

Editor's Introduction

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This volume of *Lifewriting Annual* includes for the first time a special section on a broad topic, in this instance, autobiographical theory. The five essays in this special section address questions that go beyond concerns specific to single texts or individual writers. Andrew Parker's preview of his forthcoming *Re-Marx: Life, in Writing* argues for taking Marx's early literary writings seriously and for examining the role of the literary as a suppressed negative pole in Marx's later work. Parker makes Marx, his interpreters, and in Derrida's reading, the philosophical tradition in general unlikely bedfellows with the New Critics in relegating the autobiographical to the margins. Louise Detwiler's examination of criticism on testimonio, a genre first named and described in the late 1960s, locates tendencies within it she organizes into generic "models." Because of its precision and detail, her essay marks a major development in the growth of our understanding of this lifewriting genre. Gabriele Linke's empirical study of three German publishers' decisions to translate and publish lifewriting texts shows these publishers serving as filters reaffirming what Linke calls "dominant values" and existing "systems of knowledge." She leaves open the question of whether new gatekeepers will arise to regulate the easy flow of texts now traveling through the Internet. Richard Freadman's analysis of Lillian Hellman's story "Julia" on rigorous philosophical and moral grounds distinguishes lying from self-deception, a distinction important in consider-

ing Hellman as a biographical subject, not to mention as a person. Freadman raises issues with which any biographer must come to terms in trying to tell the truth of a person's life. Finally, Maureen Stanton encourages contemporary memoirists to make more use of the world outside them by employing what she calls "external" research to complement the "internal" research of introspection and memory. Taken together, these five essays display the wide range of questions and concerns that lifewriting poses, ones that go to the heart of literary reading and writing.

Other essays in this volume span the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries in Britain and the United States. Jacob Sider Jost's study of the eighteenth-century English Grand Tour narrative shows its differences from and connections with what he calls "Lejeunian autobiography." As well as demonstrating the coherence of the Grand Tour narrative as a genre, Jost's essay helps us see the historicity of our current conception of autobiography. Lorna J. Clark's meticulously documented discussion of the letters Fanny Burney wrote to her sister Susanna and others while serving at court from 1786–91 supports her contention that, rather than marking a hiatus in Burney's literary career, her letters are better understood as a diversion of her literary energies into correspondence. The edition of Burney's *Court Journals* now being produced at McGill University for Oxford University Press will help reframe our understanding of Burney's literary career.

Based also on a close examination of letters, Chris Louttit's essay on Dickens's restlessness demonstrates that the accepted truth that Dickens was constitutionally unable to sit still happily considerably oversimplifies his personality. By his own admission, Dickens could relax and enjoy moments as they passed, Louttit shows, even if lassitude was not his default mode. A very different set of issues engages Joseph Urbas in his essay on Mary Moody Emerson, which documents the intellectual debt her nephew, Ralph Waldo, owed to her. Urbas's nomination of Mary to the status of one of Emerson's "Representative Men" deserves real consideration for the many reasons Urbas outlines, which are beyond the obvious ones of her gender and obscurity. Joel Haefner's discussion of the diaries of the mid-nineteenth century Englishwoman Marianne Estcourt, the early-to-mid-twentieth century novelist Enid Bagnold, and the contemporary Iraqi blogger Riverbend charts the handling of wartime trauma in diaries over 150 years. He reveals that, far from being insulated from the outside world, diaries can render trauma in dramatic close-up and throw light on both its objective reality and its subjective effects. Finally, Jacqueline Doyle's thoughtful consideration of the many different types of identity in play in

Judith Ortiz Cofer's *The Latin Deli* allows us to recognize that, thankfully, autobiographical writers do not bind themselves to the analytical categories scholars must use to make sense of their works. Doyle's teasing apart of the degree to which Ortiz Cofer's first-person narrators do and do not reflect her own experience helps us to understand her larger purposes in writing the book. More than just telling her own story, Ortiz Cofer gives voice to many others whose lives have crossed her own.

Lifewriting is a fertile ground for experimenting with genre as well as voice. In remembering her Moscow childhood, Natasha Lvovich opens out her essay to consider children's innate surrealism and the perhaps uniquely Russian sense of estrangement from the familiar that, she suggests, suffuses Russian daily life as easily as it conditions literary experience, according to the Russian formalists. Elizabeth Hanscombe narrates her coming to terms with professional and personal defeats in her life, in the process illustrating the therapeutic function that autobiographical writing can perform. If psychoanalysis is a talking cure, autobiography can be a writing cure, as Hanscombe suggests, for those willing to take the time and care to find the indelible patterns within their experience.

In her review of two recent biographies of Thomas Hardy, Pearl Hochstadt cannily weighs the contributions of each to our understanding of that writer. In addition to rendering well the experience of reading Eva Livia Corredor's autobiography, Ioana Luca locates its place among autobiographies written in the last twenty years by American academics as well as those by writers born in Eastern European countries who have moved elsewhere.

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