years, is a case in point, although its pretensions are literary rather than ostensibly anthropological. In this book, the foreign and unfamiliar aspects of her native land are yet part of her own culture as an American citizen.

This new kind of anthropological life writing is most often utilized by minority groups and by women, often from third-world countries. Exiled from or alienated within their own cultures or origins, these life writers recover their own heritage and self and seek to give a universal frame. Simultaneously, this form of anthropological life writing has an affinity – like Goethe's autobiography – with a language of poetics, a combination which both Wolfgang Iser and James Clifford note from the perspective of the literary critic and the postmodern anthropologist respectively. Postmodern anthropology and literary anthropology meet in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976), where the autobiographical persona defines herself in contact with white Americans and her mother's "talk-stories" about China. All of these experiences together with her discovery of herself as a writer constitute this poetic form of anthropology that Hong Kingston herself labels a "global novel". Equally transnational and global are the autobiographical fictions of Caribbean and postcolonial writers like Michelle Cliff, Jamaica Kincaid, or Gloria Anzaldúa, who deconstruct the influence of colonial cultures to unearth the heritage of their native predecessors buried in the lands of their origin. Such a reconnection with the tribal past challenges the often superficial assumptions of Western cultures and their conceptions of human values worldwide. Telling lives remains the supreme art of anthropological endeavour.

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See also Autoethnography; Ethnography; Oral History; Orality

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Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Life Writing

Although racism pervaded South Africa before 1948 (as much life writing indicates), the Afrikaner Nationalist government's policy of apartheid enshrined racist separation in increasingly draconian laws. During the apartheid period (1948–94) life writing, especially prose narratives in English, became an increasingly important weapon in the struggle. Autobiographies by Peter Abrahams (*Tell Freedom*, 1954), Trevor Huddlestone (*Nought for Your Comfort*, 1956), Albert Luthuli (*Let My People Go*, 1962), and Don Mattera (*Memory is the Weapon*, 1987; also published as *Gone with the Twilight*), as well as biographies such as Donald Woods's of anti-apartheid campaigner Steve Biko (1978), kept South African racism on the agenda.

For apartheid to work, "non-Europeans" had to be dehumanized, their history excised. Much life writing thus sought to contest apartheid's obsession with group identity and the concomitant erasure of individuals. Although seemingly at odds with this aim, many writers focused on the typicality (rather than the distinctiveness) of their subjects' experiences, thus broadening the scope of affirmation. This is evident in such texts as Ezekiel Mphahlele's *Down Second Avenue* (1959), Z.K. Matthews's *Freedom for My People* (1981), Ellen Kuzwayo's *Call Me Woman* (1985), Mark Mathabane's *Kaffir Boy* (1986), and the anonymous *Thula Baba* (1987). Moreover, life writing increasingly reinterpreted history and politics. Naboth Mokgatle's *The Autobiography of an Unknown South African* (1971), Donald Woods's *Asking for Trouble* (1987), Philip Kgosana's *Lest We Forget* (1988), Mosiuoa Lekota's *Prison Letters to a Daughter* (1991), and Maggie Resha's *'Mangoana Tsoara Thipa Ka Bohaleng* (1991) all seek to correct authorized accounts.

State repression under apartheid led to escalating violence and human rights violations. Experiences of banning and banishment are recounted by many auto/biographers, such as Helen Joseph (*Side by Side*, 1986), Frank Chikane (*No Life of My Own*, 1988), Winnie Mandela (*Part of My Soul Went with Him*, 1985, revised 1986), and Hilda Bernstein (*The World That Was Ours*, 1967). Because of its potential political impact, much life writing was banned, including most of the aforementioned texts and everything by banned or listed persons, such as Ruth First's biography of Olive Schreiner, Bloke Modisane's *Blame Me on History* (1963), and Mary Benson's biography of Luthuli. Prison memoirs were also banned: Ruth First's *117 Days* (1965), Albie Sachs's *Jail Diary* (1966), Quentin Jacobsen's *Solitary in Johannesburg* (1974), Hugh Lewin's *Bandiet: Seven Years in a South African Prison* (1981), Tim Jenkins's *Escape from Pretoria* (1987), and Caesarina Kona Makoere's *No Child's Play: In Prison under Apartheid* (1988) are but a sample. Breyten Breytenbach's *The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist* (1984) is a notable exception; it escaped banning.

As apartheid intensified, life writing reflected a growing democratization. Of the 143 (English and Afrikaans) autobiographies listed by Rowse Ushpol in 1958, 142 are by whites. (These racial labels reflect contemporary usage; earlier in the 20th century "racism" meant antagonism between Afrikaner and English whites.) In the 1950s only two black South Africans published their autobiographies (Abrahams and Mphahlele), but by the 1980s life writing by black South Africans outnumbered that of whites by about four to three. Moreover, greater diversity in terms of the subjects' class and gender occurred. Women subjects were increasingly common: prominent white women such as Sarah Gertrude Millin, Louwtjie Barnard (ex-wife of the heart surgeon Christiaan Barnard), the athlete Zola Budd, and the actresses Moira Lister and Barbara Kinghorn were joined by activists such as Helen Joseph, Frances Baard, Helen Suzman, Norma Kitson, Janet Levine, and Pauline Podbrey. The first black woman autobiographer was Noni Jabavu (*The Ochre People*, 1963). After Elsa Joubert's semi-fictionalized biography of "Poppie Nongena" (*Die Swerfjare van Poppie Nongena*, 1978; *Poppie Nongena*), black women's published life writing also multiplied, with texts such as Kuzwayo's innovatively addressing a black readership. Collections of life stories devoted to women include *Working Women* (by Lesley Lawson, edited by Helene Perold, 1985), *Vukani Makosikazi* (edited by Jane Barrett *et al.* 1985), *Sibambene: The Voices of Women at Mboza* (edited by Hanlie Griesel 1987), *Lives of Courage* (by Diana Russell, 1989), Barbara Schreiner's anthology of women's prison writings, *A Snake with Ice Water* (1992), and de-individuated accounts such as Belinda Bozzoli's *Women of Phokeng* (1991).

Regarding class, the learned elite who were the subjects of earlier life writing were joined by members of the uneducated poor, such as *The Story of Mboma* (by Kathy Bond, 1979), *The Sun Shall Rise for the Workers* (by Mandlenkosi Makhoba, 1984), and *A Working Life, Cruel beyond Belief* (by Alfred Qabula, 1989). These testimonies also addressed the semi-literate masses, with some, such as *We Came to Town* (by Caroline Kerfoot, 1985), emerging from – and designed to be used in – literacy classes.

Democratization is evident also in the published works of indigenous self-representational poetry: Trevor Cope's collection (*Izibongo*, 1968) recorded the praise poems of Zulu royalty and chiefs, whereas Liz Gunner and Mafika Gwala's text (*Musho! Zulu Popular Praises*, 1991) included those of ordinary Zulus. Publication aside, the diversified vernacular oral tradition was important throughout the apartheid period. These non-narrative poems (*izibongo* in Zulu and Xhosa, and *lithoko* and *lifela* in Sotho), performed by the subject or other community members, generally blur the distinction between the autobiographical and the biographical, since authorship is rarely specified. Although they typically focus on the individual, the praises of heroic figures such as the historic Zulu leader Shaka were nevertheless instrumental in creating pride and a spirit of resistance in the oppressed. Praises are less common now (especially among the urban population) and narrative prose life writing (usually in English) has been increasing (with some evocative linguistic medleys such as Godfrey Moloi's *My Life*, volume 1, 1987). English and print were the favoured media because of the greater potential audience and also because English was popularly perceived to be the language of liberation.

As the range of authors and subjects broadened, forms of life writing diversified. In addition to conventional Western-style prose narratives, such as Richard Rive's *Writing Black* (1981) and Frieda Matthews's *Reminiscences* (1987), there are researcher-authored records, such as the aforementioned compilations and Carol Hermer's anthropological *The Diary of Maria Tholo* (1980), Tim Keegan's oral history (*Facing the*

Storm, 1988), and Shula Marks's edition of the correspondence of three women, entitled *Not Either an Experimental Doll* (1987). There are also the postmodernist experiments of Breyten Breytenbach and Lyndall Gordon (*Shared Lives*, 1992) and a small number of auto/biographical dramas (e.g. the musical adaptation of Nat Nakasa's story of the boxer King Kong Dlamini, *King Kong: An African Jazz Opera*, edited by Harold Bloom, 1961; the cast's adventures are recounted in Todd Matshikiza's *Chocolates for My Wife*, 1961). Other plays include Stephen Gray's *Schreiner* (1983) and Athol Fugard's autobiographical *Master Harold and the Boys* (1982).

The political context notwithstanding, some South Africans continued to produce apolitical life stories. Ulf Boberg (*The Boberg Story*, 1957), Ernie Duffield (*Through My Binoculars*, 1982), and Ruth Gordon (*Alive, Alive, O!*, 1984) – all white South Africans – give little indication of the socio-political context. Such insularity was not possible for everyone: Natie Ferriera (*The Story of An Afrikaner: Die Revolusie van die Kinders?,* 1980) and Riaan Malan (*My Traitor's Heart*, 1990) are guilt-stricken. Numerous stories by activists record rejections of apartheid: there is Alan Paton's *Apartheid and the Archbishop* (1973), Norma Kitson's *Where Sixpence Lives* (1987), Pauline Podbrey's *White Girl in Search of the Party* (1993), and Carl Niehaus's *Om Te Veg Vir Hoop* (1993).

Apart from biographies of Nationalist political leaders (usually in Afrikaans), texts supporting apartheid are scarce. A sample includes J. D'Oliviera's on Vorster (1977), and homages to H.F. Verwoerd (by Marie van Heerden, 1984, and Gert Scholtz, 1974) and P.W. Botha (by Dirk and Johanna de Villiers, *c.*1984). Little known is *Independence My Way* (1976) by the "Bantustan" leader Kaizer Matanzima.

The post-apartheid "new South Africa" is characterized by a desire for historical resolution, which finds its apotheosis in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Political transformation is, however, blunted by the lingering inequalities of apartheid, and life writing reflects both the continuities and the changes.

Astonishingly (given the fact that there are five times more black South Africans than whites), life writing published since 1994 with white subjects outnumbers that with black subjects by roughly three to one, thus reversing the trend manifested in the last decade of apartheid. The reasons may include a lack of desire or need on the part of black South Africans to recall oppression or adjust to political liberation. Those in power may be too busy running the country (while the rest struggle to survive). Furthermore, the oral testimony of victims, published by white researchers, has dwindled, possibly because such work now seems patronizing or appropriative. (Notable exceptions are K. Limakatso Kendall's edition *Singing Away the Hunger* on the life of Mpho 'M'atsepo Nthunya (1996), Margaret McCord's *The Calling of Katie Makanya* (1995), and Charles van Onselen's award-winning biography, *The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper* (1996)). Most probably, however, the reversal indicates that testimony was indeed perceived as a crucial weapon in the struggle; liberation having been achieved, this need no longer exists.

Since 1994, three broad categories of auto/biographical production are discernible, the first two continuing narrative traditions practised during apartheid. The group comprising personal memoirs includes texts such as Mary Holroyd's *Weigh-Less Forever* (1997) and Kate Turkington's *There's More to Life than Surface* (1998), which barely discuss apartheid. Given that no black South Africans could be unaffected by racism, these apolitical accounts are all written by whites.

The second group, comprising life stories that recover portions of history or experience suppressed by the apartheid regime, remains important in post-apartheid South Africa as the full extent of the state's deception comes to light. Examples include the stories of activists such as Nelson Mandela (in his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom* (1994), numerous biographies, and *Goodbye Bafana* (1995) by Mandela's jailor, James Gregory), Thabo Mbeki, Eddie Daniels, Ronnie Kasrils, and Joe Slovo (*Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*, 1995). Slovo's daughter, Gillian, tries to make sense of her parents' lives and her mother's death in *Every Secret Thing: My Family, My Country* (1997). Mamphela Ramphele's *A Life* (1995) documents her involvement with Biko and the Black Consciousness movement.

The third category responds to the demise of apartheid. Some texts represent attempts to reconcile the African and European worlds: whereas William Makgoba's *Mokoko: The Makgoba Affair* (1997) and Wilfred Cibane's *Man of Two Worlds* (1998) are not primarily concerned with personal transmutation (unsurprisingly, since the colonized have always been obliged to adapt to the hegemony), white South Africans such as Sarah Penny, Peggy Norton, Antjie Krog, Ian Player, Breyten Breytenbach, Nicki Arden, and Wilhelm Verwoerd (grandson of the architect of apartheid) interrogate alternative truths and negotiate self-transformation. Penny's *The Whiteness of Bones* (1997) problematizes her racialized identity, and Arden recounts how, in training to become a *sangoma* (a traditional African healer and diviner), she resolves the conflict between contradictory value systems by capitulating to African traditions. Player reverses the cliché of the white man bringing enlightenment to Africa; gradually overcoming his "civilized" European norms, he absorbs the wisdom of his illiterate Zulu mentor.

But political change has prompted many to seek accommodation in the "new" South Africa, and not all engage in profound self-scrutiny. The former prime minister F.W. de Klerk exonerates Nationalists as "products of [their] time and circumstances". His narrative of the dismantling of apartheid (*The Last Trek: A New Beginning*, 1998) is, however, undermined by Jacques Pauw (*Into the Heart of Darkness*, 1997) and Eugene de Kock (*Long Night's Damage*, 1998), who reveal secret governmental involvement in torture, murder, gun-running, fraud, and theft.

De Kock's book was apparently an attempt to publicize his Truth and Reconciliation Commission amnesty application. Two other narratives – by George Bizos (*No One to Blame?*, 1998) and Antije Krog (*Country of My Skull*, 1998) – also arose in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Whereas Bizos's call for understanding for the perpetrators emerges from a position of difference from – and superiority to – Afrikaner Nationalists, Krog and Wilhelm Verwoerd (*My Winds of Change*, 1997) must negotiate shame and guilt to achieve self-reconciliation and the acceptance of their (reconstituted) Afrikaner identities.

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Apologias

An apologia is a defence. Often anglicized as "apology", this form of life writing may also be understood as a justification or as the elaboration or clarification of a problem or issue. In ancient Greece the term apologia referred to a kind of speech delivered for forensic purposes. The division of Plato's *Apologia* (written 4th century BCE; *Apology of Socrates*) into two main parts (excluding the farewell address) corresponds to the two principal speeches that the accused in Socrates' position was to deliver: the speech of defence proper and, in the case of conviction, a speech proposing a counter-penalty. While Xenophon's *Apologia* (4th century BCE; *Apology of Socrates to the Jury*) makes mention of the latter speech, its primary focus is on Socrates' innocence of the charges that Meletus had brought against him.

In literary dictionaries and encyclopedias in English, the examples of the apologia that one is likely to find most often are Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, Sir Philip Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* (1595, also published as *The Defence of Poesy*), and John Henry Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864). Whether the focus is on an art form, a way of life, or an individual person's decisions, the apologia carries with it the purpose of defence. In the case of autobiographical writing, the apologia can resemble confession, with its introspective focus and articulation of the writer's convictions. Further, because of the apologia's tendency to develop philosophical and theological themes, it can also at times bear family resemblances to such modes of dispute as polemic or even the philosophical dialogue. A related kind of writing is apologetics, the defence of a people or faith, as one finds in the Greek historian Josephus' *Against Apion* (written 1st century CE) and the theologian Tertullian's *Apologeticum* (written 2nd century CE; *Apology for the Christians*). For further treatments of specifically religious and theological traditions of apologetics, one may find helpful entries in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, and *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*.

Since apologias tend to arise from controversy, their focus is generally on answering an accusation or set of accusations. Even when the apologia is not addressed specifically to a jury, legal language can remain relevant to it. As Walter E. Houghton writes of Cardinal Newman in his *Apologia*, "he appealed to the British public as if to a jury and predicted that he would vanquish 'not only my Accuser, but my judges'". Writing on Spanish autobiography, James D. Fernandez also points out the significance of conflict in the apologia, in his definition of the form as "a verbal self-defense before one's contemporaries", thus emphasizing that the writing of an apologia "signals an intense engagement with the here and now". Fernandez contrasts the here-and-now address of apology to the act of apostrophe, the direct address of someone who is absent, of an abstraction, or of God, and then goes on to point out that many works of autobiography employ both apology and apostrophe. In fact, many addresses of apostrophe would seem to have apologetic concerns, in that they are addresses that the writer means her or his contemporaries to overhear and to be persuaded by. One might discern something of the reverse dynamic occurring in certain apologias; while the address is directed most pointedly to the writer's or speaker's accuser, it is also meant to appeal to a wider audience, and for the sake of defending more than the speaker or writer alone. Thus, while Plato's *Apology for Socrates* addresses itself most directly to the Athenian jury, it also addresses itself to "the Athenian public at large, and even other Greeks, if they are interested" (Slings), and it works as a defence not only of Socrates, but also of the philosophical way of life that Socrates represents. The writer and orator Apuleius in his *Apologia* (written 2nd century CE), in which he is responding to charges of sorcery, explicitly states his dual purpose of "clearing philosophy of the aspersions cast upon her by the uninstructed and of proving my own innocence". Nevertheless, even within such a broad focus of argument, the here-and-now and particular will often still show. In the midst of defending certain tenets of his faith, the poet John Milton, in his *Apology against a Pamphlet Called A Modest Confutation* (1642), offers an explanation of how he spends his mornings. Before Apuleius takes up the charge of sorcery, he answers the charges that he cleans his teeth with powder, writes amatory verses, owns a mirror, and lives in a state of poverty.

Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* works particularly well as an example of the complexity of the kinds of defence that can circulate through a single text. The work grew out of a dispute with Charles Kingsley over whether Newman recognized truth as a value in itself, and while Newman does defend his belief in the value of truth, he also defends, for example, his decision to become a Roman Catholic, as well as the legitimacy of the Roman Catholic Church. Further, the tension between the here-and-now circumstances that gave rise to the text and Newman's concerns to make appeals beyond these circumstances shows in the revisions of the work and its title. The first edition (1864), which was composed of the pamphlets that Newman published on successive Thursdays from 21 April to 2 June 1864, along

with an appendix, was entitled *Apologia Pro Vita Sua: Being a Reply to a Pamphlet Entitled "What, Then, Does Dr Newman Mean?"*. The second edition (1865) shifts the emphasis of the work in part by deleting the first two sections, which deal primarily with Kingsley's charges, and changing the title to *History of My Religious Opinions*. The title of the fourth edition (1873) illustrates how effectively this personal and religious history carries with it the apologetic purposes that motivated its initial writing: *Apologia Pro Vita Sua: Being a History of His Religious Opinions*.

Even with its emphasis on defence, the apologia allows for a variety of possibilities. For example, the accuser, the accusation, and the speaker can be fictitious, as in Robert Browning's "Bishop Blougram's Apology" (1855). While the bishop's defence of his worldly and sybaritic way of life may be loosely based on Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman (1802–65), the apologetic monologue becomes an occasion for Browning to do what he does in many other poems, explore the ambiguities of the character's thought and experience. French essayist Montaigne's *Apologie de Raimond Sebond* (1580; *Apology for Raymond Sebond*) becomes an occasion for an extended meditation on the limits of human knowledge. In *An Apology for the Life of Mr Colley Cibber, Comedian* (1740), the writer, a major actor and playwright, not only defends himself against his many detractors, but also provides a rather intimate view of a part of the history of the British theatre. *An Apology for the Life of James Fennel* (1814) reads largely as a cautionary tale about the possible dangers of generosity and profligacy. Finally, lest anyone form the impression, from reading many of the works mentioned here, that the apologia is exclusively a domain of bitter conflict, vituperation, or narrowly defined philosophical and theological dispute, it may be advisable to read Robert Louis Stevenson's "Apology for Idlers" (1881).

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Arabic Autobiography

Autobiographical writing has a very long and rich history in Arabic letters, and it is possible to trace it back to the intensely personal poetry written in pre-Islamic and early Islamic times. Poetry, as the oldest, most revered, and best loved of Arabic literary genres, was the vehicle through which Arab poets not only expressed their personal passions, grievances, and contentions but also recorded their history. Such was the fascination of Arabs with poetry that poems were learned by heart and handed down orally from one generation to the next. This helped keep the personal stories of poets and the history of their societies vivid and alive in the minds of subsequent generations, long before the tradition of recording personal histories in autobiographies actually started. It is this tendency to juxtapose the personal and the public that was to become a salient feature of the tradition of autobiographical writing in Arabic.

One of the earliest autobiographies in Arabic was written by the religious scholar, mystic, and philosopher al-Ghazālī (1058–1111). He was born in a village near Tūs in the Persian province of Khurasan and had a brilliant teaching career at the theological academy in Baghdad, but underwent a spiritual crisis that drove him suddenly to renounce his professorship and withdraw from the world. His spiritual development and search for truth are traced in his autobiographical work entitled *al-Munqidh min al dalāl* ("The Deliverer from Error"). In this autobiography he records his struggle to keep his sanity under the burden of scepticism and the compulsion he felt to regain his faith. Doubt, according to him, was a disease that could be overcome only through God's grace, His benign intervention, and the divine light He reveals out of His infinite mercy. It is hardly surprising, then, that this autobiography has often been compared to the *Confessions* of Augustine (written *c.*397–400).

There is little doubt that al-Ghazālī's work has a distinct place in the history of Arabic autobiographical writing not only because it explores with forcefulness and forthrightness the intimate nature of the Sufi (mystic) experience but, more importantly, because the personal element in it is given far more weight and importance than the public. This is where it diverges from the mainstream Arabic autobiographical tradition, in which personal and public elements were often fairly well balanced. A prominent example of this balance can be found in the autobiography written by the Arab knight Usāma ibn Munqidh

(1095–1188) under the title *Kitāb al-i'tibār* (literally "Book of Learning", translated as *Memoirs of an Arab-Syrian Gentleman*). It is a gallery of brilliant vignettes chronicling the long struggle against the Crusaders during the 12th century. Usāma recounts his personal experiences and adventures side by side with descriptions of the political and social events of his time, in a simple, direct style, using the vernacular and moving away from the heavily ornate style of literary discourse prevalent during this era. Unlike al-Ghazālī's autobiography, Usāma's work is not pronouncedly philosophical. But if there is one predominant idea that runs throughout the work, it is the conviction, shared no doubt by a great many of his contemporaries, that human life is pre-ordained and pre-determined, that history is but the unfolding of Divine Will.

Of great interest to the history of Arabic autobiographical writing is the book by the philosopher, sociologist, historian, traveller, and politician Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406) entitled *al-Ta'rīf bi-Ibn Khaldūn* [Introducing Ibn Khaldun; French translation as *Voyage d'occident et d'orient*]. Its significance stems from the fact that it brilliantly interweaves personal history with accounts of political and historical events. He gives details of his upbringing, the learned men who taught him, the letters he wrote, and the poems he composed while at the same time offering his perceptive observations on the traditions and customs of the lands he visited during his frequent travels from his native Tunisia to Spain, Morocco, Algeria, and then to Egypt where he was offered a professorship of jurisprudence. He was later appointed as chief judge but was expelled from the post on account of the conspiracies of those he referred to as "enemies" and "intriguers". But beyond all this is his attempt to justify himself, explain his motives, and refute the charges frequently levelled at him that he fomented troubles and participated in rebellions. His autobiography was his attempt to vindicate himself by telling the truth as he himself saw it.

With increased contact between the Arab world and the West in the 19th century there was a revival of interest in the art of autobiography, and writers tried to reconcile the imported Western forms with the indigenous classical models drawn from their Arab heritage. From the 19th century onwards autobiographies proliferated. A prominent example is the autobiography of 'Alī Mubārak (1823–93), Egyptian educationalist, historian, and literary prose writer, who was one of the early Arab scholars to benefit from the educational missions to Europe, the system introduced by Mohammed Ali, the Albanian-born ruler of Egypt in the first half of the 19th century, to establish and strengthen cultural ties between Egypt and Europe. His autobiography, named *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya* [New Plans], was published between 1886 and 1889. It is a monumental work of 20 volumes that combines topographical details of Egypt with historical and personal accounts, written in a simple, factual style. The work, though firmly established within the Arabic tradition of autobiographical writing, bears the imprint of the contact with French literature.

The most influential autobiographical work in modern Arabic letters, however, is no doubt *al Ayyām* by Tāhā Husayn (1889–1973), the outstanding figure of the modernist movement in Arabic literature. It is perhaps one of the most popular works in modern Arabic literature if we judge by the number of reprints of the book. Its popularity is due in part to the great emotional impact of the author's depiction of his early childhood in Upper Egypt and his valiant struggle with blindness. It has a great deal of ironic humour that saves it from descending into melodrama. It appeared in three parts, the first of which was published in book form in 1929 (*An Egyptian Childhood*) and is the record of his early education at the village school up to his departure to study at al-Azhar University in Cairo. The second part, published in 1932 (*The Stream of Days*), deals with his student days at Al-Azhar, and the third part was published in Beirut in 1967 under the title *Memoirs* (*A Passage to France*). Unlike the usual mix of the personal and the public found in most traditional Arabic autobiographies, Tāhā Husayn's work, though conscious of the social and political forces shaping the protagonist's life, remains deeply entrenched in the private and the personal.

Many Arab writers followed in the footsteps of Tāhā Husayn and recorded their own life stories. Most notable among these is the Egyptian Ahmed Amīn (1886–1954), who was given the honorary title of "father of the modern generation" and wrote about his experiences in *Hayātī* (1950–52; *My Life: The Autobiography of an Egyptian Scholar, Writer, and Cultural Leader*). The great Egyptian poet, critic, and biographer 'Abbās Mahmūd al-'Aqqād (1889–1964) wrote his autobiography in two parts, the first entitled *Ana* [meaning "I"] and the second entitled *Hayat qalam* [The Life of a Pen], both published in 1964. Yahyā Haqqi (1905–93), the renowned Egyptian novelist and critic, also recorded his life history in his autobiographical work *Khallihā 'alā Allāh* [1959; Leave It All to God]. Tawfīq al-Hakīm wrote his life story in *Zahrat al-'umr* [1943; The Flower of Life] and *Sijn al-'umr* (1964; *The Prison of Life: An Autobiographical Essay*).

The writing and publication of women's memoirs, journals, and autobiographies in Arabic is mainly a 20th-century phenomenon, brought about undoubtedly by the marked increase in the number of educated women in the Arab world and by the growing participation of women in public life. Many educated women found the directness of autobiography the best form in which to express their grievances against society. Hudā Sha'rāwī (1879–1947), one of the pioneers of the feminist movement in Egypt, who called for the liberation of women from the shackles of conventions and defied society by taking off her veil in public, recorded her life history in the mid-1940s in her book *Mudhakkirāti* (not published until 1981; *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist 1879–1924*). In it she tells of her aristocratic upbringing, the segregated life she led, her growing awareness of the constraints imposed on the women of her generation, and her determination to fight for their independence. Through the very act of writing this autobiography, Hudā Sha'rāwī was challenging the dominant patriarchy as well as the potent tradition, taken very much for granted in her society, that women should always observe silence, especially concerning their private lives.

The last three decades of the 20th century have witnessed the proliferation of autobiographies written by Arab women throughout the Arab world. The Moroccan writer Leila Abū Zayd wrote in 1993 about her childhood experiences in her book *Ruju'ila al-tufulah* (*Return to Childhood: The Memoir of a Modern Moroccan Woman*). The Palestinian poet Fadwa Tuqan in her autobiography *Rihla Jabaleyya* (1985; *A Mountainous Journey: An Autobiography*) described her childhood and her growing awareness of what it meant to be a woman in

an Arab society. Moreover, with women's increased participation in political life, many of them went through the trauma of political imprisonment on ideological grounds. The harrowing experience of incarceration was faithfully and poignantly recorded by the Egyptian writer Latīfa al-Zayyāt in her autobiographical work *Hamlat Taftīsh* (1992; *The Search: Personal Papers*) and by the Egyptian feminist writer Nawāl al-Sa'dāwī in *Mudhakkirātī fī sijn al-nisā* (1983; *Memoirs from the Women's Prison*).

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Arabic Biography

In the first decades of the 7th century CE the "dawn of Islam" as a *da'wa* or message to the Arabs and the world at large marked the birth of a new and vigorous nation soon to face the requirements of statehood. The necessary functions of clerks and interpreters gave rise to the need to teach their children "to read and write and shoot and ride" on the injunction of the Prophet Muhammad himself.

The rich tradition of pre-Islamic poetry, narratives of famous wars, tribal feuds, and heroic exploits (the *ayyām al-'Arab*) and their *ansab* (genealogy), their myths and proverbs had all been orally circulated and transmitted from one generation to the next. Recorded Arabic literature starts with Islam; the originally oral nature of the medium of transmission stamped all recorded information with the need to trace the chain of authority back through a number of informers to the original trustworthy source. Pre-Islamic biographical information orally transmitted by one *rāwī* (narrator) after another was later incorporated in the work of historians and biographers. The family tree of every character of note was meticulously preserved, elaborated, and expounded by *huffaz* who were part genealogists and part wise men and bards. The practice continued in all works of Arabic/Islamic scholarship until the end of the Middle Ages.

The art of biography was early described in Arabic as *'ilm* (a science), i.e. a work of learning and scholarship. The general term was *tarjama* (interpretation), now more commonly used for translation. The verb *tarjama li* meant to write a biography, with the name of the subject following. Because one of the earliest biographies of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, wives, and followers was the *Tabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd (d. 845), *tabaqāt* often came to be used to indicate works of biography. The term *tabaqāt* (generations) was used by Ibn Sa'd to indicate his system of classifying his material according to generation. In general *trajim* (pl.) were classified under *tabaqāt*, *wafayāt* (dates of death) generally of notables, with a subdivision of *a'mar* (age by decade at time of death). There were also *maghāzī* (military expeditions) of subjects, as well as *manāqib* (virtues) of princes, noblemen, etc., a continuation of pre-Islamic culture.

Most Muslim scholars engaged in historiography, and it has been estimated that more than half of Arabic literature consists of historical works, which do not stop with the annals of historians such as al-Tabarī (839–923) or Ibn al-Athīr (1160–1233) or public and general collections such as the *Murūj al-dhahab* (*Meadows of Gold*) by geographer and historian al-Ma'sūdī (*c.*896–956), but include for the greater part a host of biographies. Biographers also exceeded the mere presentation of biographical data, more often including incidents and public events to which their subjects were witnesses, participants, or simply contemporary. A 15th-century biography compilation of *tabaqāt* ("Generations of Shafie Imams") provides important historical information covering more than five centuries, including the great catastrophe of the Mogul invasion, *akhbār* (accounts) of Genghis Khan and his grandson Hulako, as well as events of the Crusades. The same could be said of the great biographical compilations, for example, the *Wafayāt al-a'yān* of Ibn Khillikān (d. 1282).

Modern readers are often impressed by the wonderful variety of classifications adopted by historians in their biographical compilations: companions of the Prophet and his followers, readers and interpreters of the Qu'rān, the Faqīhs of the four doctrines, *muhaditheen* (traditionists) and *Ruwah* (transmitters), the Fundamentalists, the *Shi'a* and *Mu'tazilah* (rejectionists), the *Zuhhad* (ascetic-hermits) and *Sufies*, artists and poets, linguists and grammarians, physicians, wise men and philosophers, judges, caliphs, princes and ministers, historians and genealogists, and biographies of women: an endless list.

Biographical information on individuals was even used in works of geography: for example, Yāqūt's *Mu'jam al-buldān*, and the books of *akhbār* of Mecca, Medina, Egypt, the

Maghrib, and Andalus. A wealth of biographical information is included in the famous annals and histories mentioned above, for no branch of scholarship set out its findings without biographical material for reference, or simply to enlighten and entertain the reader.

Arabic biography *per se* started with the establishment of Islam in Arabia in the 7th century, the death of the Prophet Muhammad (631CE), the conquest of the neighbouring territories of the ancient empires of Rome and Persia, and the infighting of different branches of his family and successors. Muslim historians started with recording the *Sīra* (life course) of the Prophet some decades after his death. A *sīra* is basically a biography, but when the definite article is used "the *sīra*" means the life of the Prophet Muhammad, written down and supported by the ever-growing apparatus of narratives, pronouncements, and traditions (*hadīth*), testimonies and *akhbār*, and *maghāzī*. For almost a century after his death, *qussās* (storytellers) and narrators continued to compile and disseminate stories of his life. Even serious scholars collected information according to the old practice of oral transmission, guaranteed by the authority of *isnād* (the chain of reference), which regularly constituted the method of the *sīra*. The *Sīra* of Ibn Hisham, written more than 100 years after the Prophet's death, is still the most accessible and informative account. It was the main source used by Tāhā Husayn for a literary life of the Prophet, *'Ala Hamish al-Sīra* (1933), a fascinating work in which he admitted giving rein to his imagination, except for matters of faith (*hamish* is the margin of a page, used for notes; also the fringe). The figure of the Prophet that emerges from the *Sīra* is contemplative, charismatic, and deeply humane, a man fond of women and perfume and proud of exceptional sexual prowess, but modest as to his original wealth and status: "I am only the son of a simple Arab woman who ate jerked meat!" The love that millions of Muslims feel for Muhammad has been fed by folk versions of the *Sira* narrated by itinerant bards. *Al-Sīra al-Muhammadia* became part of the repertory of the folk *sha'ir* narrating with a touch of acting in coffee shops, market squares, and before desert tents for centuries past, and now settled in regular troupes financed by ministries or agencies of culture in most Arab countries. Such folk recensions are actively discouraged and often banned outright by modern fundamentalist revivalists.

The wives of the Prophet later named "Mothers of the Faithful" figure prominently in all traditional compilations of history/biography. The first two volumes of the biographical dictionary *Tabaqāt* (9 vols) of the aforementioned Ibn Sa'd devoted to the Prophet give ample space to his wives. In fact the wives, particularly 'Ā'isha, were recognized sources of *isnād*, though some later editors described the *isnād* of some of them as "weak", that is, not entirely reliable. A number of them were later singled out for separate biographical studies, for all had important family and clan affiliations and the marriage contract often marked the sealing of a political alliance or pact of non-interference.

The two wives most favoured by biographers to this day are Khadijah bint Khuwailed (d. 621), Mohammad's first wife and staunch supporter, and 'Ā'isha, daughter of Abu Bakr, his first convert and the first of his companions to succeed him. 'Ā'isha was only 18 when he died, and has been described as "Muhammad's Beloved". Modern Muslim scholars have used the lives of these two women to demonstrate the honoured position of women in Islam. 'Ā'isha 'Abd al-Rahmān (Bint al-Shāti', 1912–74) wrote a series of modern biographical studies in *Nisa al-Nabi* (*Wives of the Prophet*), devoting a volume to each of the principal wives. Muslim feminists also made 'Ā'isha their own: Nabia Abbott wrote *Aishah the Beloved of Mohammed* (1942), breaking new ground. She stresses the important role of Khadijah in Muhammad's career. A wealthy widow of noble family, Khadijah employed the dreamy Muhammad, 15 years her junior, on missions of trust. Impressed by his integrity, she sent a proposal of marriage to her handsome young agent. They were happily married, and she believed in his mission and protected him against the malice of Quraish. She was the only one of his wives to give him children, and he never took another wife in her lifetime. Khadijah's ministering care of Muhammad when he was stricken after visions of the Angel of God and her support of him by consulting wise hermits have been widely elaborated in later studies and folk narratives.

The romance of 'Ā'isha, the child wife who came into the Prophet's house as a little girl playing with her dolls, fired Nabia Abbott's imagination. There has always been a wealth of information in classical Arabic sources on 'Ā'isha, or ascribed to her. Her career as the Widow of the Prophet, trying to further the interest of her family, and leading troops against Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, has gained her a place in the gallery of cursed devils of the *shi'a*.

Modern Arabic literature is greatly influenced by works of biography written in modern European languages; the old sources are ransacked for information, but the biographical style is more along the lines of Thomas Carlyle, André Maurois, or Maksim Gork'ii. Deeply impressed by Carlyle, the poet and literary critic 'Abbās Mahmūd al-'Aqqād (1889–1964) wrote a series of biographies under the title *'Abqariya* (genius): the "Genius of Omar", the "Genius of Abu Bakr", and the "Genius of Khalid ibn al-Walid" (the great general of Islam). They have been very popular, repeatedly published in cheap editions and set for school reading. His last work of this kind, the "Genius of Jesus" (1952), is not so widely known.

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Arabic Travel Writing

For the Arabs inhabiting the Arabian Peninsula in the first millennium CE, travelling was a way of life. They had to travel not only in search of water but also in order to trade with more prosperous neighbouring nations, hence the traditional annual journey north to Syria in the summer and south to Yemen in the winter. It is hardly surprising, then, that such a people should have a rich literary heritage dealing with their experiences while travelling to other lands, the references to which can still be found in the poetry they composed, recited, and handed down orally to later generations. It was after Islam and the expansion of Muslim domains that travelling became more closely associated with the love of learning and the spirit of scientific enquiry. Sciences such as geography, history, sociology, and astronomy were nurtured by the observations supplied by the ardent and dedicated Arab travellers.

The earliest Arab travellers to leave written records of their journeys lived in the 9th century and were mostly linguists and geographers. One of these was al-Mas'ūdī (*c.*896–957). He was a historian and traveller, and he had no settled abode for most of his adult life. He was named "Herodotus of the Arabs", travelling as he did as far as Syria, Iran, Armenia, the shores of the Caspian Sea, the Indus Valley, Ceylon, Oman in Arabia, and the east coast of Africa. He was the first Arab to combine history and scientific geography in a large-scale work, *Murūj al-dhahab wa ma'ādin al-Jawhar* (literally "The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems", translated as *Meadows of Gold*). In it he stresses the importance of travels to "learn the peculiarities of various nations and parts of the world" and devotes whole chapters to describing the history, geography, social life, and religious customs of non-Islamic lands, such as India, Greece, and Rome. The problem with al-Mas'ūdī, however, was that he sometimes recounted what he learnt from the people he met on his travels uncritically. But he was genuinely interested in different social systems and in different religions, including Hinduism and Zoroastrianism, as well as Judaism and Christianity.

Muhammad ibn al-Idrīsī (1100–65/66), the Arab geographer and traveller, combined accounts of his travels with the sciences of geography and astronomy. He spent much of his early life travelling in North Africa, Spain, and many parts of western Europe, including Portugal, northern Spain, the French Atlantic coast, and southern England, visiting Asia Minor when he was barely 16 years old. Around 1145 he entered the service of Roger II of Sicily. This resulted in the completion of three major geographic works, the most important of which is the great work of descriptive geography known as *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq* [The Pleasure Excursion of One Who is Eager to Traverse the Regions of the World], and also as *Kitāb Rujār*, or *al-Kitāb ar-Rujārī* [The Book of Roger] after his patron, the Sicilian king Roger II. In compiling it, al-Idrīsī combined material from Arabic and Greek geographical works with information obtained through first-hand observation and eye-witness reports. It is recognized as a serious attempt to combine descriptive and astronomical geography and is particularly valuable for its data on such regions as the Mediterranean basin and the Balkans.

Travel literature came to its peak with Ibn Battūta (1304–68/69 or 1377), the greatest medieval Arab traveller and the author of one of the most famous travel books, the *Rihlat* (*Travels*). It describes his extensive travels, estimated at 75,000 miles, to almost all the Muslim countries and to regions as far afield as China and Sumatra, rightly earning him the title "the traveller of Islam". Ibn Battūta embarked on his travelling career by going on the pilgrimage to Mecca. At first his purpose was to fulfil this religious duty and to study under famous scholars in the Near East (Egypt, Syria, and Hejaz). But he was seized by an irresistible passion for travel, and he decided to visit as many parts of the world as possible, vowing "never to travel any road a second time". While his contemporaries travelled for practical reasons (such as trade, pilgrimage, and education), Ibn Battūta enjoyed travelling for its own sake, for the joy of learning about new countries and new peoples, and in the process making a living out of it. He enjoyed the generosity and benevolence of numerous sultans, rulers, governors, and high dignitaries in the countries he visited, thus securing an income that enabled him to continue his wanderings.

His *Rihla*, as his book is commonly known, is an important social, cultural and political document. Because of its wealth of detail it is used as a source book for the history of the Muslim world. Ibn Battūta's reliability is accepted in general, although there are a few instances of discrepancies that can be accounted for by lapses of memory rather than by wilful distortion on his part. The book is also interesting in that it reveals to the reader the reactions and opinions of an average middle-class Muslim of the 14th century.

In modern times, travel writing has taken a very different shape. Gone is the link between travelling and geography and other sciences. Travel accounts and narratives became largely the domain of fiction writers recounting their experiences in foreign lands, especially Europe. From the beginning of the 19th century onwards, the Arab world looked to the West for knowledge, science, and progress. Since many Arabs travelled for the sake of studying at European institutions, they went home with countless impressions that they wished to record creatively, hence the proliferation of what came to be known as "travel fiction". The most notable examples of this are the Egyptian writer Tawfiq al-Hakīm's (*c.*1902–87) novel *'Usfūr min al-sharq* (1938; *Bird of the East*), the Lebanese writer Suhayl Idris's (b. 1923) *al-Hayy al-Lātīnī* (1954; *The Latin Quarter*), and the Sudanese novelist al Tayyib Sālih's (b. 1929) *Mawsim al-hijra ilā al-shimāl* (1965; *Season of Migration to the North*).

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Archives

In the case of famous men and women, and above all writers, their life writing is normally preserved in manuscript form by their families and by universities and research institutes. However, a number of institutions also archive life writings by ordinary people. They deal with diaries, letters, and autobiographies, but also other family writings, collections of poems, recipe-books, and other materials. Often these institutions are linked to universities, but sometimes they are independent, created exclusively to archive life writing. Most of the latter are in Europe and North America, where the tradition of archiving this kind of material started at the beginning of the 20th century.

We can distinguish three "generations" of this type of institution: the first is linked to intellectual traditions engaged in the rebirth of a nation; the second is a consequence of fieldwork in history and sociology in the middle part of the 20th century, when these studies were concerned, above all, with specific social groups (women, workers, young people, and so on); the third is the generation of "archives of the self", founded not to gather material for research in the social sciences, but to claim the right to archive autobiographical writings from both well-known individuals and ordinary people.

The method of collecting material varies according to the activities and the particular focus of an archive. Very often, an archive is also a centre for research. Historically, material has been collected through the gathering of ethnological data, the organization of autobiographical contests, the creation of a net of correspondents, or appeals to people (by radio and newspapers) to send in their personal writings. Although globally there are an enormous number of archives with a declared interest in life writing, particularly in North America and Australasia, there has been little organizational coordination or intellectual analysis of these as a group. There are, however, a number of European institutions that belong to a network and share an explicit identity as archives created explicitly to house life writing, and deserve extended comment here. It should be said, however, that archives elsewhere generally follow the pattern of "three generations" outlined above.

Finland has pioneered the archiving of life writing in Europe. The State Archives contain collections of life writings produced by important families (the most ancient dating from 17th century) and from various professionals such as statesmen, politicians, businessmen, civil servants, clergymen, scientists, and successful artists. Literary studies of the *Kalevala*, the great Finnish epic poem, which carried considerable significance during the constitution of the Finnish nation, led to the collection of (oral) life histories, then to the gathering of life writing. The Folklore Archive of the Finnish Literature Society, for example, has been collecting the life histories of ordinary elderly men and women since at least 1923. Nevertheless, it is quite impossible to know how many of these texts it contains today, because a large part of this material, in an archive system concentrating on folklore, has been classified as being of literary origin, as "fiction" or booklore. In contrast, the Literature Archive of the Finnish Literature Society, the central archive for literary research in Finland, contains autobiographies of young writers produced in response to a competition held by the Otava publishing company in 1972. There are also other Finnish archives that collect life writing: the National Board of Antiquities, whose oldest life-history materials (in the ethnological section) date from 1900, the Workers' Archive, and the People's Archives, where sociologists work on the life writings of ordinary people.

These latter Finnish institutions collect life writing through autobiographical contests, a method originating in Poland, which owns the oldest and richest autobiographical archives in the world. After the studies that led to the publication of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918–20), a study on Polish emigration in the United States (in collaboration with William I. Thomas at the University of Chicago) using the letters and autobiographies of emigrants, the sociologist Florian Znaniecki returned to Poland, where in 1921 he founded the Sociological Institute and organized the first autobiographical contest. The method, which consisted of asking people from specific social groups to submit their autobiographies and giving a prize to the "best one", spread throughout the whole of Poland where the intelligentsia was committed to the reconstitution of a "national memory" following the regaining of Polish independence in 1918. Some of these texts, which were published regularly, were considered a sort of popular literature and enjoyed great success. Autobiographical contests were subsequently organized by universities and cultural institutes, but also by newspapers and radio stations. The materials obtained were kept by the organizing institutions, or were given to the archives. Today there are three archives of life writings in Poland: the oldest, the Pamietnikarstwo Polskie, contains more than 500,000 autobiographical texts; the more recent ones, Karta and the Archive of the Popular Polish Republic, both founded in 1980, held 4200 autobiographical texts by 1999. Additionally the National Library of Warsaw's manuscript department contains life writings of ordinary people, as well as important historical figures, with the earliest dating back to the 15th century.

In Britain, an original centre, created in 1937, is the Mass Observation project, founded by the anthropologist Tom Harrisson, the documentary maker Humphrey Jennings, and the surrealist poet Charles Madge, in order to develop a method of analysing English society from the inside. This project of "self-anthropology", by which the theories of surrealist poetry were applied as a scientific method, was based on personal writings and on written observations of society produced by ordinary people. A panel of correspondents either answered open-ended questionnaires on specific matters, called *directives*, or submitted personal diaries which provided a particularly rich source of information on everyday life during World War II. The project was revived as an archive in 1981 at the University of Sussex, Brighton, and a new panel has been recording everyday life in Britain since 1981. It is, however, the only archive that works primarily with a panel of correspondents (currently 400–strong), whose identity is protected by the allocation of personal membership numbers which they attach to the texts they send.

The "second generation" archives in Europe are found primarily in Germany, Austria, and Italy, all founded in the 1970s and 1980s. In Germany, the University of Bochum houses the Bochumer Auswandererbrief-Sammlung (5000 emigrants' letters); another, the Archiv Kindheit-Jugend in Siegen, concentrates on the personal writings of young people:

diaries, letters, and essays written for a contest organized in 1983, but also drawings, photos, and a very good library of childhood autobiographies, most of which are already published. Other centres include the Deutsches Gedächtnis of the University of Hagen (which contains chiefly oral histories, but also the Rössler-Archiv für Schuleraufsetzen, a collection of 80,000 essays and a number of short autobiographies written by young people between 1948 and 1956) and the Erzählarchiv in Tübingen, where there are several hundred unpublished autobiographies by minor writers and lesser literary "professionals". These centres are normally linked to universities, but in Germany there is one significant exception: an archive created by a writer, Walter Kempowski. In 1979 he asked people, via newspapers and the radio, to send him their personal and family writings in order to give him "historical data" for his work. Following this, he wrote and published a large number of novels, and, most importantly, he received around 5000 autobiographical texts; he collected these and created in Hamburg the Kempowski-Archiv für unpublizierte [unpublished] Biographien.

The activities of these bodies are varied: they often operate simultaneously as archives, research centres, publishers (of the texts they receive), and museums (see for example the Deutsches Gedächtnis, publisher of the review *Bios: Zeitschrift für Biographieforschung und Oral History*). In this sense, the most active are the Dokumentation lebensgeschichtlicher Aufzeichnungen in Vienna, which is also the source of an archive on the personal writings of women, the Frauennachlässe (which inspired a group of Czechoslovakian historians to create a similarly titled centre in Prague), and the Archivio della Scrittura Popolare in Trento, Italy. The Archivio's researchers have so far concentrated on memories of World War I and have founded a Federation of Italian Life-Writing Archives, which organizes an annual symposium for Italian students of autobiographical writings. By 2001 this archive was to open a section that would contain correspondence received from famous historical, literary, and media figures. In such centres, often created to record history "from below", and where material arrives spontaneously, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, literary historians, psychologists, and linguists can find rich data.

In all the archives mentioned above (which, unless otherwise specified, contain several hundred texts) the authors are generally well known and all the texts are read and catalogued (title, length, contents, historical events the author has lived through, famous people he or she has met, places he or she lived in or travelled to, and so on). In the first and second "generations" of archives the works are also often published; in the third publication is rarer, but the rights always belong to the authors.

Among the "third generation" of archives one can find a number of centres founded since the 1980s not by researchers, but by people interested in writing and conserving life writing, a genre considered as a creative democratic act that every individual has the capability of producing. These centres include: the Archivio Diaristico Nazionale in Italy (Pieve Santo Stefano; 4200 texts); the Association pour l'Autobiographie (co-founded by the autobiography theorist Philippe Lejeune, in Ambérieu en Bugey; more than 1000 texts) and Vivre et l'Ecrire (Orléans; hundreds of diaries and thousands of letters by young people, not catalogued) in France; the Tagebuch-Archiv (Emmendingen; 200 texts) in Germany; and the Arxiu Memoria Popular (La Roca del Vallés; fewer than 100 texts) in Spain. These archives are very varied, because they respond to different social needs: the Italian centre is a municipal institution, founded by journalist Saverino Tutino to give everyone the right to "make history", and to obtain an "archive of the present" using the method of the autobiographical contest; the Association pour l'Autobiographie, on the other hand, is an association where members read the texts of the other members, meet regularly, publish a review, and refuse to institute any competition or publications, to stress that their organization focuses on meetings around the "autobiographical act and experience". The German Tagebuch-Archiv archive is a communal institution, which local politicians encourage to gather the memories of ordinary people to rebuild a national history; it refuses the contest method and gives a number of public readings of the texts it receives. In contrast, the Spanish Arxiu Memoria Popular is built on the Italian model.

In the United States and Canada, life-writing materials tend to exist rather more as sub-categories of large, general historical, sociological, literary, or folkloric collections, which have emerged on the lines of the second and third generations of the European archives. Notable centres include: the Library of Congress (Washington), as in the Congressional Archives; the Harry Ransom Centre at the University of Texas (Austin) which holds much on British literature that came on the market in the 1950s; Harvard University's Houghton Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts), and the Widener as well; Yale University's Bieneke Library; the Huntington Library in Pasedena, California; the Newberry in Chicago; the principal library at Berkeley, California; the Fales at New York University; the main library at the University of Indiana, which has huge collections in medieval and folklore studies; and the American Antiquarian Society (Worcester, Massachusetts), an extensive library of original editions of books published by American authors. For African American texts, the Schomburg Center in New York is an important source (the Schomberg Library of 19th-century black women writers series, edited by Henry Louis Gates, is a published archive in a sense). In Canada, there is the Library of Canada in Ottawa, and the Thomas Fischer Library, part of the Roberts Library complex at the University of Toronto.

In Australia, the terms "life writing" and "life history" are generally not used in relation to archives. Collection managers instead use the term "personal papers" to cover a variety of material. Each state (and the federal government) has a major publicly funded library that also has a manuscripts section. The manuscripts section actively seeks out personal papers, and these often include diaries, letters, and other kinds of autobiographical writings. Most of these libraries also have important oral-history collections, the biggest and oldest such collection being that of the National Library of Australia.

These state and federal institutions sometimes also fund projects specifically designed to gather what might be termed "life histories" (although this is not what the institutions call them). A notable example is the "Bringing Them Home Oral History Project", funded by the commonwealth government, and organized by the National Library of Australia. The project arose out of the report of the "National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Children from Their Families". Its aim is to collect and preserve a range of stories

(with eventual publication of some material) from the Australian indigenous people and others involved in the process of child removals, and is seen as an important step in the process of reconciliation between the indigenous people and other Australians. This initiative reflects the broad trend, outlined earlier in this essay, in which archives are used to review the constitution of national identity, particularly appropriate in the postcolonial world.

The principal remaining archival/manuscript collections containing personal papers are based in universities. Again, some universities also house oral-history projects to help build up the "life history" side of their collections (though again, this particular terminology is not current). One such collection is the Oral History Program in the University of New South Wales Archives, which not only collects interviews, but also uses survey-based work, where, through in-depth questionnaires, respondents essentially write their memoirs in reply to specific questions. The subjects are also encouraged to donate other material about their lives (including photographs, notebooks, journals, etc.). This kind of survey-based work, like much of that in Europe, arose out of fieldwork in the disciplines of history and sociology.

The Australian War Memorial is a publicly funded national institution that includes a substantial research collection. It is a major resource for material on Australian military history, the armed forces, and the sociological aspects of war. Of relevance to life writing is its substantial collection of private records donated by veterans from all walks of life and socio-economic classes, including letters, postcards, diaries, manuscripts, and interviews. They cover the lives of soldiers not only in wartime, but also before and after war service.

Finally, it is worth noting that there are also some important private collections, which have been established to document personal lives along with social movements. These include the Australian Gay and Lesbian Archives in Melbourne and the Jesse Street Women's Library and Archive, which documents feminism in Australia.

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Arenas, Reinaldo 1943–1990

Cuban novelist, poet, and autobiographer

Traditional autobiography often involves authors' narrative subordination of their younger selves with the aim of recounting supposedly real experience in the past to explain their current situations. According to these terms, the Cuban Reinaldo Arenas's swan song, *Antes que anochezca* (1992; *Before Night Falls: A Memoir*), finished shortly before his suicide, in anticipation of his imminent death from AIDS, might be considered a perverse text. Its narrative authority is shattered by situational dispersal, represented by a structure consisting of a series of interrelated but self-expository vignettes and liberal quotation from, or allusions to, his own or others' texts. Grotesque exaggeration and caricature also help to undermine autobiographical authenticity in an inversion of the autobiographical grounding of much of Arenas's fiction.

If death is the spur to writing his autobiography, textuality promises Arenas a way of prolonging life beyond his own physical death as well as a space where the representation of oppressive figures in his life, particularly Fidel Castro, allows the opportunity for revenge through extreme condemnation, defamation, and ridicule. While Castroist Cuba is represented as the Inferno that Arenas directly blames for his own death, his reverent homage to one of his mentors, Virgilio Piñera, and his prayer to him at the beginning of the autobiography, asking for enough time to finish his final work, installs Piñera as a Caribbean Virgil. Piñera's death in Cuba in 1979 as a disgraced writer and his subsequent revival in Arenas's text perhaps rehearses Arenas's own wish to be reborn as a literary point of reference for Cuban writers in the future, to whom he bequeaths his life/story.

As an integral part of the account of his life as a child and adult, the book dwells on Arenas's discovery, gleeful pursuit, and assertion of his homosexuality, an orientation that he claims is widespread even among the most stereotypical representatives of Cuban machismo. (As a full-length gay autobiography in a non-western context, the book is, however, still quite unusual.) The tone and style of his representation of Cuban homosexuality range among the picaresque, the Arcadian, the righteously angry, and the scandalously crude. Against the background of hypocritical Caribbean homophobia, of which the Cuban Revolution's persecution of homosexuals, including Arenas, has been but one manifestation, Arenas's literary shock tactics are unashamedly clear. But beyond these, homosexuality comes to represent one aspect of the freedom Arenas craves throughout the account of his life, and at whose denial, primarily by the Castro regime, he rages. It is interesting in this respect that the descriptions of his earliest sexual escapades, when he was about six years old, are juxtaposed with celebrations of the landscape and natural world of the Cuban countryside, where he spent his childhood. Such nostalgia for his roots is counterpointed with the defiantly rootless freedom afforded by his writing, the conditions for which are constituted painfully by internal exile, on the run from the Cuban authorities, or fairly high-profile dissidence abroad as part of the Cuban diaspora.

Arenas associates such nostalgia and the painful freedom of his subsequent life with two women: his grandmother and his mother. To the first (an illiterate peasant woman but also a repository of folk culture, belief, and imaginative skills such as storytelling) he attributes his sense of life's mystery and hidden possibilities, and to the second (who taught him the actual skills of reading and writing), his literacy. In fact, Arenas places women at the centre of Cuban life as those at the hub of family life, as the spur to his own development as a writer, and at the gates of popular and high culture. His father is absent from the beginning of Reinaldo's life, having abandoned the writer's mother before he was born. The matrilinearity of Arenas's formation thus contests the patriarchal authority of Caribbean machismo and, as he presents it, the Cuban Revolution.

The staging posts of Arenas's personal history – from rural backwater, to the stultifying provincialism of the town of Holguín, to the cultural excitement and sexual promise of city life in Havana, and finally metropolitan life in the United States – do not form a progressive map towards freedom. In all these locations, any measure of freedom is delimited but also provoked into defiant existence by oppressive limitations. These are, respectively, *machista* rural values so prevalent that Arenas is wracked with guilt as a child for his first sexual escapades; the seeds of disillusionment, sown by the revolution he fervently supported after arriving in Holguín; the full brunt of state oppression suffered by him following his artistic acclaim and gay relationships in the capital; and the crassness of American life in general and Cuban American life in particular, as well as the physical ravages and social stigma attached to any AIDS sufferer. The very title of the autobiography communicates the ethos of struggling against crushing limitations: having to write before the darkness of nightfall when he was on the run and living in Havana's Lenin Park, and snatching some semblance of life and agency from disease and imminent death.

At all levels, Arenas's text attempts to undermine authority and reclaim a true revolutionary freedom that might break the bounds imposed by not only political contingency but also the biological limits of the autobiographer's life.

JOHN D. PERIVOLARIS

Biography
Born in the province of Holguín, Cuba, 16 July 1943. His formal education was sketchy and he was largely self-taught. Researcher at José Martí National Library in Havana, 1963–68: befriended by Eliseo Diego, Cintio Vitier, and other intellectuals who worked there. Published *Celestino antes del alba* (*Singing from the Well*), the first of five semi-autobiographical novels, 1967. Editor of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, 1968–74. Had manuscripts confiscated and was denied access to employment. Imprisoned in El Morro, Havana, 1974–76. Left Cuba during the Mariel exodus in 1980. Published *La vieja Rosa* (*Old Rosa*), the first of a cycle of short novels, 1980. Professor of Cuban literature, University of Florida, 1980; Professor of literature, Cornell University,

1985. Also published poetry, notably *Leprosorio* [1989; The Leper Colony]. Became terminally ill with AIDS. Committed suicide in New York, 7 December 1990.

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Arnim, Bettina Brentano-von 1785–1859

German letter writer

The life writing of Bettina [or Bettine] Brentano-von Arnim should not be read as an attempt to represent factual events. In the three epistolary texts in question – *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde* (1835; *Goethe's Correspondence with a Child*), *Die Günderode* (1840; translated as *Günderode* or *Correspondence of Fräulein Günderode and Bettine von Arnim*), and *Clemens Brentanos Frühlingskranz* [1844; Clemens Brentano's Spring Wreath] – Brentano-von Arnim reconstructs her relations to these friends and relatives in a way at once more greatly subjective and more greatly objective. Each text is based on actual correspondence between the author and the person named in the title, but in each case the epistolary material has been radically enhanced and/or altered.

Literary critics have been most disturbed by the factual inaccuracies in Brentano-von Arnim's Goethe text. The most notable example is a letter the author allegedly received from Goethe's mother, one she dated after Frau Rath Goethe had died. However, this is a trivial error compared with the bemoaned misrepresentation of her relationship to the great poet. Brentano-von Arnim had met Goethe, written him admiring letters, and received a few responses in a distant tone. The relationship she portrays is one in which, for instance, she becomes the muse for poems he actually wrote for other occasions and to other people. While the actual correspondence is rather brief, her epistolary Goethe text is very lengthy. This, Brentano-von Arnim's first publication, is the one with which she probably took the most liberties. However, it is unlikely that any of these objections would have unnerved Brentano-von Arnim in the slightest. For this late-Romantic author reality existed on a different plane from actuality, and her subjective representation of this relationship may be considered true for her perception of it. Brentano-von Arnim's portrait of her admiration for the poet (who is not presented uncritically) and their imagined relationship charts the development of her own interest in the aesthetic and literary ideals of Goethe, her own muse, to whom she wrote this monument.

Die Günderode portrays the author's friendship with the poet Karoline von Günderode (1780–1806), which lasted from 1804 until the poet's suicide. Brentano-von Arnim characterizes the interchange in the relationship as occurring between friends with vastly different philosophies and views on aesthetics. Günderode argues for a view of life and authorship that resembles the prevailing one, while Bettina Brentano proposes one that integrates spontaneity into art and aesthetics into life. Hers is an essentially Romantic view of the inseparability of art and life, but without the characteristic Romantic attraction to the primacy of the Ideal. For Brentano-von Arnim failure to enhance daily reality suffocates life. This theme is further modulated in her third epistolary text, a correspondence with her brother, the Romantic poet Clemens Brentano (1778–1842). The early intimacy of their relationship is gradually destroyed as he recommends, even insists, that she adopt behaviour appropriate for a conventional young woman. They are his Romantic ideals of feminine behaviour, and she ultimately rejects them as stifling her aesthetic, personal, and social desires. Of the two, she is the one concerned to create a new reality and integrate her ideals into daily life.

Read in their biographical order, rather than the order of publication, these texts present a view of Brentano-von Arnim's development as one that occurred in and through these essential relationships. Although the concept of unique "personality" formed the core of her self-understanding, the conceptualization of her "self" and her development is exclusively a relational one. Throughout these texts, named after her correspondents, her growth is conditioned by their "personalities". They represent simultaneously a portion of her "self" as well as the limits or options she ultimately rejects for the sake of her "self". Thus, for all the subjectivity of the texts, Brentano-von Arnim has given us a more open view of the development of her personality, one which the reader must labour to interpret.

According to reports Brentano-von Arnim spent many hours reworking these texts, polishing the "spontaneous" style. In addition to these biographical epistolary texts (some refer to them as novels), she wrote other epistolary or conversational texts with a greater political content: *Dies Buch gehört dem König* [1843; The King's Book], and *Gespräche mit Dämonen* [1852; Conversations with Demons]. Since her death various portions of her actual correspondence have been published. Unfortunately, although much of her correspondence with Goethe is extant, very little of her original correspondence with Karoline von Günderode or with her brother Clemens has survived.

KATHERINE R. GOODMAN

Biography

Born Catharina Elisabetha Ludovica Magdalena Brentano in the German city of Frankfurt-am-Main, 4 April 1785; sister of the Romantic poet Clemens Brentano. Brought up by her grandmother, the writer Sophie von La Roche, after her mother's early death. Educated at a convent in Fritzlar, 1794–97, then in Offenbach, Frankfurt, and Marburg. Became a friend of Goethe, whom she met in 1807. Married the Romantic poet Ludwig Achim von Arnim, 1811: seven children. Spent some of her married life on their estate, Wiepersdorf. Moved to Berlin without her husband, 1817. Hosted a literary and political salon; associated with Ludwig Tieck, the Grimm brothers, the

Humboldt brothers, Friedrich Jacobi, and F. Schleiermacher; was also acquainted with Beethoven, Franz Liszt, and Hans Christian Andersen. Began her literary career after her husband's death in 1831. Oversaw the publication of a complete edition of his works. Died in Berlin, 20 January 1859.

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Artifacts and Life Writing

In a broad sense, any personal possession can be considered an auto/biographical artifact. Through the use of insignia, some possessions extend their biographical role by claiming affiliation between the biographical subject and a personally significant group – a clan, religious order, profession, school, military unit, sports team, etc. Some objects, however, embody a more self-aware and deliberate connection between subject and life narrative. The following account explores suggestively rather than exhaustively the autobiographical function of such artifacts.

The role of artifacts in life writing can be divided into two broad categories: objects that physically encode auto/biographical information, and objects that have been preserved due to their auto/biographical associations. Both categories participate in the tension between the discursive and the figural that characterizes the relationship between word and image. For this reason, auto/biographical artifacts may be difficult to interpret for an observer not already acquainted with the life data represented through the object.

In addition, as Mircea Eliade points out: "The use of an object clearly influences the beholder's presumptions and associations: function guides the projection that the beholder makes. This phenomenon is also familiar from literature, where the reader's expectations are shaped by the literary genre" ("Iconography").

The practice of graphically representing biographical information predates writing, but writing does not fully replace it. Historically, biographical artifacts have more often been approached anthropologically than textually. For example, funerary objects that indicate the social rank, profession, or gender of the deceased tend to be interpreted by anthropologists in terms of categorical rather than individual significance, although they could not attain the latter without representing the former.

The category of objects that physically encode auto/biographical information can be further divided into those that literally incorporate materials from the subject's life and those that merely represent elements of that life pictorially or graphically. The former, smaller subset is exemplified by quilts made from textiles woven or worn by the subject, or Victorian mourning pictures and brooches made from the hair of the deceased. The larger subset includes such phenomena as totem poles, kente cloth, or Australian "dreamings", among other things, which tend to broaden the subject of life inscription from the individual to the communal.

Although non-verbal in content, auto/biographical artifacts can be approached textually. Totem poles and appliquéd quilts operate pictographically, while kente cloth, pieced quilts, and Australian "dreamings" operate hieroglyphically. The former present the viewer with images that are apprehensible either literally or symbolically, while the latter group is more likely to present design value than information value to the uninitiated observer.

A totem pole is "read" from top to bottom, although the largest, most important figure appears at its base. The crest image traditionally identifies the supernatural creature through which a human, by means of a marvellous encounter with the creature, establishes an ancestral connection to divinity; however, since a crest could also be acquired through marriage or by conquest of an enemy family, as well as traded, given as compensation, or appropriated from a family line that had become extinct, it becomes difficult to interpret a totem pole accurately when it is separated from its familial provenance.

Grand in scale like totem poles, quilts provide a broad canvas for the representation of the maker's relationships, ideologies, and tastes. A quilt may depict portraits of loved ones or admired political figures, or it can function as a graphic witness to significant life events such as birth, attainment of majority, marriage, and death. The "album" quilt incorporates not only personally relevant imagery but inscriptions such as names, addresses, dates, statements of relationships, personal messages, and literary quotations which may be inked, stamped, or embroidered on white spaces in the patterns. In such quilts the biographical intention is unambiguous.

When a quilt is not textually augmented it may be difficult to determine whether the use of symbolic imagery such as the American eagle and the Whig rose intends a personal statement

or merely incorporates a motif considered fashionable at the period of its making, unless textual documentation has also been preserved. Even more ambiguous is the biographical content of a pieced quilt of which the geometrical pattern bears a symbolically charged name. The application of the names "Kansas Tears" and "Texas Tears" to the same pattern in different decades of the 19th century points to a specific historical and regional consciousness, but other seemingly political pattern names are known to have been invented by the editors of women's magazines to give a specious *gravitas* to fashion.

Unlike "traditional" tartan (which actually acquired its semiotics of clan affiliation only in the 18th century, after the English conquerors of Scotland lifted a ban they had imposed on its use), kente cloth patterns are rarely linked to specific lineages; an exception is the "Asasia", which can be worn only with the permission of the Asantehene or by descendants inheriting that permission. In Africa, kente cloth patterns are more typically linked to the status of the wearers. The traditional patterns, when their names are known, offer a semiotic representation of historical events, philosophy, and politics, among other themes. As is true for pieced quilt patterns, the significance of the names is not clearly visible in the textile. A contemporary wearer choosing a pattern named after a historical event or a proverb may be making a conscious statement or may be choosing only to please the eye. For African Americans, kente cloth has become a symbol of cultural heritage and pride irrespective of regional origin.

In contrast to kente cloth patterns, the designs of Australian "dreamings" connect strongly both to clan and to land. While the x-ray representations of animal forms in Australian "dreamings" are clearly comprehensible as images of supernatural beings, the geometrical patterns in this art form mediate between the individual present and the ancestral past by encoding the relationship between primordial beings, people, and place. These designs are conceived as extensions of the ancestral beings themselves and are sometimes referred to as their "shadows". Aboriginal women use analogous, but gender-specific, systems of design in their sand drawings.

The information about kinship, class, renown, or relationship to divinity encoded in traditional artifacts may diminish in its communicative power when such artifacts enter the marketplace. Thus American New Deal-era totem pole restoration projects, even though undertaken by the Indian Civilian Conservation Corps, produced such an increase in white attention to the art form that many traditional carvers were tempted to pander to nontraditional tastes, creating works with more aesthetic than documentary value. The non-African wearer of kente cloth is not entitled to the status claims made by the quality and pattern of the fabric, even if she or he fully understands them, while a contemporary quilter may choose to reproduce the pattern New York Beauty merely because it is visually striking, and not out of a wish to make a statement about the Empire State Building or the ability of railroads to penetrate the Adirondack mountains.

At the same time as traditional auto/biographical artifacts can diminish in evocative power through commercialization, commercial products can become "totemized"; gang members may choose off-the-rack garments in identifying colours, for example, while truck drivers in Haiti and Afghanistan intensely personalize their vehicles with paint, beadwork, photographs, and other materials. Another way in which an artifact not originally designed to convey biographical information can be drawn into the nexus of life writing is through its connection to a significant personal event. Souvenirs and scrapbooks accomplish this connection straightforwardly and so are preserved despite their limited intrinsic value, but other kinds of artifacts attain enhanced value from the life narratives used to justify their preservation. Like totem poles, these artifacts frequently commemorate an encounter with a dignitary; for example, a particular quilt is preserved because, in her childhood, its maker gave a dipperful of water to George Washington on his way from New York to Philadelphia. Such heirlooms become the repositories of family folklore as well as the embodiment of intergenerational continuity, which confers on them a value independent of their aesthetic or economic merit.

The auto/biographical function of artifacts, then, is highly contingent on context. Cut off from the communities that create and preserve them, such artifacts may be rendered illegible, translated from the narrative or didactic mode into the discourse of consumption.

JOANNE B. KARPINSKI

See also Visual Arts and Life Writing

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Asian American Life Writing

Asian Americans began emigrating to the United States from the 1840s onwards, and auto/biographical and other accounts of their experiences began to appear from the 1880s. The earliest Asian labour immigrants to America tended to be sojourners, and rarely left behind any English-language accounts of their time in America when they left. However, many other early immigrants, including diplomats, foreign students, and scholars, did write autobiographical accounts of their experiences in America, partly in order to ingratiate themselves with an often hostile, predominantly white, host society. Elaine H. Kim has named these early autobiographers "ambassadors of goodwill", precisely because of their attempts to promote Asians to America. These accounts include Chinese immigrant Lee Yan Phou's *When I Was a Boy in China* (1887), Japanese American Etsu Sugimoto's *A Daughter of the Samurai* (1925), Chinese American Lin Yutang's *My Country and My People* (1937), Korean American Younghill Kang's *East Goes West* (1937), and Filipino American Carlos Bulosan's *America is in the Heart* (1946).

Somewhat outside the main development of Asian American life writing, but worth mentioning, are the turn-of-the-century Chinese Eurasian sisters, Edith Maude Eaton / Sui Sin Far and Winnifred Eaton / Onoto Watanna, who wrote autobiographical narratives exploring their position as biracial subjects in America. Both sisters adopted pseudonyms in order to write: Edith a Chinese-sounding name, and Winnifred a Japanese-sounding name.

The early cultural ambassadors were mainly first-generation immigrants, but their writings were later succeeded by accounts authored by American-born Asians, published in the 1940s and 1950s. These narratives include Chinese American Pardee Lowe's *Father and Glorious Descendent* (1943) and Chinese American Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1945). These Chinese American narratives betray their authors' eagerness to prove their Americanness to a white reading public; but, unlike the earlier autobiographies, this eagerness is coupled with an insistence upon the autobiographers' right to exist in America. Sau-ling C. Wong has termed these writers' work "autobiography as guided Chinatown tour" (in King-kok Cheung), because both texts offer a picture of Chinese America as exotic and different. For these American-born writers, America is their only home, so their texts do not reflect the "between-worlds" conflicts of the earlier narratives to the same extent.

A further group of Chinese American women writers wrote a series of autobiographical pieces from the 1940s onwards. These include Han Suyin's *The Crippled Tree* (1965), *A Mortal Flower* (1966), *Birdless Summer* (1968), *My House Has Two Doors* (1980), and the fictionalized *Destination Chungking* (1942); Helena Kuo's *I've Come a Long Way* (1942); Mai-mai Sze's *Echo of a Cry: A Story Which Began in China* (1945); and a collective autobiography by three sisters, Adet, Anor and Meimei Lin, *Dawn over Chungking* (1941).

These Chinese American life stories have several Japanese American equivalents, although predominantly authored slightly later (between the 1940s and the 1980s). Many Japanese Americans were interned by the United States government during World War II, and much Japanese American life writing during the period 1946–82 focuses on this experience, protesting the treatment of interned Japanese Americans as well as exploring its psychological effects upon the victims. The majority of these narratives are by women, and include Miné Okubo's *Citizen 13660* (1946), Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter* (1953), Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's *Farewell to Manzanar* (1973), and Yoshiko Uchida's *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese-American Family* (1982). Texts by male Japanese Americans include Daniel Inouye and Lawrence Elliot's *Journey to Washington* (1967), and Daniel Okimoto's *American in Disguise* (1981).

The era of the civil rights movements saw catalytic changes in Asian Americans' self-image and a heightened awareness of racial identity for many Asian American writers. This resulted in a new kind of life writing, far more confident in both style and tone. Many of these more contemporary writings are experimental in form, mixing genres such as autobiography and fiction together. The best known of these is Chinese American Maxine Hong Kingston's pair of memoirs/auto/biographies, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts* (1976) and *China Men* (1980). Both of these texts relate the histories of Kingston's ancestors: *The Woman Warrior* of her female relatives, and *China Men* of her male relatives. *The Woman Warrior*, in particular, has attracted widespread critical attention and acclaim, partly because of Kingston's skilful mixing of genres, and partly because of her weaving together of her autobiography with the biography of her mother and other imagined and real female forebears. Another increasingly well-known example is Korean American Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's multi-genre, experimental text, *Dictee* (1982). Other Korean American life writing includes Mary Paik Lee's *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean American Woman in America* (1990), and Margaret K. Pai's *The Dreams of Two Yi-Min* (1989).

Other recent forms of Asian American life writing include biographical work. Ruth Lum McCunn's fictionalized biography of Chinese American pioneer Lulu Nathoy (Anglicized name Polly Bemis), *Thousand Pieces of Gold* (1981), is one such example. Another Chinese American example is Lisa See's epic biography of her family, *On Gold Mountain: The One-Hundred-Year Odyssey of a Chinese-American Family* (1995). A text that crosses the boundary between biography and literary criticism is Annette White-Parks's literary biography, *Sui Sin Far/Edith Maude Eaton: A Literary Biography* (1995). Japanese American biographical work includes Akemi Kikumura's anthropological/autobiographical texts about her parents, *Through Harsh Winters: The Life of a Japanese Immigrant*

Woman (1981) and *Promises Kept: The Life of an Issei Man* (1991).

One final form of Asian American life writing that bears mention is the recent trend of writing memoir-as-theory. Chief exponents of this kind of writing are the works of South Asian American women writers, including Meena Alexander's *Fault Lines: A Memoir* (1993) and *The Shock of Arrival* (1996), Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days* (1987), and Malayan American Shirley Geok-lin Lim's *Among the White Moon Faces: An Asian American Memoir of Homelands* (1996). Japanese American equivalents include Kyoko Mori's *The Dream of Water: A Memoir* (1995) and Lydia Minatoya's *Talking to High Monks in the Snow: An Asian American Odyssey* (1992).

HELENA GRICE

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Aubrey, John 1626–1697

English writer of biographical sketches

John Aubrey's name is remembered today because it is attached to a work he neither published in his lifetime nor finished, *Aubrey's Brief Lives,* a title that is most frequently encountered in the footnotes of other biographers. In his own time, he was recognized as an antiquarian, having brought to light the megalithic remains at Avebury and produced numerous accounts (also unfinished and unpublished, but circulated in manuscript) of the topography and archaeology of his native Wiltshire, of Surrey, and Stonehenge. A man of insatiable curiosity, with a vast circle of friends, Aubrey in 1667 offered his assistance to the Oxford chronicler Anthony Wood, who was then beginning to compile the *Athenae Oxonienses,* a biographical dictionary of the writers and bishops educated at Oxford. Wood, who was as reclusive and unpopular as Aubrey was convivial, accepted the offer with alacrity, and over the next 20 years set Aubrey on a career of biographical investigation. For Aubrey, the task could not have been more congenial. "I am glad you put me on it", he later wrote to Wood, "I doe it playingly". Aubrey produced his *Lives* – or as he called them, "minutes of lives" – "tumultuarily", setting down thoughts as they occurred to him or as he received his information, supplying far more than the specific facts Wood had requested (personal observations, the recollections of distant connections – often at second or third-hand – gratuitous anecdotes and credulities), but with little regard for order or stylistic nicety. "First draughts ought to be as rude as those of Paynters," he told Wood, "for he that in his first essay will be curious in refining will certainly be unhappy in inventing."

"A biography should either be as long as Boswell's or as short as Aubrey's", Lytton Strachey wrote in an essay on Aubrey. On average, Aubrey's lives were rarely longer than a single page, and he produced 462 of them. The shortest, on Abraham Wheelock, consists of only two words ("Simple man"); the longest, on his good friend the philosopher Thomas Hobbes, runs to about a dozen pages. Aubrey dashed off verbal caricatures that caught and preserved what was most memorable about his subjects. He seized upon details, such as Sir John Denham's eyes ("right goose-gray"), that stared out of a face "unpolished with the smallpox"; they "had a strange Piercingness (like a Momus)" – or Ben Jonson's – one of which was "lower than t'other, and bigger, like Clum the player; perhaps he begott Clum". He reported that John Milton pronounced the letter "R" "very hard – a certaine signe of a Satyricall Witt"; that the poet Sir John Suckling was one of the best bowlers in England, but was bad at cards; that Hobbes "would drinke to excesse to have the benefit of Vomiting, which he did easily". He records the dispositions in terms of the four humours of his subjects and, when possible, the precise hours of their births, for astrological purposes, along with the exact locations of their graves. And if a subject brought an interesting bit of oral history to mind, that too would be included. Indeed, such particulars may be the only justification for commemorating his more obscure subjects. In defence of this practice, Aubrey wrote that "men thinke because every body remembers a memorable accident shortly after tis done, twill never be forgotten, which for want of registering, at last is drowned in Oblivion; which reflection has been a hint that by my meanes many Antiquities have been reskued and preserved".

Such an unmethodical, antiquarian interest in people does not discriminate against rumours and unverifiable beliefs, however, and Aubrey has been generally blamed for his credulousness. He reports that Ben Jonson "killed Mr. Marlow, the Poet, on Bunhill, comeing from the Green-curtain play-house", and, on the authority of Thomas Hobbes, that Francis Bacon died of a cold contracted when he attempted to preserve the flesh of a chicken by stuffing it with snow. Aubrey, in fact, took pains to determine the accuracy of information, and when possible records the names of his informants. For his life of Milton, he checked and rechecked his notes by interviewing the poet's widow, his brother, and nephews; and when he encountered contradictory reports, as in the life of Sir Edward Coke, he registered the two contrary assertions impartially, with the complaint, "What shall one believe?". To Anthony Wood, he made his purpose in the *Lives* clear:

> I here lay-downe to you ... Trueth, and, as neer as I can and that religiously as a Poenitent to his Confessor, nothing but the trueth: the naked and plaine trueth, which is her exposed so bare that the very pudenda are not covered ... So that after your perusall, I must desire you to make a

Castration … and to sowe-on Figge-leaves …

Unfortunately, Wood did not heed this final admonition. In transcribing Aubrey's life of David Jenkins, the Oxford chronicler included the note that Jenkins might have become a Westminster Judge had he "given money to Chancellor Hyde", a lapse for which Wood was fined and expelled from the university, his book publicly burned. Aubrey's authority for the note was Jenkins's.

GEORGE WASSERMAN

Biography
Born in Easton Piercy, a hamlet in the parish of Kington St Michael, Wiltshire, England, 12 March 1626. Educated at local church schools and at Blandford Grammar School, Dorset. Studied law at Trinity College, Oxford, 1642, 1643, and 1646–48 (studies interrupted by illness and the Civil War), and the Middle Temple, London, 1646–48. Returned home after his father's death. Spent much of his time on topographical, antiquarian, and archaeological pursuits; drew attention to the megalithic remains at Avebury, Wiltshire, 1649. Began a ruinous lawsuit concerning his encumbered inheritance, 1656. Researched north Wiltshire for a proposed county history from 1659. Elected fellow of the Royal Society, 1663. Embroiled in lawsuit over his disastrous engagement to Joane Sumner, 1665–69. Forced to sell the last of his estates, 1670, and his books, 1677. Granted crown patent to make antiquarian surveys, 1671; made a tour of Surrey, 1673. Wrote a comedy, *The Country Revell*, never performed. The only work published in his lifetime was *Miscellanies* (1696), a collection of folklore. Died June 1697.

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Augustine, Saint 354–430

Bishop of Hippo and autobiographer

Augustine's magnificent autobiographical *Confessiones* (written *c.*397–400; *Confessions*) has proven perennially captivating not only because it portrays vividly the progress of a life of a great sinner to that of a great saint, or because it portrays the sinner himself with exceptional vivacity, but also because it constitutes a conceptually and philosophically rich piece of life writing. It is also one of the most rigorously sustained undertakings of self-investigation: throughout its pages, as Augustine writes with characteristic rhetorical power, "I probed the hidden depths of my soul and wrung its pitiful secrets from it" (all quotations are from the Pine-Coffin translation).

Augustine, born in Thagaste in Roman north Africa, lived through many of the radical and often dramatic changes in politics, theology, philosophy, and culture at large that together marked the transition from late Roman paganism to early medieval Christianity. As a child he found himself surrounded by the culture of Roman antiquity; nearly 80 years later, as he lay dying, the invading Vandals were advancing rapidly toward his episcopal city of Hippo (now Annaba, Algeria), and early medieval Europe had already taken form out of the steeply declining Roman empire.

Augustine, in writing the most influential of all ancient autobiographies, was honest enough a philosopher to extend his self-analysis into the analysis of memory itself. He observes that, despite virtually all of his experience residing within "the vast cloisters of my memory", despite it being within memory (as he memorably puts it) that we meet ourselves, and despite the prodigious power of memory to plumb its own depths and thus actively to constitute the very subject being investigated, memory is nevertheless insufficient to the task of "understand[ing] all that I am". And in his distinctive philosophical voice, he adds that: "this means, then, that the mind is too narrow to contain itself entirely". Pressing beyond autobiographical self-reflection into its curious reflexive logic, Augustine finds himself lost in what he calls a bewildering maze of conceptual difficulties, deeply puzzled about where that part of the mind could be: "Is it somewhere outside itself and not within it? How, then, can it be part of it, if it is not contained in it?"

As the 13 chapters unfold, we encounter Augustine's boyhood, his early religious instruction, and the famous episode of his stealing pears from a pear tree, which he savoured not for the pears but rather for the taste of his "own sin, which [he] relished and enjoyed", and indeed "it was the sin that gave it flavour"; it is no surprise that he quicky turns from this foundational and metaphorically significant episode to the subject of "lustful caresses" and "unchaste love". He proceeds chronologically through his self-indulgent time in Carthage, his moving description of the death of a friend, his writing a book on Beauty and Proportion, his Manichean and Neoplatonic periods, his advancement from the literal to the figurative interpretation of scripture, his philosophizing concerning the nature of God and the explanation of evil, his long (and unsteadily prepared) conversion and baptism, and the death of Monica, his mother. At this point (chapters 10–13) the autobiographical writing changes to more purely philosophical and conceptual reflection on problems such as memory, time, creation, form, and matter, and he closes the book with a rigorously sustained allegorical interpretation of the final chapter of Genesis. This rather sudden textual division has provoked debate concerning the true end of the *Confessions* as composed by Augustine, with some arguing that Monica's death at the close of chapter nine was the intended end of the autobiography. Be that as it may, we are extremely fortunate to have the last four chapters for all their

intricate conceptual richness, and indeed we might argue that without seeing the philosopher Augustine we are not seeing the whole Augustine.

It is of the essence to Augustine's thought that, when recounting the experiences of his infancy and youth, he seizes the opportunity to reflect on the nature of language and language-acquisition. He reports that he noticed associations between sounds made and objects in the world and thus came to name the one with the other; he observes (placing emotional experience both logically and psychologically prior to language) that he recognizes jealousy in a baby who does not yet know how to talk and yet "whenever he [the baby] saw his foster-brother at the breast, he would grow pale with envy". And he learned the "language" of adult facial and bodily gestures as well, relating them to his growing grasp of linguistic meaning. He reflects on his boyhood, noting that he was "a great sinner for so small a boy"; progresses in adolescence to his lust and its consequences – noting in retrospect that, introducing a distinction from Plato (to whom, along with Aristotle, he is considerably indebted), he was happy only on the level of appearance; and, although unbeknown to himself at the time (and thus beginning the debate over self-interpretive revisionism), he was most unhappily suffering in hedonistic anti-salvation. He examines his early subscription to the bifurcated philosophy of the Manicheans. They were followers of Mani, born 216CE in Babylonia, the founder of an influential religion whose central tenet concerned the dualism of good versus evil, where the origins of each are not derived from the same ultimate source but rather stand as metaphysically separate and theologically distinct forces of Light and Darkness, and where both are corruptibly intermingled in embodied humanity. Augustine then examines his subsequent disillusionment over their inability to reconcile their doctrine to empirically proven scientific facts.

As an intellectually engaged member of the cultural world of late Roman antiquity, Augustine had an education that placed much emphasis on literary, and particularly rhetorical, study. This emphasis on the masters of Greek and Roman epic and drama clearly shows in his own refined rhetorical facility, and one of his early worldly ambitions was satisfied with the appointment to a chair of rhetoric in Milan. But, like the culture around him, Augustine's mind was in transition, and he records throughout the *Confessions* a growing suspicion of rhetoric and its inherent dangers of making the false position appear, through rhetorical redecoration, persuasive: he thanks God for having taught him "that a statement is not necessarily true because it is wrapped in fine language or false because it is awkwardly expressed". Always the philosopher, Augustine quickly articulates the converse, that "an assertion is not necessarily true because it is badly expressed or false because it is finely spoken". And, in his distinct philosophical-autobiographical style, he shows an inward suspicion of rhetorical persuasion that parallels his outward suspicion of the rhetorical charm of writers – he is vigilant against the dangers of self-deception, and particularly so, given his background, to the variety of self-deception that is linguistically or propositionally stabilized. Modern readers of the *Confessions* may not always be convinced that Augustine is immune to that particular danger; his recounting of the heartbreaking necessity of breaking off with his beloved mistress to marry (so heartbroken he took another mistress to fill the void) can give rise to questions of whether he is protesting his own sins too much, and perhaps satisfying a desire to make the absent lover present (rhetorically if not physically) in a way inconsistent with his textual self-definition.

It is, again, in the final philosophical chapters of this adventurous study of selfhood that we find a famous encounter with the problem of evil (if God is omnipotent and benevolent, how can we explain the presence of evil in the world?) and an equally famous encounter with the problem of the nature of time (how can we make sense of the question of what God was doing *before* creation? What was before the beginning of time?). In the former, evil is reconstrued as a privation, as an absence not yet saturated by goodness and not something substantive in and of itself; in the latter, time is reconstrued not as a self-subsistent entity but rather as a form of *relations* between temporal events, thus precluding nonsensical rhetoric concerning the time when there was no time. Contained within these remarks is an implicit salutary warning concerning not only the conceptual dangers of rhetoric, or of grammatical appearance, but also the necessity of a particular context for intelligibility. Those issues, along with many others related to Augustine's great project of self-investigation, have been taken up throughout the history of philosophy, and the lengthy list of important thinkers that his work has influenced includes Anselm, Aquinas, Petrarch, Dante, Luther, Pascal, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Wittgenstein. Moreover, in the centuries following Augustine's death, there developed within theology what came to be known as Augustinianism or the Augustinian tradition, which, eventually closely linked to the Franciscan Order but widely influential beyond those boundaries, largely dominated medieval thought until the time of Thomas Aquinas and the subsequent legacy of Aristotelian Thomism throughout the late-medieval intellectual world. Augustinians drew from all of Augustine's voluminous and fortunately well-preserved writings, and, among other tenets, posited faith as a precondition for understanding (codified in Anselm's maxim *Credo ut intelligam*: "I believe in order to understand"); they also posited that the human being is a composite of soul and body where the former is (temporarily) using the latter and – resonant with the general idea of the *Confessions* if not invariably with its exact content – that the soul has direct knowledge of itself (and it is plausible to believe that Augustine exerted a decisive influence on Descartes's conception of the interior self). But, most centrally, it is in the *Confessions* that we see the conceptually nuanced encounter of the self with that self's representation in language. As such, Augustine's work established a genre of philosophical autobiography defined through moral crisis, self-examination, and confession that has been canonized from Wilhelm Dilthey to Françoise Lionnet as the origin and pattern of Western autobiography.

GARRY L. HAGBERG

Biography

Born Aurelius Augustinus in Thagaste (now Souk Ahras, Algeria) in the Roman province of Numidia, 13 November 354CE. Brought up as a Christian by his mother, Monica; his father Patricius was a pagan. Educated in rhetoric in nearby Madauros (now Mdaourouch), and went to Carthage to study rhetoric, 371. Abandoned Christianity. Had one son with his concubine, *c.*373. Adopted Manichaeism, 374. Taught rhetoric in Thagaste, 375–76, in Carthage, 376–83. Became disillusioned with Manichaeism, 383. Sailed to Rome, 383, and turned to Neoplatonism. Taught rhetoric in Milan, where he met Ambrose the bishop, 384–86. Converted to Christianity, 386: baptized by Ambrose,

387. Mother died, 387. Returned to Africa, 388, and established a monastic community at Thagaste. Son died, 390(?). Was ordained priest in Hippo Regius (now Annaba, Algeria), 391, and became its bishop, 395. Wrote his autobiography, the *Confessions*. Contended with the Donatist schism, Pelagian heresy, and Vandal invasions, and wrote *De Trinitate* (*On the Trinity*) and *De civitate Dei* (*The City of God*) in response, among other works. Was the first Christian theologian to elaborate the doctrine of human salvation through divine grace. Died in Hippo, 28 August 430CE. (Feast day: 28 August.)

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Aung San Suu Kyi 1945–

Burmese political leader and dissident

Freedom, human rights, and the restoration of democracy in her native Burma are Aung San Suu Kyi's principal concerns. Appropriately, this Burmese humanitarian's first collection of life writing, published in 1991, is titled *Freedom from Fear*. Daughter of Aung San (as well as his biographer), Burma's most prominent nationalist leader, Suu grew up with a sense of being closely identified with the destiny of her country. As early as 1972, she writes to her husband, the late English Oxford professor Michael Aris, "I only ask one thing, that should my people need me, you would help me do my duty to them". *Freedom from Fear* reflects the aspirations and apprehensions of the Burmese people, always central to Suu's sense of mission.

Structured around a collection of essays, letters, speeches, and interviews, the subject matter of which ranges from biography and politics to literature, this collection resists easy generic classification. The common theme recurring in all her political writings, and this collection is no exception, is the quest for democracy under a tyrannical regime, be it the British Empire or the indigenous Burmese military dictatorship. Divided into two sections by the editor, Aris, the first section "The Inheritance" is primarily engaged with colonial Burma. Suu, as an actively participating presence, is remarkably absent from many of these writings. The essay "My Father" would lead us to anticipate a personalized account of Aung San; instead we are provided with an intellectual, rather than an emotional, understanding of him. Yet, the personal remains yoked to the factual, as the essay "*My* Country and People" (emphasis added) indicates.

Part Two is considerably more eclectic in form, although its subject matter relates exclusively to the violation of human rights in Burma. The first three essays were written for a project that Suu was unable to complete because of her incarceration by the military regime in 1989. Here, occasionally, we are able to see Suu in and through her own writings. For example, in a speech to a mass rally at Shwedagon Pagoda, she defends her role in sustaining democracy in Burma and emphasizes her profound attachment to her country, despite her foreign residence and marriage, thus rejecting the views of detractors who would brandish her foreign links to undermine her.

While most of Suu's other writings are more academic in content, *Letters from Burma,* published in 1997 and written during her internment, reveal Suu's intense preoccupation with the restoration of Burmese democracy as well as providing lingering descriptions of the country. In *The Voice of Hope* (1997), which consists of conversations with the American Burma scholar Alan Clements, she explains in detail why she chose to enter the political fight. She emerges valorous and confident, eager to combat the totalitarian regime head-on. She echoes *Freedom from Fear* when she says: "Fear is very much a habit. People are conditioned to be frightened", echoing her ardent belief that it is truth and freedom from fear that ultimately liberates.

The Voice of Hope is also much more intensely personal than her other writings, perhaps because the genre of "conversations" allows the interviewer to lead the discussion in whichever direction s/he wants to. Clements often directs the conversation to Suu's relationship with her mother, her memory of her father, and the manner in which she has raised her children. Here, Suu

mentions, on her own accord, the pain involved in her decision to return to Burma, leaving her husband and children in England.

Since the interviews for *The Voice of Hope* were conducted 11 months after Suu's release in 1995, the "mood" of this book is more hopeful than her earlier writings. Suu charts her vision of the future of Burma, claiming that the members of her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), are becoming more and more active, and she is optimistic about the popular support enjoyed by the NLD. Suu concludes with a bright vision for Burma and a clarion call to the rest of the world to help Burma restore Aung San's dream – the initiation of a popular democracy. It is characteristic that Suu pushes her personal life to the periphery and instead continues to emphasize her role in the troubled political times in Burma.

PALLAVI RASTOGI

Biography

Born in Rangoon, Burma, 19 June 1945. Her father was Thakin (or Bogyoke) Aung San, leader of Burma's campaign for independence from Britain; he was assassinated in 1947. Educated at St Francis Convent and the Methodist English High School, Rangoon. Went to live in India with her mother, Khin Kyi, who was Burmese ambassador there, 1960. Attended Lady Shri Ram College and studied politics at Delhi University. Studied philosophy, politics, and economics at St Hugh's College, Oxford, 1964–67 (BA). Assistant secretary, Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, United Nations Secretariat, New York, 1969–71. Research officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bhutan, 1972. Married Dr Michael Aris, a British academic working in the field of Asian studies, 1972: two sons. Visiting scholar, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Japan, 1985–86. Fellow, Indian Institute for Advanced Studies, Simla, India, 1987. Returned to Burma to nurse her invalid mother, at a time of popular uprising against the failing government, 1988. Led pro-democracy movement and became general secretary of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD), 1988. Made extensive campaigning tour of Burma as leader of NLD, 1989. Placed under house arrest in Burma by the military government for attempting to disrupt army activity, July 1989. Prevented from running for election, May 1990. Refused to leave Burma, despite being offered freedom, unless country returned to civilian government and political prisoners released, December 1990. Detained incommunicado under house arrest for five years without charge or trial, 1991. Awarded Nobel Peace Prize, 1991, and established Health and Education Trust in support of the Burmese people with the prize money, 1992. Released from house arrest under pressure from the UN and Amnesty International, 1995. Remained in Burma and continued to campaign for democracy and human rights, despite continuing restrictions on her freedom; refused to leave Burma to visit her dying husband in England for fear of being refused re-admittance to the country. Husband died, 1999.

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Aurelius, Marcus 121–180

Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher

This Roman emperor has always enjoyed tremendous respect for his outstanding political and military skills, his extensive education and culture, and significant philosophical life writings. He reflected in many ways the best virtues of the ancient Roman world at a time when it was faced with many military, financial, and political crises, and was also experiencing a series of devastating natural catastrophes. During his reign Marcus Aurelius strongly supported the arts, literature, philosophy, and rhetoric, and he himself practised the philosophy of stoicism, which finds extraordinary expression in his autobiographical *Meditations*. Marcus was considered the last of the five "good emperors" because of his profound concern for the material and spiritual well-being of his people. Under his rule civil law experienced a vast development, since he supported the works of Julian, Gaius, and Papinian, whose writings in turn became the basis for the *Digest* of Justinian. This represents the basis of modern Western law.

Marcus Aurelius was born as Marcus Annius Verus in Rome. His grandfather Annius Verus, a member of the senatorial class, held the office of consul three times. His father, also called Annius Verus, seems to have died when Marcus was still very young. In his youth Marcus had acquired a solid education from his teachers Cornelius Fronto (Latin) and the famous rhetorician and sophist Herodes Atticus (Greek). When he was only 12 years old, he dedicated himself to the study of philosophy and rhetoric, but when he reached the age of 25 years he gained access to Greek literature and philosophy through the writings of the Stoic Aristo of Chios and the teachings of Junius Rusticus.

In 137 Marcus was appointed prefect of the Latin festivities at Rome during the absence of the consuls. In accordance with a common practice among Roman rulers, Marcus was, together with Lucius Verus, adopted by the emperor Antoninus Pius in 138; Antoninus Pius had previously been adopted by Hadrian to guarantee the continuity of the line of emperors. In 139 Antoninus appointed Marcus as Caesar. Lucius became co-regent between 161 and 169, but after the death of Antoninus Pius Marcus assumed the imperial throne by himself and met with general approval and popularity because of his previously outstanding performance in governmental services. During his reign Marcus had to fight enemies along almost all of the Roman borders, especially along the Danube frontier and in Palestine. While on his last campaign against the Marcomanni and Quadi in the area of modern-day Austria he died in Vindobona

(Vienna) on 17 March 180. In his personal life the emperor had to witness the many infidelities of his wife, Faustina the Younger, daughter of Antoninus Pius, whom he had married in 145. His son Commodus proved to be a failure as his heir despite an extensive education. Curiously, Marcus, following the laws set up by his predecessors, persecuted the Christians quite harshly, perhaps because of his strong dedication to the pagan gods and his pantheistic beliefs.

In his literary self-reflections, composed in the Greek language under the title *Ta eis heauton* and consisting of 12 books, he briefly outlines his personal development, his schooling, and the influence of his various teachers and relatives. Primarily, however, these life writings contain aphorisms and a detailed outline of the meaning of Stoic philosophy. In addition, the correspondence with his teacher Cornelius Fronto from 139 to 166/67 and political documents from the time of his reign have come down to us. In so far as the emperor rarely found the time during his military campaigns to compose a traditional autobiography, he relied on aphorisms, epigrams, and maxims, such as "let nothing be done rashly, and at random, but all things according to the most exact and perfect rules of art", or "a man cannot any whither retire better than to his own soul". By contrast, many Roman emperors before him, such as Augustus, Hadrian, and Tiberius, spent much attention on the very personal and even intimate aspects of their lives when they composed their autobiographies. He made profound statements about morality, ethics, human shortcomings, and ways in which to combat them by means of the new Stoic attitude. He composed his text in Greek because it was the language of intellectuals and fully in his command. The extraordinary wisdom expressed in these *Meditations* appealed both to his contemporaries and to posterity. Augustine, for instance, recommended to his flock the reading of Marcus' text as a guide for their own lives.

In the first book the author mentions his grandfather, who was a model of generosity and composure, and his father, who was an example of manly virtues and modesty. From his mother, Domitia Lucilla, he learned piety and kindness, whereas his great-grandfather Catillius Severus had ensured that he would be schooled at home. He praises his teachers for their moral and ethical lessons about moderation, frugality, distaste of arrogance, forgiveness, rationality, tolerance, and acceptance of all other people. He also underscored the need to stay away from tyranny, envy, violence, and force. His father demonstrated to him the value of self-control, honour, temperance, friendship, loyalty, open-mindedness, and love of philosophy. Marcus also emphasized the importance of virginity for men as well as women until they marry.

Marcus believed in divine providence and the harmony of the universe. According to his convictions true happiness does not exist in the external world, but instead can be found only in the soul. All actions and thought should be guided by the awareness of ever-present death, which must be accepted as part of creation. Excessive search for truth will mislead the individual who is recommended to be content with his or her lot. Only philosophy can guide a person through transitory life, and for Marcus this meant a Stoic attitude in every situation and under every circumstance. The true stoic accepts other people as they are, even with their many faults, and tries to correct their failures in a tolerant fashion. All people are created to work in cooperation with society to improve human living conditions. The individual must recognize that he or she is only a small part of nature and will have only a very limited time of life.

ALBRECHT CLASSEN

Biography

Born Marcus Annius Verus in Rome, 26 April 121CE, into a consular family of Spanish origin. Gained the favour of the emperor Hadrian, who made him a Salian priest at the age of eight, supervised his education, and arranged a marriage. Prefect, Latin festivities in Rome, 137. Adopted (as Marcus Aelius Aurelius Verus Caesar) by Hadrian's heir Antoninus Pius, his mother's brother, when he became emperor in 138. Quaestor, 139; consul with Antoninus Pius, 140, and also in 145 and 161. Married Pius' daughter, his cousin Annia Galeria Faustina, 145 (died 176): one daughter and one son. Abandoned study of rhetoric and began to study philosophy, *c.*146–47; influenced by Stoicism. Succeeded Antoninus Pius as emperor, 161. Elevated his fellow consul that year, Lucius Verus, to joint authority with himself. Negotiated with German tribes in Aquileia, 168. Ruled alone after Verus' death in 169. Fought the Marcomanni and Quadi, two Danube tribes, 170–74. Began to write the *Meditations*. Visited Syria and Egypt to settle revolts, 175–76. Raised his son Commodus to rank of Augustus, 177. Fought the Marcomanni again, 177–78. Died 17 March 180CE.

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Australia: 18th- and 19th-Century Auto/biography

The history of Australia is largely a matter of first-person narratives, ranging from the journals of Captain James Cook to the official reports of Arthur Phillip and Watkin Tench of the First Fleet of 1787–88, to explorers' accounts of expeditions into the interior. Written impersonally according to generic expectations, these narratives at first offered little room for self-presentation, but they were soon joined by others that included the self as well as Australia as an object of interest and discovery. The revolutionary event of coming to Australia, either voluntarily or involuntarily, inspired numerous individuals, who doubtless would never have become autobiographers had they stayed at home, with a compulsion to describe that experience. Extremely mixed in terms of class, ethnic origin, gender, wealth, education, occupation, and literary skill, early colonial autobiographies invariably privilege place over self. Prime motives for writing were the need to explain to relatives and friends the extraordinary differences of Australia from "home" and the desire to maintain relationships severed by distance. Sometimes in the case of convict narrators, the motive was one of self-justification, protest, or self-rehabilitation in the form of confession. Two narratives in particular have been seminal for historians and writers of the convict period: the *Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux* (1819) and *The Adventures of Martin Cash* (1870). Other convicts to record their sufferings, remorse, or sense of outrage are Thomas Cook, John Broxup, S. Cockney, James Connor, William Derricourt, Snowden Dunhill, William Delaforce, Thomas Page, William Gates, and J.F. Mortlock. Two of the most remarkable life stories are Joseph Holt's *Memoirs*, republished as *A Rum Story* (1988), which describes the narrator's history from hero of the Wicklow rebellion in Ireland to exile in New South Wales, transportation to Norfolk Island, and shipwreck on the Falkland Islands; and Jorgen Jorgenson's (*A Shred of Autobiography* 1835 and 1838; republished 1981), which contrasts his two visits to Australia, the first in the early 1800s as a young midshipman and the second as a transported convict.

Male autobiographers of this period frequently present themselves in terms of occupation or experience, so that there is a host of personal stories of extraordinary achievement and extraordinary misfortune – by pioneers, naturalists, whalers, seamen, teachers, small settlers, itinerant workers, squatters, military officers, gold diggers, musicians, actors, politicians, ministers of religion, policemen, entrepreneurs, amateur explorers, and adventurers. Extraordinary events are no guarantee of interest, however, and some of the most readable and poignant narratives are the simplest. Education, furthermore, is not always allied with enlightenment, and often the poorly educated reveal more sympathy and understanding of both convicts and Aborigines and more empathy with the landscape than the conventionally educated. Literary skill also seems to be a more random than predictable quality. Some self-consciously literary or "educated" autobiographies now have a dated air, while others, written by unlikely individuals, are vivid and even gripping. Foster Fyans, captain in the British Army and the author of *Memoirs Recorded at Geelong, Victoria, Australia* (written in the 1850s, published in 1986) has a gift for witty satire, and George Hamilton's *Experiences of a Colonist Forty Years Ago, and a Journey from Port Phillip to South Australia in 1839* (1879) manages to make even the droving of cattle humorous and lively.

Significant male narratives written during the colonial period but often not published until the 20th century include Peter Cunningham's *Two Years in New South Wales* (1827), Charles Macalister's *Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South* (1907), George Gordon McCrae's *Recollections of Melbourne and Port Phillip Bay in the Early Forties* (1909, 1911, and 1912), Newland Simpson's memoirs (1926), Roger Therry's *Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in New South Wales* (1863), James Bonwick's *An Octogenarian's Reminiscences* (1902), W.A. Brodribb's *Recollections of an Australian Squatter* (1883), Charles Cozens's *Adventures of a Guardsman* (1848), Edward Curr's *Recollections of Squatting in Victoria, then Called the Port Phillip District, from 1841 to 1851* (1883), Richard Howitt's *Impressions of Australia Felix* (1845), and James Backhouse's *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies* (1843). Alexander Harris's various autobiographical narratives, dense in social detail and presenting rich quarries for historians, are also interesting as examples of Australia's challenge to the self, which in Harris's case led to a series of anonymous and pseudonymous ventures into life writing: a semi-autobiographical novel, *The Emigrant Family* (1849); the more documentary-style *Settlers and Convicts* (1847); a series of articles initially titled "Religio Christi" and published in 1858, which are a reworking of the same material and were subsequently published as *The Secrets of Alexander Harris* (1961); and a more intimate account of his religious conversion, *A Converted Atheist's Testimony to the Truth of Christianity* (1848). Other visitors to Australia from Europe also left remarkable accounts of their experiences, including Havelock Ellis in his *My Life* (1940), Mark Twain in *Following the Equator: A Journey around the World* (1897), and Anthony Trollope in *Australia and New Zealand* (1873).

Women's first-person narratives of this period, often preserved in the form of diaries and letters or family journals, generally record deeper levels of self-awareness as a result of their authors' literary and social confinement to the domestic world. If men were constrained to introduce themselves in terms of occupation, setting themselves within the socio-economic structure of the community, women generally placed themselves within the community of the family, writing as wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers of squatters, missionaries, clergymen, and politicans. Religious experience or physical disability, however, as in Eliza Davies's *An Earnest Life* (1881) and Tilly Aston's *Memoirs* (1946), sometimes provided an excuse for a more independent approach. Two distinguished women writers of the period also wrote their life stories: Ada Cambridge in *Thirty Years in Australia* (1903) and *The Retrospect* (1912), and Rosa

Praed in *My Australian Girlhood* (1902) and *Australian Life: Black and White* (1885).

Significant autobiographies by women include Louisa Meredith's lively and observant *Notes and Sketches of New South Wales* and *My Home in Tasmania* (1852), Sarah Musgrave's *The Wayback* (1926), Jane Watts's *Family Life in South Australia Fifty-Three Years Ago* (1890), Annabella Boswell's *Early Recollections and Gleanings from an Old Journal* (1908), and Ellen Clacy's *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings* (1853). The recent interest in women's diaries and letters from the period suggests that they are often more revealing than publicly conceived memoirs. Annie Baxter Dawbin, for example, the author of a sanitized autobiography, *Memories of the Past* (1873), also left numerous, more frank and inward diaries that Lucy Frost has drawn on in *No Place for a Nervous Lady* (1984) and *Face in the Glass: The Journal and Life of Annie Baxter Dawbin* (1992). Lucy Frost has also edited a critical edition of Dawbin's *Journal* from 1858–68 (1998).

The discovery of gold and the subsequent gold rush resulted in a greatly increased number of narratives after 1850. Prospecting for gold is itself the subject of many of these narratives, and again gender differences are remarkable. Men often write ostensibly to impart mining information or record the history of rushes, successes, and failures; women to record the social fabric of the goldfields in which their own individual experiences as mothers, daughters, or sisters were interwoven. Reading the gold-rush narratives as a select collection reinforces the impression that those who flocked to the fields came from every walk of life and from a great variety of countries. It also reinforces the historical fact that failure, extreme hardship, and even ruin were more familiar experiences than the discovery of wealth. Two of the most striking narratives in this sub-genre are Emily Skinner's *A Woman on the Goldfields: Recollections of Emily Skinner 1854–1878* (1995) and James Armour's *The Diggings, the Bush, and Melbourne* (1864). There are few published biographies in the period although research in recent years has resulted in a host of accounts of major colonial figures. Contemporary accounts include Edwin Hodder's *George Fife Angas: Father and Founder of South Australia* (1891), J.F. Hogan's *The Convict King* [on Jorgen Jorgenson] (1891), Arthur Patchett Martin's *Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Robert Lowe* (1893), John Howlett Ross's *The Laureate of the Centaurs* [on Adam Lindsay Gordon] (1888), and John Morgan's *The Life and Adventures of William Buckley* (1852).

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Australia: 18th- and 19th-Century Diaries and Letters

Paper was a precious commodity in colonial Australia. For many years after the first contingent of British soldiers and convicts set foot on the shores of Botany Bay in 1788, it had to be imported. The value of paper, however, lay not only in its distant origin; words on paper alone could communicate across the vast oceans that separated the British colonists from their kin. Letters and journals began flowing back to Britain immediately, and this paper trail continued for as long as people were transported, either involuntarily or voluntarily, across the southern seas. New selves unfold in 18th- and 19th-century Australian letters and diaries, subjectivities forged both through a confrontation with a strange landscape and people and a volatile, protean society offering unexpected possibilities. These colonists and convicts also strove for continuity, and writing was a powerful tool for negotiating selves poised between past and present.

The letters of Margaret Catchpole (1762–1819) and Mary Reibey (1777–1855) convey the mundane realities of their convict life, a story not only of hard work but also of struggling to understand the architecture of power and policy. Both women eventually gained respectability, Reibey as a trader, and Catchpole as a farmer, shop owner, and midwife. In their pragmatic use of language – petitioning the colonial authorities, relaying agricultural prices to English friends, and so forth – Catchpole and Reibey disclose selves in tune with the political and commercial ethos of the penal society.

William Smith O'Brien (1803–64) and Richard Dillingham (convicted in 1831) represent two extremes of convict experience in the way they could record their lives. Smith O'Brien was an educated and deeply self-aware Irish nationalist British MP convicted of treason in 1848 and transported to Tasmania. Dillingham, an illiterate Bedfordshire rural labourer caught stealing, had his death sentence commuted to Tasmanian exile. Dillingham's autobiography consists of four brief, awkward, and self-effacing letters, dictated to an amanuensis. These sparse missives sketch nine years of his life from his conviction to gaining freedom. They seem intended less to portray the details of his life than to provide evidence of his continuing survival by the mere act of their arrival. The lengthy, elaborate, and highly ritualistic salutations beginning each letter become explicable in this light. By contrast, Smith O'Brien's substantial journal, addressed to his wife in Ireland, mingles introspective musings and intimate discussions with weighty cogitations on politics, punishment, and social life – themes already explored in his published works. Kept in solitary confinement for the first two years of his sentence, Smith O'Brien was able to find solace in the mere act of writing.

The Australian penal colonies, home to thousands of convicts and troubled by wars with the Aboriginal people, were unlikely to be considered appropriate places for ladies, yet the writings of gentlewomen capture best the difficult process of colonial self-invention. On the eve of her departure to New South Wales in 1789, Elizabeth Macarthur (1766?–98) wrote to her mother that she was a "warm advocate" of emigration since she held a "reasonable expectation of reaping the most material advantages". This keen eye for economic advancement was rewarded: