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Life Writings

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Prepared by

Dr. M. Sri Vidhya @ Thangalakshmi

Assistant Professor, Department of English (SF),

St. John's College, Palayamkottai - 627 002

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LIFE WRITINGS

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UNIT – I – Defining Kinds of Life Writing

Carole Angier – Biography

Carole Angier is the biographer of Jean Rhys: Life & Work (shortlisted for the Whitbread Prize and winner of a Writers' Guild Non-Fiction Award) and The Double Bond: A Life of Primo Levi. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and currently a Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Oxford Brookes University. She has edited several books of refugee writing, and teaches life writing at Birkbeck College, London University. Born on October 30, 1943, in London, England; daughter of Jussy (an insurance consultant) and Liesl (a homemaker; maiden name, Kelsen) Brainin

Education: McGill University, B.A., 1964; Oxford University, B.A., 1966, M.A., 1971; Cambridge University, M.Litt., 1980.

Educator and author. Worked in the theatre, 1966-69; tutor in philosophy, Cambridge University, 1975, and University of Sussex, 1975-76; extramural tutor in philosophy and English literature at Oxford University and University of Bristol, 1976-83; Open University, Milton Keynes, England, tutor and consultant, 1980—

Her Awards and Honors are Canada Council fellow, 1969-75; Southern Arts grant, 1986; Royal Literary Fund fellow, 2002. Her writings are Jean Rhys (biography), Viking (New York, NY), 1985.Jean Rhys: Life and Work, Little, Brown (Boston, MA), 1990.The Double Bond: Primo Levi, a Biography, Farrar, Straus (New York, NY), 2002.

Also author of plays, including an adaptation of Jean Rhys's novel Good Morning, Midnight, 1984, and two original plays for radio, 1986. Book reviewer for British periodicals, including London Review of Books, New Society, and Women's Review.

In her 1985 biography Jean Rhys, Carole Angier chronicles both the life and writings of the early twentieth-century British novelist. Rhys, described in a Village Voice review by Wendy Kaminer as a

"gifted writer" but a "tormented, self-destructive woman," wrote novels about her personal anguish and, in Kaminer's opinion, "made an art of suffering." Observing that "Angier reveals the growing self-knowledge (and artistic control)" gained by Rhys and ultimately reflected in her best works, Kaminer determined Jean Rhys to be "an astute and eloquent biography."

Angier has continued her fascination with the Dominican-born Rhys in a more expansive work, 1990's Jean Rhys: Life and Work, which extends the discussion of Rhys's novels as well as her troubled personal life. Noting of the 700-plus-page biography that Angier affects a "moralizing tone that could hardly be less in keeping with Rhys's own amoral, almost absurdist vision," New Republic contributor Ann Hulbert commented that "it's clear that the writer has found not a soul mate in her biographer, but … a mother earnestly intent on understanding her wayward daughter." However, a Publishers Weekly critic dubbed Angier's detailed work an "impressive study."In her 2002 biography The Double Bond: Primo Levi Angier collects Levi's poetry, memoirs, and essays to help tell his life story. Levi was a survivor of Auschwitz who became a celebrated author, only to commit suicide at the age of sixty-seven. In its 900 pages, this biography chronicles Levi's life and speculates that severe depression, stemming back to the Holocaust, was the main cause of his death. Peter Conrad, a critic for the Observer, pointed out that Angier demonstrates how Levi's books can be read as a series of suicide notes, and went on to call Angier's biography "exhaustive" and "wearyingly long." Conrad also noted that while Angier did extensive research, she "aspires to know everything about a subject whom she can never know at all." A writer for the New York Times felt that Angier has written, not a biography, but the "story of a wound" and seems "unable to touch something without making it a little confusing." However, Frederick Raphael, reviewing the work for the Spectator, praised The Double Bond, calling it an "immensely useful source of intelligence and detailed fact." A Kirkus critic agreed, describing Angier's book as "a rich, nuanced portrait of a man who lived through the worst horrors imaginable." Kenneth Baker of the San Fransisco Chronicle perhaps summed up Angier's work on this biography best when he wrote that "In the book's

final pages … the reader recognizes Angier's decade of devotion to Levi as a rescue mission, to save him and his work once and for all from the stigma of suicide."

According to Sebald, he only writes prose or prose fiction. He objected to the name "novel" because he found the creaking machinery of conversation and plot—which gets people in and out of rooms—to be annoying. He was correct to reject the term, and you will be let down if you pick up a Sebald book expecting a typical narrative. None of them adhere to a conventional storyline or set of social interaction moments. Instead, they take the shape of reflections and memories interspersed with lengthy stretches of (seeming) digression, all written in incredibly beautiful and stunning prose. Thus, in my opinion, they were merely prose. Not to mention fiction, even though it doesn't often seem like it. However, that's a crucial query that we might revisit.It is not unusual for his novels to be based on real ones, frequently very closely; all authors draw on their own experiences as well as those of individuals they know. His use of old photos and records is what gives his characters such a realistic sense. As we read, we see them, we gaze into their eyes; we don't just envision them. It wasn't entirely unique. As Sebald demonstrates in the second section of Vertigo, Stendhal had utilized illustrations and maps in his Vie de Henri Brulard, for example. It had been done by other French writers, such as Georges Rodenbach and André Breton, as well as German writers Sebald was familiar with and respected, such as Alexander Kluge and Klaus Theleweit. even less recent and youthful ones, such as William Boyd in his 2015 book Sweet Caress.Most of the good and bad things in his life were inspired by his quest for independence. It was the war and the Holocaust that occupied his early years that most significantly shaped his critical thinking and his unwillingness to tolerate silence and the cover-up surrounding them. That was really good, to put it gently. However, one can't be a maverick in one area of life and not another; one must be a maverick in all areas. For example, he disregarded academic norms as well, thus you may run into problems if you depend on any of his footnotes. Although there aren't actually any rules in literature, he did not adhere to any literary "rules" either.

His mental breakdown during the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s led him to begin writing literary works. It took him to Vienna to see the schizophrenic poet Ernst Herbeck, and from there he traveled to his birth hamlet in the Bavarian Alps in northern Italy, a trip he chronicled in his first prose work, Vertigo. It also inspired him to write a screenplay in 1979 prior to After Nature, his first published work, and to the poems he produced and included in it. In all of them, as well as in his later works, which culminated in Austerlitz, he examined both his own psychological traumas and suffering.He had actually been writing since he was in school and had made the decision to become a writer at the age of twenty. However, he never acknowledged this, instead giving the impression that he started writing in his 40s as a way to break away from his academic schedule. In spite of everything I have just said, I believe he had to know, at least occasionally and somehow, that it was untrue. In my novel, I've breached his private, therefore he claimed that to defend himself. My justification is that a great writer's origins are fascinating and even significant, and that a person can never again think about them after they pass away.Without a doubt, the first obvious trauma in his life was the death of his grandfather. However, I don't believe it can be considered a cause in any way. It demonstrates his vulnerability. As a result, he experienced more anguish than many of his more resilient peers when he eventually learned about the Holocaust through his reading and, astonishingly, a film about the death camps that was played at his school. That occurred shortly before his 18th birthday, and a number of other events occurred around the same time, such as his abandonment of his Catholic faith. And that's also when he experienced his first significant breakdown. And then the third, which we've already discussed, at roughly thirty-five. His entire life, he battled to maintain his mental stability. As a biographer, I cannot explain why this was the case; perhaps more will become clear when his psychoanalyst friend Albrecht Rasche completes the book he is writing about him. However, as the scholar Uwe Schütte points out, just because Sebald's grandfather's death was the initial trauma doesn't mean it was the primary or even the only true one. This is unsupported by evidence, and there is a lot of evidence to the contrary—all the other traumas I've described and those I haven't. The primary one was really the one he discussed in his writing: the murder of Jews and other oppressed minorities by his countrymen. To suggest otherwise is an insult to them and to Sebald himself. For him,

stories typically started with a picture. For example, "Ambros Adelwarth" in The Emigrants began with a picture of his great-uncle William from his American aunt's family album, and Austerlitz began with a long-held image of a tiny boy on the cover. He frequently talked about how pictures affected him, how the subjects seemed to be pleading to be pulled momentarily out of oblivion.

He wrote for them with that purpose in mind, which is also the reason he included pictures: to give us a sense of their realism that he himself experienced. For every book, he gathered an enormous quantity of material: mostly essays; photographs, both his own and those of others; paintings; maps; newspaper clippings; and other documents, like the train ticket and pizza bill in Vertigo. He placed everything in folders labeled with the titles of the books. I'm not sure how much of this he completed at the time of writing, or if it was all done after he compiled his archive. Undoubtedly a mix of the two. In any case, following his passing, the designated file folders containing his manuscripts, typescripts, correspondence, and other materials were delivered to the DLA. Thanks to the DLA and him, the collection is unusually comprehensive and well-structured. His favorite authors, particularly Kafka, Stifter, Robert Walser, and Thomas Bernhard, undoubtedly served as inspiration for him. You'll notice that none of these were German. Whereas Walser was Swiss, Stifter was Czech, and Bernhard was Austrian. That was characteristic of Sebald, who originated on the German border and, as is well known, struggled greatly with his home country. However, he also had significant heroes and influences from other German writers, such as Hebel, Jean Paul, and Alexander Kluge from the 20th century. These writers, together with non-German authors like Rousseau, Conrad, Borges, and Thomas Browne, had a profound impact on him and his writing. One could argue that Kafka once remarked, "I am made of literature; I am nothing else and cannot be anything else."We could say the same of Sebald and all his works.as there wasn't much information to provide. Sontag was significant to Sebald because, as his most well-known early admirer, she helped establish his reputation in America, or more specifically in the English-speaking world. She also introduced him to the incredibly influential literary agent Andrew Wylie, who secured him a substantial sum of money for Austerlitz and multiple other novels. And Max did indeed meet Sontag on a

number occasions, including at his performance at the 92nd Street Y in New York and at the London launch party for The Emigrants. However, they never grew close, and this was near the end of his life. Sebald actually had very few writer pals, certainly none as well-known as Sontag. It wasn't until he began publishing in English in the final five years of his life that he gained recognition as a writer; prior to that, he had little to no success in the literary world. He disliked being lionized and didn't feel like he belonged. All he wanted was time to write by himself.

. **Sally Cline – Autobiography**

Sally Cline, award-winning biographer, short story writer and winner of the BBC short story contest, is the author of ten books, including ground-breaking biographies of Radclyffe Hall, Zelda Fitzgerald, and Lillian Hellman and Dashiell Hammett. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Advisory Fellow for the Royal Literary Fund and a judge and mentor for the Arts Council Escalator scheme. Sally has an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Anglia Ruskin University, where she is Writer in Residence and a mentor on the MA in Creative Writing. Both Carole and Sally work as one-to-one mentors with emerging writers. Sally Cline is a groundbreaking biographer and short story writer. She has now completed her 11th book The Arvon Book of Life Writing (with Carole Angier) published by A and C Black (June 2010), the first stand-alone book in the UK on biography, autobiography and memoir. It is to be the first in a new Arvon series of books on writing (short stories, creative non-fiction, novels, poetry etc) which Sally will co-edit. Her previous award winning literary biographies include Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John (1997), Zelda Fitzgerald: Her Voice in Paradise (2002) and Lillian Hellman and Dashiell Hammett: Memories or Myths (forthcoming 2011 with Black Apollo Press). She is now researching the first American woman publisher Blanche Knopf for her next biography.

Her first novel The Visitor is awaiting publication, but chapter 5 has already been published on the internet within the art and literature magazine International Literacy Quarterly, Issue 11.

In 2004 she was the recipient of the Hawthornden Fellowship for Writing. That year she also won the Hosking houses Trust Fellowship for a Woman Writer over 40. Her short fiction for both print and radio have been shortlisted for the Asham Short Story Award, won a Raconteur Fiction Prize, several Arts Council bursaries and the BBC Short Story Contest. She was a prize winner in the UK New London Radio Playwriting Contest and has scripted, co-produced and presented three documentaries based on her own books for Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Born in London, she has lived for 30 years in Cambridge, taught for many years at Cambridge University, read English and Philosophy at Durham University, gained her Masters in Social Science and Women's Studies from Lancaster University, and in 2004 was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Letters from Anglia Ruskin, Cambridge for her internationally known writing. In 2006 she was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. She was Anglia Ruskin's first Royal Literary Fund Writing Fellow, a position she held for three years. She then became one of the Royal Literary Fund's Advisory Fellows as well as Writer in Residence at Anglia Ruskin where she mentors the creative and academic writing of academic and administrative staff and postgraduates from most University faculties. She was Director of the RLF's innovative mentoring scheme The Writers' Pool between 2004-2006, has been a judge and mentor on the Arts Council's Escalator programme to help talented emerging writers, and currently teaches Lifewriting at the Arvon Foundation and is a judge and mentor for the prestigious Gold Dust Mentoring Scheme.

Early in her life she was a Fleet St journalist, a TV critic, and an international stage director and concert manager.Her work with both experienced and new writers, and in particular with those without either a literary background or scholarly achievements, has always enabled many to achieve literary success. In 2004 Sally Cline was awarded the Honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Sally Cline, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, was born in London and held degrees and masters from Durham University and Lancaster University. She taught for many years at Cambridge University and lived in Cambridge for 34 years; in 2004 she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate for International

Writing. For several years she was a judge and mentor on the Arts Council funded Escalator programme to help talented emerging writers. She was also a judge and mentor for the successful Gold Dust mentoring scheme. Sally was an award-winning biographer and fiction writer who completed a novel called 'The Visitor' at the same time as publishing her 11th book The Arvon Book of Life Writing (Bloomsbury 2010), co-authored with Carole Angier. The Arvon Book of Literary Non-Fiction, co-authored with Midge Gillies, was published by Bloomsbury in 2012; it was volume 3 of an 8 volume series of books about writing she co-edited for Bloomsbury. Her groundbreaking double biography of Lillian Hellman and Dashiell Hammett was also published in 2012. Her previous biographies were Radclyffe Hall: A Woman called John (shortlisted for the LAMBDA award) and Zelda Fitzgerald: Her Voice in Paradise (John Murray 2002 Arcade 2012).

In 2004 Sally was the recipient of the Hawthornden Fellowship for Writing. That same year she won the Hosking Houses Trust Fellowship for a Woman Writer over 40. Her short fiction won the BBC Short Story Contest, a Raconteur Fiction Prize, was shortlisted for the Asham Short Story Award, and won several Arts Council bursaries. She was a prize winner in the UK New London Radio Playwriting Contest and scripted, co-produced and presented three radio documentaries based on her books.

Her non-fiction books included Couples: Scene from the Inside (Little Brown), Lifting the Taboo: Women Death and Dying (Little Brown), Women Celibacy and Passion (Andre Deutsch), Just Desserts: Women and Food (Andre Deutsch) and Reflecting Men at Twice their Natural Size (Andre Deutsch). She also edited and wrote an introduction for the Pandora edition of Mary Hays' Memoirs of Emma Courtney and co-edited The Arvon Book of Crime Fiction, by Michele Spring and Laurie King (Bloomsbury). For her biographies and general non-fiction she won awards from the Society of Authors, Arts Council, Eastern Arts, British Academy, AHRB, and fellowships from Princeton University and the University of Texas (Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center). She read and discussed her work at literary festivals including Hay-on-Wye, Cheltenham, Ways with Words, Dartington, the Sole Bay Literature Festival, and the Biographers Club. She served on the Women's Committee of the Writers' Guild, and was a member

of PEN, the Society of Authors, the Royal Society of Literature, the Fawcett Club and the Women Writers Salon. A former Fleet street journalist and international stage director, Sally taught social and political science, life-writing, radio writing, short fiction, drama, English literature, and creative writing for UK and Canadian universities, colleges, festivals, workshops and prisons. Sally was Writer-in-Residence at Anglia Ruskin University and mentored for the MA in Creative Writing.

Sidonie Smith – Fifty –two genres of Life Narrative

"Getting a life means getting a narrative, and vice versa" (80)--so say Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson in their latest collaborative work of life-writing scholarship. Reading Autobiography is their fourth major joint venture, the others being De/Colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women Autobiography (1992), Getting a Life: Everyday Uses of Autobiography (1996), and Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader (1998). This is a momentous event in life-writing pedagogy: here, for the first time, we have an overview of the field of "autobiography" that includes history, poetics, theory, politics, criticism, terminology, and research resources. The nearest competitor is William Spengemann's admirable but more selective The Forms of Autobiography, published in 1980. In a mere 219 pages of main text Smith and Watson cover a remarkable amount of ground. This book would be worth reading for its breadth of reference to "autobiographical" texts alone. Its bibliography of primary and secondary sources will be a major resource for life-writing scholars, teachers, and students for years to come.

The volume comprises seven main chapters. The first deals with definitional issues, then moves to theoretical topics, and in particular, "autobiography"'s relations to history, and the question of "autobiographical truth." Chapter 2, "Autobiographical Subjects," begins with an impressive, multifaceted account of "memory," then considers the nexus between "the autobiographical subject" and "experience"; it then moves to various sites and registers of "identity," a very good discussion of "embodiment," and a less satisfactory account of "agency." The third chapter, "Autobiographical Acts," provides a usefully detailed, and sometimes innovative, poetics and rhetoric of the genre. While it's particularly good on "sites" of telling, reception and representation, and modes of emplotment, its account of "modes of Self-Inquiry" is suggestive but limited in philosophical scope. Chapter 4, "Life Narrative in Historical Perspective," attempts the impossible: an historical account of "autobiography" from Augustine to now, ranging across cultures, and through canonical and marginalized voices--all in twenty-five pages. Given the awesome constraints under which they're operating, Smith and Watson do a fine job here. They're interesting on some of the canonical texts, and strong on various registers of political, ethnographic,

immigrant, autopathographical, postmodern, and other forms. Here, as throughout the book, they're superb on "the inextricability of genre and gender" (141), and quite brilliant in providing an encyclopedic array of textual examples. The chapter is organized around various historical manifestations of the "autobiographical subject": Antiquity and the Middle Ages, "The Humanist Subject, Secular and Spiritual," "The Migratory Subject of Early Modern Travel Narratives"; Enlightenment, Dissenting, Bourgeois, and Modern subjects; "New Subjects" in the eighteenth century; nineteenth century Romantic, Bildungsroman, and American subjects; then "New Subject Formations" in late modernity. Inevitably, given the brevity of this vast historical sweep, the quality of these expository vignettes is variable. I'll come back to the least satisfactory of them--the Enlightenment--shortly.

Chapters 5 and 6 constitute a two-part "History of Autobiography Criticism." They're typically wide-ranging and are packed with useful information. Building on some of their groundbreaking earlier work, there is some telling critique of Misch and other scholarly fashioners of the atomistic masculinist autobiographical subject. Much of the commentary is incisive, and the overviews of recent developments are particularly valuable. These chapters are structured around the leitmotif of the "wave": three "generations" of life-writing criticism are adduced, the wave metaphor suggesting, despite occasional disclaimers (162), a teleological account premised on the familiar notion of "paradigm shift" (135) in literary and cultural studies. One gets the impression that the latest "wave" in autobiography studies is where the important work is being done. They see this "third wave" as essentially postmodern and antihumanist in character. Some readers of these chapters will be surprised to know that, for instance, James Olney's recent Memory and Narrative--a major book by perhaps still the leading figure in autobiography studies-owes very little to antihumanist postmodern approaches.

Reading Autobiography concludes with some pedagogic tools, including a useful "Tool Kit" of questions that can be brought to "autobiographical" texts and topics, and a brilliantly synoptic list--a veritable pedagogic gem--of no less than fifty-two genres of life-narrative! The authors hope that the book "will be useful to advanced undergraduate and graduate students and to scholars in the humanities, the social

sciences, and the arts who are interested in the burgeoning field of life writing." It's even intended to be "user-friendly for the general reader" (xi). It's no easy thing to pitch to so broad an audience, but gifted teachers that they are, Smith and Watson have produced a text that is generally lucid, lively, and engaging. Early on, they offer a list of what they call "coaxers and coercers" (51-52): life-contexts which call upon people to practice forms of autobiographical telling in the course of their daily lives. The point is not new--indeed most teachers of autobiography will have made it to their classes--but the authors do it with a verve and inclusiveness that will indeed fascinate "undergraduates" and even "the general reader."

The volume's full title is Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives. In fact, "autobiography" turns out to be something of a misnomer, insofar as Smith and Watson see "autobiography" as an ideologically fraught category, "a suspect site of exclusionary practices" (96), in which white Western masculinist ideology has often dictated the formal and epistemological terms of the genre. "Autobiography ... is a term for a particular practice of narrative that emerged in the Enlightenment and has become canonical in the West" (3). By contrast, their preferred term, "life narrative ... includes many kinds of self-referential writing, including autobiography" (3). Given their preference for the latter term, it's perhaps surprising that the main title should feature "autobiography." To the extent that the book offers a critique of "autobiography" as a generic marker, this makes sense; but given that the volume surveys a vast array of "life narrative" forms, the main title misrepresents what goes on between its covers. Perhaps the publisher wanted the ease of recognition that "autobiography" would supply? Maybe Smith and Watson found, as many probably will, that "autobiography" is one of those terms that's so deeply embedded in our discursive habits that it has to be used, even when its shortcomings have been disclosed? Whatever the explanation, the authors further muddy the water when they argue that "Life narrative and its multiple genres have been foundational to the formation of Western subjects, Western cultures, and Western concepts of nation, as well as to the organizing project of exploration, colonization, imperialism and, now, globalization" (109). This seems to cast "life narrative," and not just Enlightenment-inspired "autobiography," as "a suspect site of exclusionary practices." One can agree with the general import of

this just-quoted assertion--as this reviewer does--but still wish for greater clarity in the book's deployment of its own generic designations.

In fact, the critique of the Enlightenment is fundamental to the book. Reading Autobiography is no mere descriptive survey. As befits a study that so compellingly asserts the situatedness of all speech acts, this one is written from somewhere, and it expresses a quite specific "take" on its subject. To this extent, Smith and Watson's characterization of their project as a beginner's "guide" or "map"--"Our intent is that this study provide a map for beginning to navigate" (146)--doesn't capture the spirit or content of their book. For all its appeals to the "welter" (162) of approaches that comprise contemporary "autobiography" studies, this volume is essentially written from an anti-humanist, postmodern point of view. This "take" on the subject is everywhere apparent in the topics it chooses to highlight and the way it deals with them--its insistence, for instance, that "experience" of all kinds is constitutively social (25)--its critical and theoretical vocabulary, its historical accounts of the genre and its study of the "self" and the "subject," and so on. "Everywhere apparent," that is, to someone already familiar with literary, cultural, and life-writing studies; but the book would have been better for an initial intellectual self-characterization that let the beginner in search of a "map" know where these authors are "coming from." The danger of introductory studies not offering such initial declarations is that their intellectual orientation can strike the uninitiated as self-evident, undisputed, just the way the discipline is. (For a more inclusive account of the field, students might be referred to Margaretta Jolly's recent Encyclopedia of Life Writing.)

Smith and Watson's critique of"autobiography" as essentially an Enlightenment form reflects a widely-occurring premise in anti-humanist postmodern theory: namely, that the Enlightenment spawned an account of selfhood that can now be designated "the subject"; that this account of selfhood is deeply implicated in, indeed profoundly causal of, modern gendered, capitalist, colonialist, racist, classist, and other ideological constructions of the world; and that a central task of contemporary theoretical and critical activity is to "deconstruct" the subject so conceived, thereby loosening its ideological hold and opening up new and hitherto repressed social and expressive possibilities. Given that "life narrative" is

fundamentally implicated in, and "performative" (44) of, self and subjecthood, these matters had to be accorded a central place in this introductory volume. And so they are. But the book tends to give the impression that, in the academy at least, the big theoretical battles have been decisively won; that "liberal humanism" and its defining commitments to Enlightenment selfhood, rationality, the "myths" of "identity" and "coherent" (47) selfhood, and so on, have been utterly vanquished. Hence the now familiar claim that "What had been assumed by earlier generations of critics to be a universal 'self'--achieving self-discovery, self-creation, and self-knowledge--became, in the wake of multiple theoretical challenges of the first half of the [twentieth] century, a 'subject' riven by self-estrangement and self-fragmentation" (124). As an account of the impact of Freud, Marx, and Saussure, this is fair enough; but the book does not sufficiently reflect developments in "liberal humanist" social theory, philosophy of language, and other fields over the same period and beyond. The fact is that, even now, there are many scholars in History, Politics, Sociology, English and other "arts" and "social sciences" departments who do innovative and powerful work--including work on "life narrative"--that does not owe much to Marx or (post)-Saussurean linguistics (Freud's influence is more pervasive).

I do not mean to imply that Smith and Watson deliberately mislead on such points. On the contrary, they are extraordinarily conscientious educators, as is evident in many places where they are at pains to deflect unwarrantedly dogmatic construals of their arguments (their reminders about the multiplicity of the field, for instance), and the instances in which their concern for fairness causes them to air constrastive perspectives on key issues. On the "subject," for instance, they make the familiar claim that recent "theoretical reframings suggest a paradigm shift in understandings of the subject"; yet a few lines later comes the observation that "at this time the unitary self of liberal humanism remains a prevailing notion governing Western configurations and disciplines of selfhood" (135). It must be said in Smith and Watson's defense that trends in such matters, both within and beyond the academy, are extraordinarily difficult to gauge and summarize--especially in a wide-ranging introduction of around two hundred pages, in some respects, Reading Autobiography is bedeviled by its own brevity: the authors attempt far more

than can be accomplished in so few pages, with the unfortunate result that some sections of this book are inferior to Smith and Watson's work in De/Colonizing the Subject and Women, Autobiography, Theory.

Trends in intellectual and cultural history are of course similarly resistant to easy analysis. The Enlightenment--so much at issue in contemporary debates--is a case in point. What is its relationship to postmodernity? On this and some other aspects of intellectual history, Smith and Watson seem to me to be unconvincing. Virtually all of their direct references to the Enlightenment are negative in implication. It bequeathed the "master narrative of 'sovereign self'" (3), and rendered canonical the Cartesian, universalist, rational, atomistic subject (91-92). Some liberal humanists will be surprised to find "Enlightenment" and "liberal humanist" used as synonyms: "the Enlightenment or liberal-humanist notion of selfhood understood the 'I' as the universal, transcendent marker of 'man'" (123). Though it's hard to avoid simplistic paraphrase in books of this kind, it has to be said that these generalities are just too blunt. Anyone who wants to check need go no further than Hume's "bundle" theory of the self, or Kant's carefully qualified account of transcendental apperception.

In Chapter 4 the authors list historical influences that have prompted interest in "notions of personhood." The first two dot points read as follows:

* the eighteenth-century privileging of an Enlightenment or liberal-humanist subject understood as universal man and transcendent mind;

* the revolutionary movements of the late eighteenth century, with their pressures for greater democratization of society and the enfranchisement of women and some classes (112).

Whether intentionally or otherwise, this suggests a complete disjunction between the philosophical "outlook" of the Enlightenment and the emancipatory events that occurred in the eighteenth century. Of course, there has been a long debate as to whether, for instance, the French Revolution caused, reflected, refracted, was otherwise implicated in, or was in some sense independent of, the intellectual "moment" of the Enlightenment. These are complex questions, and Smith and Watson would not be alone in putting the disjunction case. Indeed, in doing so their position again reflects widely held anti-humanist postmodern views. My point is simply that the "advanced undergraduates," "graduate students," and even "the general reader" to whom this book is addressed would be better served if it more clearly signaled the complexities of such historical-intellectual issues, and adverted more often to constrastive views, important debates. Those like the current reviewer who are unpersuaded by such accounts of the Enlightenment will be inclined to see it as a much more diverse and complex cultural phenomenon than Smith and Watson allow; a "moment" which did indeed tend to give undue weight for instance to certain notions of rationality and universality, but which also bequeathed rich and sometimes transformative ethico-political discourses to later modernity. In this context, the work of an intellectual historian like Charles Taylor might provide an instructive counter-weight to the Smith Watson view; for instance, Taylor's important essay "The Politics of Recognition," which traces continuities between Enlightenment conceptions of "identity" and "recognition," and contemporary "identity politics."

In Reading Autobiography, as in much contemporary theoretical and critical work, the conceptual correlative of the negative account of the Enlightenment is the discontinuous subject, the "subject" as "riven by self-estrangement and self-fragmentation." In Smith and Watson's treatment, as in many similar ones, this "subject" appears, paradoxically, as both paralyzed by its condition of "subjection" to ideological determination, and as normative-normative in the sense that, because "riven" and embedded in conflicting ideological systems, it has the power to transcend Enlightenment "myths" of "unitary" selfhood. Let it be said that all accounts of the self/subject have their problems. The intellectual

complexities involved are just colossal. But I'm not sure that Smith and Watson make this sufficiently clear to the students and general readers among their target audience.

Their notion of the "subject" derives from a familiar cluster of sources: it's "heteroglossic" after Bakhtin (34), non-self-identical as in Derrida (133), fractured in the linguisticized Lacanian unconscious (133), and so on. (Smith and Watson's itemization of influences, which includes references to postcoloniality, queer theory, and other trends, appears on 133-35.) This conception of the subject as fragmented is helpful in accounting for the mobility and changeability of "selfhood" (as I will call it); it's much less effective in accounting for such existential phenomena as the continuity of identity and its constituent beliefs and values over time (a continuity that does not preclude significant change and development), and various forms of rational agential behavior. In the "Tool Kit" section, under the heading "Agency," the authors pose the following question for students: "People tell stories of their lives through the cultural scripts available to them, and they are governed by cultural strictures about self-presentation in public. Given these constraints, how do people change the narratives or write back to the cultural stories that have scripted them as particular kinds of subjects? How is this 'writing back,' this changing of the terms of one's representation, a strategy for gaining agency?" (176). It's a good question but I for one am unconvinced by their answer: "The ground of the ideological 'I' is only apparently stable and the possibilities for tension, adjustment, refixing, and unfixing are ever present" (62). The assumption is that the very incommensurability of the ideological pressures upon the "subject" can prompt, enable, empower her/him to transcend false ideological stories of self and world. But why need this be the case? If, as heavily deterministic theories like this seem to assume, human beings are profoundly susceptible to being rendered cultural dopes by ideological stories, why would a plurality of coercive stories help people shake themselves loose of falsehoods? Why wouldn't this very plurality just render the subject pathologically inert, paralyzed, incapable of agency? Might it be that in order for ideological incommensurability to have emancipatory implications one has to read back into the situation a "self" or "subject" which possesses

certain highly nuanced capacities of intellectual and affective reflection, discernment, assessment, self-scripting--the very qualities that anti-humanist accounts like this one seek to discredit?

To this reviewer (many will disagree), Smith and Watson's account of agency is one of the least convincing aspects of the book, not least because their attack on "the agency of free will" (121) fails to distinguish between "will," "free will," and gradations thereof. Of course they know that agency must figure centrally in their account. But some further questions for the "Tool Kit" might runs like this: To what extent, and in what way does their composite theoretical position actually license a substantive account of agency? Does it allow them to produce agency as anything other than a conceptual rabbit out of a hat? Can they have both the fragmentary, hybridized, fluid, deconstructive self anal effective registers of agency that offer deep forms of resistance to ideological pressures? How persuasive are the many and various attacks by liberal theorists like Anthony Giddens on, say, Althusser's account of ideology and subject?

There are other things that a reviewer of the present one's stripes might query. The one footnote that signals information about "contemporary philosophers of language" (13) actually gives no information about the philosophy of language at all, and the book is pretty much bereft of references to non-postmodern linguistic theory--a troubling omission given the sophistication with which some analytic philosophers of language discuss intentionality, referentiality, speech acts, and other key issues in "autobiography" scholarship. Not surprisingly, given their theoretical orientation, Smith and Watson offer thin accounts of central "autobiographical" phenomena like introspection.

And yet--there's so much to like and admire about this book. Speaking personally (as befits the subject matter), I'm grateful for its range of textual and cultural reference. It taught me a lot about various investments, imperatives, cultural-political sites of "life narrative" production. It drew my attention to many texts, both primary and secondary, I knew nothing about, and to important issues of genre history and form. It's consistently challenging, urgent, and provocative. "Autobiography studies" has come a long

way: it now has a big secondary literature, well patronized courses in many universities, fine scholars in various parts of the world, many of whom are now associated with the IABA (International Auto/Biography Association); it even has an MLA Chapter. Yet its position in the academy remains somewhat undefined: seldom, if ever, do we see academic positions advertised in the field of life-writing scholarship.

In many ways, Reading Autobiography is the challenging introductory book the field has been waiting for. My main reservation about it is that it so insistently identifies contemporary "autobiography" studies with the anti-humanist postmodern paradigm. There is no doubting the power and appropriateness of this paradigm for many works of "autobiography"; but there are many "autobiographical" texts that presuppose and require other interpretive approaches. In saying this, I am not objecting to political approaches to "autobiography." Quite the contrary. "Autobiographers" and their readers have important roles to play in emancipatory struggle. My reservations are about the intellectual underpinnings of the Smith and Watson position; in particular, about whether its conception of the "subject" can yield a sufficiently compelling account of the individual as a bearer of rights, and of the autobiographical consciousness as the deep, individuated, and creatively agential thing it often is.

For those already committed to anti-humanist postmodernism, Reading Autobiography will seem like pedagogic manna from heaven. Recommending follow-up reading will be largely a matter of elaborating on Smith and Watson's position. Life-writing teachers who don't endorse this position might want to supplement the book with some readings that put contrastive views on the table. But what they won't be able to do is ignore the book. It's too good, and too important, for that.

Unit II

Malini Chib – One Little Finger

Malini Chib, born in 1966, is an Indian disability rights activist and author who has cerebral palsy. She wrote the book "One Little Finger" over the course of two years by typing with only one finger. After her birth, her parents moved to England to get better care for her. She later returned to England to attend Thomas Delarue School, a boarding school for pupils with cerebral palsy. She earned a BA at St. Xavier's College, affiliated with the University of Mumbai, and a master's degree in Gender Studies at the Institute of Education, University of London.

In December 2010, Chib wrote her first book and autobiography "One Little Finger" published by Sage Publishing. The book was critically acclaimed. In 2015, she wrote a chapter titled "I Feel Normal Inside. Outside, My Body Isn't!" in the anthology "Disability, Gender and the Trajectories of Power" edited by Asha Hans and published by Sage Publishing.

Chib is the founder and co-chairperson of ADAPT Rights Group, a part of the ADAPT (Able Disable All People Together) organisation. The Rights Group was formed with the belief that both "able" and "disabled" should work together to form an "inclusive" society where "all" are welcomed and included. She also heads the Library and Media Services and is responsible for the micro and macro advocacy efforts of the ADAPT Rights Group. She lent her skills by organising an 'Inclusive Job Fair' for disabled youth and also conducts Empowerment and sensitization courses for individuals, corporates, parents, professionals, and disabled activists.

In 2011, the Indian Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment awarded Chib the National Award for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in the category Role Model. In 2017, on the occasion of World Cerebral Palsy Day, Chib was honoured with the first global Cerebral Palsy Day Award for ensuring rights and entitlements of persons with disability conferred by the Cerebral Palsy Alliance, Australia.

The 2014 Indian film “Margarita with a Straw” is based on her life, in which actress Kalki Koechlin played a character based on her. The film was a major critical and commercial success, and Koechlin won several awards for her performance.

Malini Chib’s book, One Little Finger, was first described to me as the autobiography of a woman with a very severe form of Cerebral Palsy. In fact, her ‘one little finger’ is her lifeline, her ‘powerhouse of strength.’ She uses it to type, first on a typewriter, then on a computer and, much later, on a mobile phone to send text messages.

She describes how her parents moved from India to England when she was young, leaving behind a good life because they knew her needs would be better met in England. She describes growing up in a close family with her loving parents, ‘normal’ little brother, aunts, uncles and cousins, who she treated like her brothers and sisters. Her tales of these times with her family took us back to our own childhood.In England in the late 1960s/early 70s, Malini spent a few years at Cheyne Walk, a special school in Chelsea which still exists today. Its recent pupils have included Ivan Cameron. At Cheyne Walk, says Malini Chib, she ‘received the best treatment and educational management.’ It was here that an IQ test revealed that she has ‘an intelligent mind with a disobedient body.’

From a young age, Malini travelled with her parents, spending winters in the Bahamas as her mother could not stand the cold in England. This is an interest which continues and is obvious throughout the book. Her descriptive language and fast pace of writing about the places she visits made us feel, at times, as if we were with her, travelling the world by wheelchair.

After the birth of Malini’s little brother Nikhil, the family returned to India. India in the early 70s was not the best place for a severely disabled child. In the hospital where she was treated, Malini felt as if she was ‘just a patient and not a human being.’ The difference in attitude towards disability in India and England is a recurring theme in the book. In England, Malini has freedom and is able to be independent, while in India she feels restricted.

No schools in India would take Malini, so her mother set up a special school based on Cheyne Walk, called The Centre For Special Education. She was joined in this project by a physiotherapist called Pam Stretch. Anyone who knows anything about physiotherapy knows that this is a very appropriate name for a physiotherapist!

Malini says, however, that her time at special school in India was 'the darkest period of my life.' From her own experiences, she strongly supports the idea of inclusive education – a view that I share. She feels that the chance to be in a 'normal school,' and to see able bodied children interacting, would have encouraged her to be independent in her communication.

Communication – and more specifically Malini's own speech – is a constant theme in the book. Malini is dysarthric – her speech is slow and monosyllabic, and not always clear. This seems to be the thing that affects Malini most about her disability. In all areas of her life, at every stage, she feared that her speech would not be understood. For many years, her speech impediment made her lack confidence to meet people her own age. Throughout the book, each time she met someone new who understood her speech, or took the time to try, her excitement and pleasure was very clear to us.

She has used communication aids from the age of 13, first a Canon Communicator, which was slow and 'laborious' to use and later an Abilia which she describes as a smaller version of Stephen Hawking's communication device. However, this only has a male voice, understandably not the most pleasant thing for a young woman! When she describes discovering the Internet and email in the 90s, her excitement is obvious again, as now she felt that finally 'people with poor speech can interact easily.'

In 1981, Malini came back to England to attend a special boarding school called Thomas Delarue. There she took her GCSEs and learnt to 'grow up and be responsible for myself.' She becomes assertive and learns to organise her time. It is at Thomas Delarue that she is given an electric wheelchair for the first time. 'Who cared if I could not walk?' She asks. 'With an electric wheelchair, I could run.'

On her return to India, Malini attended St Xavier's College – a place that anyone who has seen a 1990s Bollywood movie will surely recognise. There she, along with three other students from the Centre For Special Education, made history by 'making the concept of inclusive education in higher education, a reality in India for the first time.' However, St Xaviers, like most places in India, was not the most accessible place for a wheelchair user – there were two lifts, but neither one went as far as the library. From this point onwards wheelchair access becomes another constant worry for Malini and an important theme in the book.

After achieving a first in her college exams, Malini took a BA at St Xavier's. There she met Zubin, a student teacher who became a close friend. She later developed romantic feelings for him, which were not returned. However, she does write in detail about how, like any woman her age, she wondered at this point in her life whether any man would ever notice her.

During her first Masters degree, which she took at the Institute of Education in Central London in 1998 in Gender Studies, she applied theories of feminism to disability and disabled women. She describes this experience as 'intellectually invigorating and emotionally empowering.' This course allowed her, for the first time, to accept her identity as a disabled woman, and, she says, she was finally 'proud of being one.'

The book ends with the most current stage of Malini's life – she now has a job in India as an event manager at a bookstore. As a lot of this job can be done online, she is able to combine it with her other interests – campaigning and giving talks at the Institute of Education. She writes her last chapter sitting in Russell Square, reflecting on her life and all she has achieved. She ends with a realisation that any British Asian can easily identify with – India will always be home, she will always return home, but a part of her will always belong to London. Finally, in terms of accepting her disability, she has come full circle. She has realised that she does not know what 'normal' is. As she puts it CI know only me. I like me.'

Manobi Bandopadhyay – A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi

A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi was published in the year 2017. This is not just any biography, but a biography of a transgender Manobi who happens to be India's first transgender principal.

The biography of an Indian transgender is an essential read though understandably, not an easy one. This is even more so when it is candid. A lot of what we fear does actually play out in this book. A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi, the biography of Manobi Bandyopadhyay, as told to journalist Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey should be read for this very reason. The author's note, an emotional appeal to the readers, sets the tone for the rest of the book. Born on September 23,1964 as Somnath Bandyopadhyay, Manobi's childhood was loaded with premonitions of her lifelong struggle with identity. Well-wishers referring to the family's increasing prosperity and commenting, at her birth, that "This is a boy Lakshmi!" was an early instance. From being raped by her cousin in class V to being physically assaulted by boys at school, her adolescence was anything but easy.

Manobi became the talk of the town in 2015 when she became the 'first transgender principal' in an Indian university. She sprung back to the limelight over the next two years with the release of her biography and allegations of harassment from colleagues doing the rounds. Manobi, like most trans persons, has lived through her share of ordeals to emerge resilient. Furthermore, she has formidable credentials, with a PhD in Bengali Literature and authorship to multiple other books, magazines, and hundreds of newspaper articles. In 1995, she founded the first Bengali transgender magazine Abomanob (Subhuman). It is undoubtedly commendable that Manobi put on a brave front in the face of persistent humiliation and indignity. Belittled by others, treated as a public spectacle, and bumping into the glass ceiling throughout the career – such challenges are relatable to most queer individuals. The strength of Manobi's work is it calls a spade a spade, and the concluding sections emphasizing her ascendancy in work-life are particularly inspiring

However, this merit cannot compensate for the several problematic aspects in A Gift of Goddess that have shockingly made it to print. Right off the bat, one senses a desultoriness in the writing with banal details from Manobi's family history lingered over. Clichéd phrasing like 'saved from the jaws of death' rankle. Basic and avoidable errors of mis-gendering and using transgender as a noun are frequently committed. Some of the details of sexual intercourse are unnecessarily and cringe worthily graphic. To make matters worse, the book peddles with common stereotypes about the trans community, such as suggesting they have a natural inclination for make-up and dancing. Furthermore, it overly emphasizes on physical appearance as the litmus test for societal acceptance.

While Manobi's indignation towards the injustice faced over the years is justified, the author(s) could have expressed the sentiments with more tact and thought instead of languishing in self-pity and launching into thinly veiled accusations on all and sundry. In many instances, she even puts down her allies and friends. Mere rechristening does little to protect the identities of those mentioned considering every minute details of their whereabouts etc. are divulged. Manobi's privileged upbringing has perhaps even blinded her to some of the classist remarks she makes, from flaunting her own 'educated' and 'cultured' status on one hand to making condescending observations about those without equivalent status. Despite her educational background, A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi rarely evinces self-reflection; whether on societal constructions of gender, patriarchy, love, companionship, and so on.

As a trans person, they seldom find dignified representations of transgender identities in the arts. Take cinema, literature, or paintings, what usually occupies a space in the mainstream imagination are either glorified or vilified representation of cis-gendered heterosexual identities. Within the queer community, transgender characters are particularly subjected to egregious characterizations, with cis-gendered persons often coopting stories of our struggles and successes for their own gain. We are viewed as either the 'lowest of the low', the 'despised lot', or the 'monster' on one hand, or 'the exotic', 'the supernatural' and the 'impossibly righteous figure' on the other. Being a researcher myself, I have sieved through reams of

literature on transgender studies. Most studies, usually by cis authors, have pathologized a trans person's sense of self from either psychological or sociological standpoint.

At this point of time, we need more transgender voices to reclaim their positionality in the arts, seize the pen, the paintbrush, the camera, and illuminate society about their own lived (or fictionalized) experiences. The autobiographical (or biographical) mode provides a rich and powerful source for the world at large to grasp the lived experiences and the authentic voices of trans people. This is where the works of Manobi Bandhopadhyay, Lakshmi Narayan Tripathi, Living Smile Vidya, and A. Revathi become essential reading.

As trans creators of media, and especially people in positions of influence, one must be doubly responsible in their self-representation and cannot commit the same mistakes that the society perpetuates. As a minority, the statements made by the few who get a seat at the table are taken as the gospel truth, while failing to consider that they too are human and therefore capable of erring and holding prejudices. The solution to this is to critique community's voices with the same fervor that we show while critiquing others, as only this will help them bring forth their lived experiences in a more matured, refined, sensitive, and authentic manner.

The book throws light on the life of transgender people. Though Manobi was lucky to always have the support of her family which made her life easy to some extend, but still her struggles cannot be ignored. After reading this book I've gathered a great amount of respect for all forms of human life. This book has taught me two lessons. One is that not all lives are the same and each and every individual has his /her own struggles in life and hence we should have a sense of gratitude for the wonderful we all have been blessed with. Second is that education is the key to success in life.

Viktor Frankl – Man's Search for Meaning

Viktor Frankl was born in 1905 in Vienna, and died in 1997. His life, therefore, spanned most of the twentieth century. As a young child, Frankl would meditate on the meaning of life—"Particularly about the meaning of the coming day and its meaning for me" (p. 156). As a teenager he was fascinated by philosophy, psychology, and psychoanalysis—the latter of which was theorized and popularized by Sigmund Freud. As a young adult, he supplemented his high school studies with adult education courses. He also began a correspondence with Freud. At eighteen, he wrote a psychoanalytic essay titled "On the Mimic Movements of the Affirmation and Negation," and sent it to Freud, who eventually submitted Frankl's work for publication in the International Journal of Psychoanalysis. While in college, he worked for the psychotherapeutic department of the Psychiatric University Clinic. Frankl earned a Doctorate in Medicine from the University of Vienna in 1925. From 1940 to 1942, he was director of the Neurological Department of the Rothschild Hospital (a hospital for Jewish patients). During this time, Frankl began writing his manuscript The Doctor and the Soul, which was the forerunner of MSFM. After his release from the Türkheim concentration camp, Frankl returned to Vienna and became director of the Vienna Neurological Policlinic. In 1946, he published A Psychologist's Experiences in the Concentration Camp, which was later republished as Say Yes to Life in Spite of Everything. The book was finally translated into English in 1959 as Man's Search for Meaning. In 1948, Frankl received a Ph.D. in Philosophy, and he was eventually named professor of Neurology and Psychiatry at the University of Vienna Medical School. Throughout his career, Frankl was in high demand on the lecture circuit. He also held guest professorships at several American colleges and universities, including Harvard University and Duquesne University. Frankl wrote several more books, including The Will to Meaning, The Unheard Cry for Meaning, The Unconscious God, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, and Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning. The Viktor Frankl Institute was founded in Vienna in 1992.

Man's Search for Meaning (hereafter MSFM) is an autobiographical account of Viktor E. Frankl's application of his trademark theory, which he calls, "Logotherapy." He began formulating this

theory, which posits that finding meaning and purpose in life is the key to personal happiness and well-being, in Vienna, Austria, before the dawn of Nazi aggression. Later, while imprisoned for three years in first a Nazi ghetto and then in Nazi concentration camps, Frankl applied his theory to his own immediate situation, to console himself and his fellow prisoners.

Because he was Jewish, Frankl was arrested by Nazi German authorities in September 1942, along with his pregnant wife, his parents, and his brother. They were deported from their beloved Vienna and transported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto in Czechoslovakia, where Frankl's father died. Frankl and his remaining family members were next transported to Auschwitz in Poland, where all of them, except Frankl, died.

At the time of his arrest, Frankl was a well-regarded psychologist. He had already begun developing his theory of Logotherapy (literally, "meaning therapy"). Frankl carried his manuscript outlining his theory, titled The Doctor and the Soul, with him to Auschwitz. (It was slipped into a pocket sewed between the lining and the outer fabric of his overcoat.) At Auschwitz, in short order, Frankl was separated from his family and stripped of his clothing (including his overcoat, which contained his manuscript). The Nazis even shaved all of his body hair off. Of this experience, Frankl wrote, "most of us were overcome by a grim sense of humor. We knew that we had nothing to lose except our ridiculously naked lives"

In the "Experiences in a Concentration Camp" section of MSFM, Frankl writes about consciously commanding his mind to detach from his immediate physical circumstances in order to apply the central tenet of Logotherapy—namely, that life holds meaning regardless of one's circumstances—to his own situation. The depiction of this concentration camp experience is followed in MSFM by a poignant argument in favor of all aspects of Logotherapy.

In spite of the loss of his family, his professional manuscript, and his dignity, Frankl pressed on to "live" as fully as possible in the face of imprisonment by Nazi Germany. In essence, MSFM provides a living example of Logotherapy in practice, as Frankl writes about how he survived his experience in the Nazi

concentration camp, before moving on to an in-depth account of the theory itself. Frankl organizes MSFM into the following sections: 1) “Experiences in a Concentration Camp”; 2) “Logotherapy in a Nutshell”; and 3) a postscript, “The Case for Tragic Optimism.”

MSFM was first translated into English in 1959. As a result, teachers should be aware that Frankl’s work contains words and phrases that may be anachronistic or confusing to modern readers. For example, Frankl uses the term “moslem”. “Moslem” is an abbreviated version of the German word “musselman,” a term Nazis used for prisoners who have lost the will to live.

Mourid Barghouti – I saw Ramallah

I Saw Ramallah is an Arabic language autobiographical book written by Palestinian writer and poet Mourid Barghouti. The English translation of this book was first published in 2000 by the American University in Cairo Press, and later on 16 May 2005 by Bloomsbury. Ahdaf Soueif translated the book to English.

I Saw Ramallah is a first person account of living in perpetual spatial and temporal displacement. The author – a Palestinian poet – reflects on the ways in which assorted forms of change and violence overtime have reconstructed the lives of generations living in the occupied territory. His beautiful observations and descriptions subtly reveal how one group’s vision of a utopia has manifested into a simultaneous, but opposite reality for others: an everyday lived dystopia, rooted in a tormented history. Imminently accessible, thoughtful and historical, it is a timely book for context given the escalating violence by the Israeli state against Palestinians — a violence which manifests in multiple ways, hurting even those it purports to protect.

In I Saw Ramallah, Mourid Barghouti reconstructs his visit to Palestine after 30 years in exile, following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Organized into chapters inspired by place and personal memory; his is a deeply existential and historical account of the land: a story of time and displacement that is bound by the tremendous personal loss of family and homeland due to an illegitimate occupation.

Barghoti's gentle, elegant impressions and treatment of a homeland ridden with trauma and violence builds an honest portrait of a dystopia guised as national design and security. His story is told in solidarity with the everyday experience of Palestinians, whose daily lives remain scrutinized, surveilled and restricted by Israel:

"Occupation prevents you from managing your affairs in your own way. It interferes in every aspect of life and of death; it interferes with longing and anger and desire and walking in the street. It interferes with going anywhere and coming back, with going to the market, the emergency hospital, the beach, the bedroom, or a distant capital"

Set in a situation of ever-diminishing freedoms following the occupation of Palestine in 1948, the book lays bare the inner turmoil related to displacement and dispossession from one's homeland. While visiting the village of his childhood, it becomes apparent how memory can become idyllic, and that what exists now is a significantly changed and grim reality on multiple levels: state, family and individual.

Faced with bureaucratic procedures and other forms of hidden violence that restrict his visit to his homeland, he ponders how this will affect future generations of his family from accessing the land they once called home. As the book progresses, it becomes apparent that returning to his homeland is less joyful or familiar, and more fraught with immense loss, change and benign everyday harassment.

Barghouti's observations of his homeland's transformation carry the reader through a landscape of on-going conflict while focusing them on the realities of everyday life. Dystopia in this case is mediated by

the reality of the occupation. The securitization of Israel, which has built a near constant surveillance system that restricts and spies on Palestinians while compromising their safety and privacy as part of constructing a Zionist utopia.

He astutely notes the divisive materiality of new architecture and urban planning for Jewish settlements which has changed a once familiar landscape. Both the visible and invisible borders of life as a Palestinian returning to an occupied homeland emerge through his anecdotes: how standard routines, freedoms and the connection of self and place have completely changed under occupation, weaponized as tools of harassment and control, including the uncertainty of waiting.

Alluding to the absurdity of these harassments is a hidden violence of trauma rooted in seemingly benign state formation. And yet in spite of the injustice his family personally feel, he acknowledges the complexity of the situation Palestinians and Israelis find themselves in:

"The long Occupation has created Israeli generations born in Israel and not knowing another 'homeland' created at the same time generations of Palestinians strange to Palestine; born in exile and knowing nothing of the homeland except stories and news…(It) has succeeded in changing us from children of Palestine to children of the idea of Palestine"

He notices the divisiveness of new buildings and housing constructions, Israeli barriers and flags, signs in a new language he is unfamiliar with — and the connectivity enabled by other infrastructure. This includes networks like the telephone, holding his family together across their newly occupied and fractured land. It sits in sharp contrast to the visible neglect and stagnation of his village, which remains more or less unchanged. Perhaps most significant about his writing is that it very poetically leaves a lot to be looked into.

The unfathomable trauma and violence experienced in the region due to colonial mapmaking, the unspeakable injustices which are committed in the name of politics and state ideology, rooted in colonialism and politicization of beliefs, the collapse of a peace process and the recent unending

nightmare aimed at Palestinian people are issues Barghouti manages to convey while focusing on the complexity of dispossession. This ability is rooted in an undervalued skill: paying attention to the changes of his land, and to the lived experience in the absence of freedom.

Barghouti‘s is a unique story for the details of its recollections, but it is part of a broader, fractured narrative: the collective story of violent loss, oppression, and dispossession that is Palestine. His book is a gem, akin to the works of poets like Mahmoud Darwish — among so many other Palestinians — who use the written word to resist forgetting their own history and identity. And use it to record the ongoing injustices that perpetuate their homeland.

As the world watches continued military aid for state-led ethnic cleansing, while the states with power and vested interests repeatedly veto against a ceasefire that could halt what has amounted to a live cast genocide by the Israeli state against Palestinians — including by starving people and destroying their health system — resistance as writing and through other forms of creative expression becomes a necessity.

Unit III

Urvashi Butalia – The other Side of Silence

The Partition of India in 1947 caused one of the great human convulsions of history. The statistics are staggering. Twelve million people were displaced; a million died; seventy-five thousand women are said to have been abducted and raped; families were divided; properties lost; homes destroyed. In public memory, however, the violent, disturbing realities that accompanied Partition have remained blanketed in silence. And yet, in private, the voices of Partition have never been stilled and its ramifications have not yet ended. Urvashi Butalia's remarkable book, the outcome of a decade of interviews and research, looks at what Partition was intended to achieve, and how it worked on the ground, and in people's lives. Pieced together from oral narratives and testimonies, in many cases from women, children and dalits- marginal voices never heard before- and supplemented by documents, reports, diaries, memoirs and parliamentary records, this is a moving, personal chronicle of Partition that places people, instead of grand politics, at the centre. These are the untold stories of Partition, stories that India has not dared to confront even after fifty years of independence.

The partition of India into two countries, India and Pakistan, caused one of the most massive human convulsions in history. Within the space of two months in 1947 more than twelve million people were displaced. A million died. More than seventy-five thousand women were abducted and raped. Countless children disappeared. Homes, villages, communities, families, and relationships were destroyed. Yet, more than half a century later, little is known of the human dimensions of this event. In The Other Side of Silence , Urvashi Butalia fills this gap by placing people—their individual experiences, their private pain—at the center of this epochal event.

Through interviews conducted over a ten-year period and an examination of diaries, letters, memoirs, and parliamentary documents, Butalia asks how people on the margins of history—children, women, ordinary people, the lower castes, the untouchables—have been affected by this upheaval. To understand how and

why certain events become shrouded in silence, she traces facets of her own poignant and partition-scarred family history before investigating the stories of other people and their experiences of the effects of this violent disruption. Those whom she interviews reveal that, at least in private, the voices of partition have not been stilled and the bitterness remains. Throughout, Butalia reflects on difficult questions: what did community, caste, and gender have to do with the violence that accompanied partition? What was partition meant to achieve and what did it actually achieve? How, through unspeakable horrors, did the survivors go on? Believing that only by remembering and telling their stories can those affected begin the process of healing and forgetting, Butalia presents a sensitive and moving account of her quest to hear the painful truth behind the silence.

The political partition of India caused one of the great human convulsions of history. Never before or since have so many people exchanged their homes and countries so quickly. In the space of a few months, about twelve million people moved between the new, truncated India and the two wings, East and West, of the newly created Pakistan. By far the largest proportion of these refugees—more than ten million of them—crossed the western border which divided the historic state of Punjab, Muslims travelling west to Pakistan, Hindus and Sikhs east to India. Slaughter sometimes accompanied and sometimes prompted their movement; many others died from malnutrition and contagious diseases. Estimates of the dead vary from 200,000 (the contemporary British figure) to two million (a later Indian estimate) but that somewhere around a million people died is now widely accepted. As always there was widespread sexual savagery: about 75,000 women are thought to have been abducted and raped by men of religions different from their own (and indeed sometimes by men of their own religion). Thousands of families were divided, homes destroyed, crops left to rot, villages abandoned. Astonishingly, and despite many warnings, the new governments of India and Pakistan were unprepared for the convulsion: they had not anticipated that the fear and uncertainty created by the drawing of borders based on headcounts of religious identity—so many Hindus versus so many Muslims—would force people to flee to what they considered `safer' places, where they would be surrounded by their own kind. People travelled in buses, in cars, by train, but mostly

on foot in great columns called kafilas, which could stretch for dozens of miles. The longest of them, said to comprise nearly 400,000 people, refugees travelling east to India from western Punjab, took as many as eight days to pass any given spot on its route.

Unit IV

Eugene O'Neil – Long Day's Journey into Night

Long Day's Journey into Night is a play in four acts written by American playwright Eugene O'Neill in 1939–1941 and first published posthumously in 1956. It is widely regarded as his magnum opus and one of the great American plays of the 20th century[citation needed]. It premiered in Sweden in February 1956 and then opened on Broadway in November 1956, winning the Tony Award for Best Play. O'Neill received the 1957 Pulitzer Prize for Drama posthumously for Long Day's Journey into Night. The work is openly autobiographical in nature. The "long day" in the title refers to the setting of the play, which takes place during one day.

The play takes place on a single day in August 1912. The setting is Monte Cristo Cottage, the seaside home of the Tyrones in Connecticut. The four main characters are the semi-autobiographical representations of O'Neill, his older brother, and their parents.

The play portrays a family struggling to grapple with the realities and consequences of each member's failings. The parents and two sons blame and resent each other for various reasons; bitterness and jealousy serve as proxies for ultimately failed attempts at tenderness and compassion. The family's enduring emotional and psychological stress is fueled by their shared self-analysis, combined with articulate honesty. The story deals with addiction, unfulfilled dreams, moral flaws, and the struggle of family relationships.

Long Day's Journey Into Night is considered to be O'Neill's greatest play not only for its story and characters but also because of its inventive, theatrical elements including:

The play's form and structure. The play tells the story of one family over the course of one day. O'Neill shows us the passage of time in a particularly heartbreaking way: through the family's addictions. As the day progresses, Mary becomes more and more affected by the morphine that she takes. And the men become increasingly drunk. Though we see the men drink, O'Neill never shows us Mary using morphine; we only see the affect that it has on her.

Stage directions

O'Neill's stage directions are precise. For example, his description of the set—down to the type of books that are on the family's bookshelves—reveals as much about the characters as do the descriptions of the characters themselves.

Lighting

O'Neill's description of the lighting is another way that he shows us the passage of time. When the play begins (in the morning), he tells us that "sunshine comes through the windows." At the beginning of Act Two (early afternoon), he tells us that "no sunlight comes into the room…outside the day is still fine but increasingly sultry, with a faint haziness in the air which softens the glare of the sun." And so it goes—with the light changing—to the end of the play. Through the lighting design, we actually see the "long day's journey into night."

Language

The characters in the play speak like real people speak. And the characters sound differently as the day goes on. As the men drink and Mary uses morphine, their language changes as a result of their being under the influence.

Metaphor

The fog that eventually overtakes the house is a metaphor (or symbol) for something else. O'Neill shows us that the literal fog represents the fog of addiction. No one is able to escape.

Theme

O'Neill addresses tough, real-life issues of addiction, guilt, and betrayal. When the play appeared on Broadway, nothing like it had been seen before. The play forced audiences to grapple with difficult issues. It exposed the deep psychological traits of its main characters—and by extension, the audience.

Unit V

Christopher Isherwood – Goodbye to Berlin

Goodbye to Berlin is a 1939 novel by Anglo-American writer Christopher Isherwood set during the waning days of the Weimar Republic. The novel recounts Isherwood's 1929–1932 sojourn as a pleasure-seeking British expatriate on the eve of Adolf Hitler's ascension as Chancellor of Germany and consists of a "series of sketches of disintegrating Berlin, its slums and nightclubs and comfortable villas, its odd maladapted types and its complacent burghers.] The plot was based on factual events in Isherwood's life, and the novel's characters were based upon actual persons.The insouciant flapper Sally Bowles was based on teenage cabaret singer Jean Ross who became Isherwood's friend during his sojourn.

During Isherwood's time abroad in Germany, the young author witnessed extreme "poverty, unemployment, political demonstrations and street fighting between the forces of the extreme left and the extreme right." Following the Enabling Act which cemented Hitler's power in March 1933, Isherwood fled Germany and returned to England. Afterwards, the Nazis shuttered Berlin's cabarets,and many of

Isherwood's friends fled abroad or perished in concentration camps.These events served as the genesis for Isherwood's stories.

The novel received positive reviews from critics and contemporary writers. Anne Margaret Angus praised Isherwood's mastery in conveying the despair of Berlin's denizens and "their hopeless clinging to the pleasures of the moment".[8] She believed Isherwood skillfully evoked "the psychological and emotional hotbed which forced the growth of that incredible tree, 'national socialism'. George Orwell hailed the novel for its "brilliant sketches of a society in decay".[9] "Reading such tales as this," Orwell wrote, "the thing that surprises one is not that Hitler came to power, but that he did not do so several years earlier."

The 1939 novel was republished together with Isherwood's 1935 novel, Mr Norris Changes Trains, in a 1945 collection titled The Berlin Stories. Critics praised the collection as capturing the bleak nihilism of the Weimar period. In 2010, Time magazine hailed the collection as one of the 100 Best English-language novels of the 20th century.[10] Goodbye to Berlin was adapted into the 1951 Broadway play I Am a Camera, the 1966 musical Cabaret, and the 1972 film of the same name. According to critics, the novel's character Sally Bowles inspired Truman Capote's character Holly Golightly in his 1958 novella Breakfast at Tiffany's.

After relocating to Weimar-era Berlin to work on a novel, an English writer explores the decadent nightlife of the city and becomes enmeshed in the colourful lives of a diverse array of Berlin denizens. He acquires modest lodgings in a boarding house owned by Fräulein Schroeder, a caring landlady.

At the boarding house, he interacts with the other tenants, including the brazen prostitute Fräulein Kost, who has a Japanese patron, and the decadent Sally Bowles, a young English flapper who sings tunelessly in a seedy cabaret called "The Lady Windermere". Due to a mutual lack of funds, Christopher and Sally soon become roommates,[f] and he learns a great deal about her sex life as well as her coterie of "marvelous" lovers.

When Sally becomes pregnant after a tryst, Christopher facilitates an abortion, and the painful incident draws them closer together.[g] When he visits Sally at the hospital, the hospital staff assume he is Sally's impregnator and despise him for forcing her to have an abortion. Later during the summer, Christopher resides at a beach house near the Baltic Sea with Peter Wilkinson and Otto Nowak, a gay couple struggling with their sexual identities. Jealous of Otto's endless flirtations with other men, Peter departs for England, and Christopher returns to Berlin to live with Otto's family, the Nowaks.

During this time, Christopher meets teenage Natalie Landauer whose wealthy Jewish family owns a department store. After the Nazis smash the windows of several Jewish shops, Christopher learns that Natalie's cousin Bernhard is dead, likely murdered by the Nazis. Ultimately, Christopher is forced to leave Germany as the Nazis continue their ascent to power, and he fears that many of his beloved Berlin acquaintances are now dead.

Nandini Oza – Homeless: Revil's Story – Whither Justice: Stories of Women in Prison

Marginalised for centuries, women in India have now established themselves in the forefront of the public sphere; independent and brave they break new barriers everyday, moving from strength to strength. This book is not about these women.

As an activist of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), Nandini Oza lived and worked among the people affected by the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) for over a decade. Having participated in the movement and documented its oral history through the voices of its leaders, she felt it was important to share their lived experiences so that their struggle would not be forgotten. Although Oza has authored a book on the movement, she wanted the audio and video recordings to be available to a larger audience.

The Narmada Oral History website (oralhistorynarmada.in), curated by Oza — currently president of the Oral History Association of India — is the first of its kind in India, and comprises over 400 hours of interviews with 80 key players in the struggle.

This book gives the silent a voice, the forgotten a name and the abused, the justice that they crave. Whither Justice is a daunting and disturbing look at women in Indian prisons; these are stories of their battle against various forces: the government, family, poverty. Living in a society that creates its own villains and is quick to punish them, these women-faceless, voiceless and forgotten-battle on.

These fictionalised stories are of dreams shattered beyond recognition, of hopes that still linger. Told from the unique perspective of someone who has actually lived with them, the author has vividly captured their despair and their strength.

This book gives the silent a voice, the forgotten a name and the abused, the justice that they crave. Whither Justice is a daunting and disturbing look at women in Indian Prisons; these are stories of their battle against various forces: the government, family and poverty. About Author Nandini Oza, completed

her post-graduation in Social Work from Baroda. She was placed in Central Jail as a part of her field work, and later, as a full-time activist in the Narmada Bachao Andolan. She was imprisoned several times - experiences that exposed her to the stories of women prisoners. She currently works with a Trust.Nandini Oza, completed her post-graduation in Social Work from Baroda. She was placed in Central Jail as a part of her field work, and later, as a full-time activist in the Narmada Bachao Andolan. She was imprisoned several times - experiences that exposed her to the stories of women prisoners. She currently works with a Trust.