

Citation metadata

Author: Nancy K. Miller
Date: Spring 1994
From: *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* (Vol. 6, Issue 1)
Publisher: Duke University Press
Document Type: Article
Length: 10,499 words

Main content

Abstract :

Women authors use distinctive patterns of self-representation in their autobiographical works. In 1980, Mary Mason claimed that female self-disclosure comes in the form of an alternate identity that denies the phallogocentric system. This hypothesis is confirmed over time in female Western literature, especially in 1970s feminism, which is characterized by difference as a style of relatedness. This perspective of female autobiography can be used to re-examine men's writings and autobiographical theory as well.

[Access from your library](#)

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.

Source Citation

Source Citation

Miller, Nancy K. "Representing others: gender and the subjects of autobiography." *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* vol. 6, no. 1, 1994, p. 1+. Accessed 14 Nov. 2020.

Gale Document Number: GALE|A16642798

Explore

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.

[Access from your library](#)

Footer

- [About](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Accessibility](#)

The main difference between a biography vs. an autobiography is that the author of a biography is not the subject. Biographies include details of key events that shaped the subject's life, and information about their birthplace, education, work, and relationships. Biographers use a number of research sources, including interviews, letters, diaries, photographs, essays, reference books, and newspapers. While a biography is usually in the written form, it can be produced in other formats such as music composition or film. Examples of famous biographies include: *His Excellency: George Washington* An autobiography is a self-written account of the life of oneself. The word "autobiography" was first used deprecatingly by William Taylor in 1797 in the English periodical *The Monthly Review*, when he suggested the word as a hybrid, but condemned it as "pedantic". However, its next recorded use was in its present sense, by Robert Southey in 1809. Despite only being named early in the nineteenth century, first-person autobiographical writing originates in antiquity. Roy Pascal differentiates Helen Buss, among others, identifies Laurence's project as a feminist revision of the "Bildungsroman" or "Künstlerroman" (555). Emphasizing contradiction, Christl Verduyn analyzes Laurence's use of language and genre for female self-representation: "The text includes a struggle against itself as formalized written language, with techniques like the use of memorybank movies and snapshots, and questions about the meaning of words, challenging the formalities of genre" (55). See also the May 1978 issue of *MLN* (93) on 'Autobiography and the Problem of the Subject,' and the *NLH* issue (Autumn 1977) cited in note 12.

14. A good example is Louis Renza, 'The Veto of Imagination: A Theory View. In this context, the topic and thematic description represents important At the other end of the spectrum of self-positionings as autobiographical narrator, Wordsworth testifies to the impossibility of autobiographical closure in his verse autobiography ([1799, 1805, 1850] 1979). Behind the narrator, the empirical writing subject, the "Real" or "Historical I" is located, not always in tune with the 'narrating' and 'experiencing I's', but considered the 'real author' and the external subject of reference. The social dimension of autobiography also comes into play on an intratextual level in so far as any act of autobiographical communication addresses another—explicitly so in terms of constructing a narratee, who may be part of the self, a "Nobody," an individual person, the public, or God as supreme Judge. Postmodernism and the Autobiographical Subject: Reconstructing the Other. In *Autobiography and Postmodernism*, ed. Kathleen Ashley, Leigh Gilmore, and Gerald Peters, 130.66. Representing Others: Gender and the Subjects of Autobiography. In *differences* 6, no. 1 (1994): 1.27. *Writing Fictions: Womens Autobiography in France*.