

AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN CONTEXT

Autobiography in Context

Edited by Irena Grubica



**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Rijeka, 2014**

Izdavač / Publisher
Filozofski fakultet u Rijeci
[Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences]

Za izdavača / For the publisher
Predrag Šustar

Urednica / Editor
Irena Grubica

Lektura / Language editing
Joseph Molitorisz

Dizajn korica / Cover page design
I. Grubica: Paris 2013, Photo © Copyright

Računalna priprema i tisak / Computer and print design
Tiskara IMPRESS, Rijeka

Naklada / Edition
100 primjeraka [100 copies]

CIP - Katalogizacija u publikaciji
SVEUČILIŠNA KNJIŽNICA
RIJEKA

UDK 82-94(063)(048)

INTERNATIONAL interdisciplinary conference
Autobiography in Context (2014 ; Rijeka)
Autobiography in context :
<international interdisciplinary
conference : Rijeka, 21st and 22nd
November 2014> / edited by Irena Grubica. –
Rijeka : Faculty of Humanities and Social
Sciences, 2014.

ISBN 978-953-7975-13-5

I. Grubica, Irena
I. Autobiografija -- Zbornik sažetaka

130519086

Published in English.
PRINTED IN RIJEKA, CROATIA, in November 2014

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Introduction

Autobiography and life writing have been receiving increasing scholarly attention due to the recent booming production of various forms of personal narratives, and the ongoing changes in the art of self-representation. The boom in personal narratives reflects changes in the articulation of self-identity, the role of memory (individual, cultural and collective), the influence of the media and new technologies. These changes challenge us to re-examine some constitutive features of the genre and to redefine the boundaries of the genre of autobiography, as well as to re-contextualize it in relation to various cultural and discursive practices underlying self-narratives.

The international interdisciplinary conference *Autobiography in Context* hosted by the English Department of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka, took place in Rijeka on the 21st and 22nd November 2014 and gathered around thirty scholars coming from all across Europe (Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Hungary, Romania, Austria, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Croatia).

The aim of the conference was to re-examine the concept of autobiography and re-contextualize its historical and cultural significance. The conference abstracts collected in this book encompass a wide range of approaches to autobiography and life writing, in light of the development of the genre and the various sub-genres, challenging traditional theoretical and historical contexts, as well as offering new ones.

The papers presented at the conference, therefore, dealt with autobiography in context, across cultures, social groups and across different historical periods. In view of the above mentioned the topics of the abstracts collected in this book include but are not limited to the following:

- **Autobiography and the boundaries of the genre;**
- **Autobiography and the canon;**
- **Autobiography and life writing, testimonials, confession, diaries, journals, letters, memoirs, fictitious autobiographies, autobiographical essays;**
- **Advancements and limits of autobiography; the role of the author, authority, authorship;**
- **Self-representational writing, self invention, fiction and truth, ethics, the art of lying;**
- **Autobiography and memory: autobiographical memory, collective memory and cultural memory;**
- **Autobiography and identity formation (gendered, hybrid, transnational, etc.); Personal narratives and Cosmopolitanism;**
- **Autobiography, body, self-identity and society;**
- **Autobiography and gender; Women's literature;**
- **Autobiography and history-making;**
- **Autobiography, trauma, cultural memory;**
- **Autobiography across cultures: Irish, Australian, Scottish, etc. (other national cultures);**
- **Autobiography and diasporic memories; ethnic literature (Irish, Ethnic-American, etc.); postcolonial autobiography; Indigenous autobiography;**
- **Autobiography and blog, online writing of the Self;**
- **Autobiography in Theatre, Dance and Film;**
- **Autobiography and Popular Culture;**
- **Cultural studies approach to autobiography**

The conference provided a stimulating platform for further rethinking of the genre of autobiography and life writing, its theoretical, philosophical, practical, and other implications within a broader literary and cultural context.

Irena Grubica, conference organizer

PLENARY LECTURES

The Excess of Autobiography: Texts, Paratexts, Contexts

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This paper is devoted to a reconsideration of the limits and advances of the genre of autobiography. Given the recent boom in autobiography and personal narratives this topic poses a formidable challenge to current literary and cultural studies. Autobiography frequently takes the form of a disturbance, upsetting the expectations and classifications of both general public and literary critics. It is a form of writing that is quickly dismissed or derided, but which nevertheless has revealed itself to be of central importance in understanding recent literary and cultural developments. What presuppositions does the genre of autobiography build upon, and how should we respond when more strictly literary genres integrate autobiographical elements?

This paper will explore selected, representative examples of how autobiography and autobiographically inclined literary works have challenged pervading norms over the last two centuries, with particular emphasis on English-language poets from the Romantic period to the present. The use of autobiographical elements in literature has repeatedly been part of an estranging revitalization of more or less settled literary forms, in addition to contributing to the reimagining of nationality through the example of representative or marginal identities. Russian Formalism helps us towards the formulation of the former of these developments, but formalism's response to biographical elements has also, tellingly, been a vexed one. Issues of genre are important, and will not go away: not only does every autobiographical text respond to, and take a measure of, the pressures and conventions of the autobiographical genre of its own specific

era, but in general autobiography's excess is also strikingly evident in how it overflows into other genres, through being a "trans-genre" or modulation of other forms.

The examples will span from the Romanticism of William Wordsworth and Lord Byron, via the 19th century call for uncompromising "sincerity" and the ensuing experiments of Modernism, to more recent instances of extreme and frequently troubling confessionalism in writers such as Anne Sexton, Robert Lowell and Karl-Ove Knausgård. William Butler Yeats's turn to autobiography and autobiographical forms of lyric in the second decade of the twentieth century will be given special attention, as a significant instance that draws together many of the key and conflicting tendencies covered. The borders and dialogue between life and writing will be in focus in this paper, and the degree to which critical terms text, context and paratext help us understand and clarify their complex interaction will also be subject to discussion.

CHARLES IVAN ARMSTRONG is a professor of British literature at the University of Agder, Norway. He formerly taught courses in Comparative literature and British literature at the Universities of Bergen and Tromsø, both in Norway. Since 2002, he has been a Visiting Fellow at Wolfson College, University of Cambridge. In the autumn of 2007 he held the same position at the Irish Studies Centre at the National University of Ireland – Galway. He has been an invited lecturer and seminar-holder at the renowned *W.B. Yeats International Summer School* on three occasions, in 2005, 2011 and 2014. His doctorate is in Comparative Literature and his published work has combined this field of study with the philological approach of traditional English studies and cultural emphasis of Irish studies, making his main contributions in the intersection between literary history and critical theory. His third, and most recent, monograph is *Reframing Yeats: Genre, Allusion and History* (Bloomsbury, 2013). This study provides a unique approach to the work of William Butler Yeats with innovative chapters on Yeats's autobiographical writings and biographical accounts of his life in the book, reflecting the author's long-standing interest in the complex intersections between literature and everyday life. His monograph *Romantic Organicism:*

From Idealist Origins to Ambivalent Afterlife (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) was a pioneering study that anticipated much later scholarship on vitalism and the importance of the life sciences for British and German Romanticism. *Figures of Memory: Poetry, Space and the Past* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) rewrote the history of poetry in the UK and Ireland over the last two hundred years, tracing the importance of personal, collective and other forms of memory in key poets such as William Wordsworth, Lord Tennyson, T. S. Eliot and Seamus Heaney. He has also co-edited three essay collections and published articles in a wide range of journals and essay collections. Professor Armstrong was the president of the Nordic Irish Studies Network from December 2010 to May 2014, and has been a member of the executive board of the same organization from 2006 to the present. He is also a member of the editorial boards of the journals *Romantik: Journal for the Study of Romanticisms*, *Nordic Irish Studies*, and *The Yeats Journal of Korea*.

Autobiography and Cultural Difference

Stipe GRGAS

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After cursory remarks on autobiography itself, this paper offers a number of readings of Irish, American and Croatian autobiographies. The main thrust of my argument is that autobiographies not only reveal and hide realities of human lives but that they are marked by the cultural context in which they are written. I will first look at the autobiographies of William Butler Yeats and Maud Gonne and argue that they hide a history of intimacy. That hidden intimacy and history of the body it gestures to will be the subject of my brief discussion of Colm Tóibín's novel *Master*. The next two biographies I attend to, autobiographies by Benjamin Franklin and Henry Adams, serve to articulate the place of the individual in American culture. I will use the biographies of Mirko Kovač and Stanko Lasić to show how writers in Croatia foreground in their accounts concerns which are peripheral in the other texts. On the basis of this evidence I discuss how the priorities and the hierarchy of values within a culture mark impact on the above-mentioned texts. Finally I will comment upon how autobiography in the present moment shows a marked transformation of the relationship between the individual and culture.

Professor STIPE GRGAS (1951) is the chair of the American Studies program at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb. He has published three books: *Nietzsche i Yeats* (Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, Zagreb, 1989), *Ispisivanje Prostora: Čitanje suvremenog američkog romana* (Naklada MD, Zagreb, 2000) and *Kažnjavanje*

forme: irsko pjesništvo poslije Yeatsa (Naklada MD, Zagreb 2004). Together with Svend Erik Larsen he has edited the collection of essays *The Construction of Nature* (Odense University Press, 1994). He has written more than a hundred articles on Irish, British and American literature and culture as well as on topics having to do with the interdisciplinary field of human spatiality. He has been a participant of numerous scholarly conferences, a guest lecturer at a number of European universities (Leipzig, Aarhus, Odense, Genova) and a recipient of two Fulbright scholarships which he spent at Yale University, New Haven (1994/5) and at Cornell University, Ithaca (spring 2011).

Women Writers' Autobiographies of the Early 20th Century

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For women writers, the early 20th century was a period of experimentation both in terms of life style and in narrative techniques, including life writing. Modernist texts' awareness of their own making and the resulting self-reflexive quality had an inevitable effect on how autobiographies were written. I will address the issue of the relationship between narrative and contextual diversity by exploring autobiographical texts by five women writers: Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), Gertrude Stein (1874-1946), Jean Rhys (1890-1979), Mary McMarthy (1912-1989) and Margit Kaffka (1880-1918). They all come from different cultural backgrounds, but they all reflect on the early 20th century, and their autobiographical writing bears the mark of their specific cultural context that is also manifest in their choice of narrative form.

Out of the six authors, the upper-middle class Londoner, Virginia Woolf's late autobiographical writing, *A Sketch of the Past* reveals its own textual codes, almost destabilising the "autobiographical pact". Her narrative technique, however, can also be understood as the admission that certain contents are impossible to articulate and to contain within a life narrative. The experiment with the narrativisation of an unorthodox content is, in my reading, the ultimate theme of Gertrude Stein's two texts that can be seen as autobiographical: *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and "Ada". Analysing them I will point out how a lesbian relationship is narrativised in Stein's metonymical modernism in the context of early 20th-century Paris. Jean Rhys's *Smile Please*, in turn, presents a complex cultural background (a white colonial subject in the Caribbean and in

Europe), where the basic sense of the self is questioned by constantly shifting cultural boundaries and borderlines, which at the same time constructs the space of creativity too. Narrative spaces are in the centre of Mary McCarthy's *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*, in which the Foucauldian notion of the confession is problematised in a narrative that reflects on (Catholic) confession and autobiography both as a narrative space and as a constraint, constantly correcting itself, and undoing the verifiability of truth production. Finally, I will also give an insight into an autobiographical text of the most canonised Hungarian modernist woman writer, Margit Kaffka: *Lyrical Notes on a Year*, written during and about World War I, which addresses issues of the fragmentation of the female subject and, mainly due to the war experience, deconstructs the boundaries between the individual and society.

NÓRA SÉLLEI is professor of English at the University of Debrecen, Hungary, and at the Catholic University in Ruzomberok, Slovakia. She gained her Ph.D. (1996) and “habilitation” (2001) from the University of Debrecen, and DSc from the Hungarian Academy (2013). Her main fields of teaching and research are gender studies, feminist literary theory, and 19th and 20th-century women writers, primarily fiction and autobiography. Apart from almost one hundred scholarly articles, her publications include five books: *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Personal and Professional Bond* (Peter Lang, 1996), and four monographs in Hungarian: on 19th-century English women writers (1999), on 20th-century women's autobiographies (2001), on Hungarian feminist theory and criticism (2007), and on cultural (self-)reflexivity in Virginia Woolf's writings of the thirties (2012). She was the series editor of the Hungarian feminist book series Artemis Books, is currently a member of the advisory board of *Gender Studies, Focus, Confluente* and *Synthesis*. She is the Hungarian translator of Virginia Woolf's *Moments of Being*, Jean Rhys's *Smile Please*, and Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*. Among other volumes, she also edited a collection of articles on female subjectivity, edited and translated a reader on the theoretical junctures of feminism and (post)modernism and co-edited two thematic international volumes (*She's Leaving Home: Women's Writing in English in a European*

***Context*, Peter Lang, 2011, co-editor: June Waudby; *Presences and Absences: Transdisciplinary Essays*, Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2013, co-editor: Katarina Labudova).**

For further information see: <http://ieas.unideb.hu/sellei>

CONFERENCE PAPERS

Beckett's Greatcoat: Paternal Heirloom and Costume Staple

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This presentation will explore the autobiographical origins of the greatcoat worn by so many of Beckett's fictional characters that it might safely be proposed as their costume staple. Beckett took this garment from his father's wardrobe after his death. Over fifty years, Beckett dressed his characters in this greatcoat, devoting lengthy descriptions to the sensual aspects of the coat's decay. Bill Beckett wore precisely such a coat during his regular walks over the fields and mountains near the family home, right up to his sudden death in 1933. A decade later, Beckett introduced the greatcoat in *Watt*, and in his writings of the 1940s and 50s its ludic pockets and lapels and the worn softness of its ancient fabric make it a useful and comforting object for various indigent and isolated characters. From the 1960s to the 80s, however, the greatcoat becomes a poetically charged icon of loss, metonymic for the mourned loved ones and past lives that haunt Beckett's later writing. This presentation will explore how the nature of Beckett's relationship with his father profoundly alters the register of his writing, through his descriptions and treatment of the paternal greatcoat: although Beckett initially uses this item of clothing to house and inscribe details of his father's memory, the tender melancholy of its associations for him come to determine the atmosphere of his increasingly elegiac novels, plays and poetry.

Dr JULIE BATES was awarded her Ph.D. by Trinity College Dublin in 2013. Her doctoral thesis charted Samuel Beckett's material imagination and evolving creative praxis through thirteen recurring objects in his fiction, drama and poetry from the early 1930s to the late 1980s. Julie is currently revising her thesis for publication as a monograph with Cambridge University Press. She has contributed a chapter to the *Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre* (2015), and has given talks in Ireland, Britain, Portugal, Colombia, Mexico and Turkey. Julie has lectured on modern European literature and art at universities in Dublin and Mexico, and currently lectures on drama at the International University of Sarajevo.

Autobiographical Elements in Ludwig Bauer's Neo-Historical Novels

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This paper combines two voices: Ludwig Bauer's reflection on the autobiographical and pseudo-autobiographical elements in his novels and Lidija Dujić's philological interpretation of these elements. The key topics discussed are national and cultural identity, biculturalism and the fate of the German minority in the Slavic context. The paper is particularly focused on the issue of alternative autobiography, as opposed to the true one, and as an expression of belonging. It seeks to provide an encompassing analytic framework which would allow both authors to examine the representation of Germans not only as culprits but also as victims of Nazism and other ideologically monolithic models. Moreover, in line with these timely issues, the paper examines the contribution of the German language and culture to the development of contemporary Croatian culture.

Unlike the historical novel as a literary **reconstruction** of history, the term neo-historical novel aims to stress the literary **interpretation** of history. The analysis will include the following neo-historical novels of Ludwig Bauer:

Kratka kronika porodice Weber [The Short Chronicle of the Weber Family], Sarajevo, 1990; Zagreb, 2001, 2nd ed.; Zagreb, 2007, 3rd ed.

Don Juanova velika ljubav i mali balkanski rat [The Great Don Juan's Love and the Little Balkan War], Zagreb, 2003;

Patnje Antonije Brabec [Sorrows of Antonia Brabec], Zaprešić, 2008;
Zavičaj, zaborav [Homeland, Oblivion], Zaprešić, 2010;
Karusel [Carousel], Zaprešić, 2011;
Toranj kiselih jabuka [Tower of Sour Apples], Zaprešić 2013.

LUDWIG BAUER (1941) received his B. A. in Slavic Studies from the University of Zagreb and attended postgraduate studies in Prague. His work includes over 30 fiction titles in several languages. His stories written for children are included in the Croatian elementary school curriculum. Bauer's novels are extremely critical of all non-democratic regimes. The protagonists are individuals, mostly ethnic Germans/Austrians, who fall victim to history. His fiction and translation was awarded several international literary awards and some Croatian ones. Bauer's numerous translations from Slavic languages, German, English and Danish include fiction, drama and poetry. He is currently a guest professor at "Agora", College of Marketing Communication, where he teaches creative and functional writing.

LIDIJA DUJIĆ (1965) received her B. A. and Ph.D. in Croatian Philology from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb. She has been working as an editor in Croatian publishing houses *Profil* and *Mala zvona*. She was a lecturer at the Teacher's College in Zagreb and the Art Academy in Osijek. She has been teaching at the University North in Koprivnica since 2012. Lidija Dujić authored three books of fiction *Plagva* [the name of the title hero], *Suhozid* [Stonewall] and *Agavine kćeri* [Agava's Daughters]. She also published a book of literary essays *Ženskom stranom hrvatske književnosti* [Along the Female Side of the Croatian Literature] in 2011 (electronic edition 2014); her numerous articles about Bauer's fiction and translations were published in Croatian and international magazines in different languages.

Romantic Confession: The Case of Thomas de Quincey

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In the introductory part of the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821), de Quincey makes a distinction between French and English confessional writings by saying that ‘nothing, indeed, is more revolting to English feelings than the spectacle of a human being obtruding on our notice his moral ulcers or scars, and tearing away that “decent drapery” which time or indulgence to human frailty may have drawn over them’. French sensibility, according to de Quincey is ‘spurious and defective’ while the English is always concerned with the constitution of the moral faculties. Departing from de Quincey’s remark and his confessional autobiography, this paper aims to explore the origins of Romantic confessional writing and possible overlapping between Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s and de Quincey’s work. It will also try to locate ‘confession’ within Romantic autobiographical writings, stressing the importance of a truly autonomous subject, fully conscious of his uniqueness.

In discussing important criteria through which the Romantic ‘I’ is being constituted, I want to invoke Charles Taylor’s four requirements: to know who you are is to be oriented in a moral space, to be framed by certain universally valid commitments, particular identifications and by one’s social surroundings. Furthermore, in assessing these four requirements, the paper will try to deal with the poststructuralist vein of thinking, departing from Linda Anderson’s argument that ‘autobiography represents a privileged form for a Romantic writer because it confirms his plight: the perplexity of a self forever recasting and repeating itself as text.’

MARTINA DOMINES VELIKI works as a senior teaching assistant in the English Department of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. She teaches Introduction to the Study of English Literature and two undergraduate courses on British Romanticism (poetry and prose). She has participated at several international conferences and has published papers in both Croatian and international journals (*Grasmere Journal, Studien Zur Englischen Romantik, Central European Journal of Canadian Studies, Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagabiensia, Književna smotra*). For her first Romantic conference she was granted the Jonathan Wordsworth Scholarship (in 2008) and has won two bursaries for doing her doctoral research (University of Bergen and University of Newcastle). In 2011 she defended her doctoral thesis, entitled ‘Constructions of the Romantic Subject: Rousseau and Wordsworth’. In 2013 she became the president of the Croatian ESSE branch, HDAS (Croatian Association for Anglophone Studies).

Autobiography into Film: Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*, or the Auteur's Take on the Author's Truth

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Stanley Kubrick's film *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) is based on two more or less autobiographical texts, both rooted in their authors' experience in the Vietnam War: *Dispatches* (1977), a memoir by Michael Herr, who acted as a war correspondent, and Gustav Hasford's far more fictionalized account entitled *The Short-Timers* (1979). Both Herr and Hasford contributed also to writing the script, alongside Kubrick. This paper will examine the transition from autobiography to film by considering issues such as the "autobiographical pact" (Lejeune, 1973), referentiality, self-presentation and truth.

The film's relationship with its autobiographical sources is a complex one. *Dispatches* is a declared memoir, but *The Short-Timers* is an autofiction which signals to the reader that it is based on reality, without claiming any degree of factual accuracy. Kubrick first enlisted Herr to write the script, then discovered Hasford's book and decided to base most of the film on his novel. Both autobiographers were thus involved in writing the film, but significant changes were made in the process of adapting their books to screen, the most striking of which is the radically altered extent of the first section. The film suggests no autobiographical identification, and offers instead a highly reworked version of the two authors' narratives.

On the other hand, Kubrick repeatedly insists on his films being

accurate adaptations, and aims at creating a form of truth with the specific means of the filmmaker. In this particular case, he seems to reconstruct a degree of referentiality that could be seen as compensating the degree of verisimilitude lost by the lack of an autobiographical pact. His very choice of two autobiographers testifies to this desire, alongside the authenticity he creates by researching and faithfully re-creating the realities of the Vietnam War in his UK set, or by notoriously employing a genuine former drill instructor (R. Lee Ermey) to play the drill instructor in the film, and letting him write most of his own lines.

I will look at the way in which the film transposes the autobiographical into the visual medium, how this makes impact on issues such as authorial authority or viewer identification with the central consciousness, and ultimately how these issues affect the representation of the Vietnam War.

CLAUDIA IOANA DOROHOLSCHI is a lecturer in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at the West University of Timișoara, Romania, where she teaches English and American literature, as well as courses in academic and creative writing. She holds a Ph.D. in literature, and has published articles and studies on fin de siècle literature, contemporary literature and on academic writing. She has a long-standing interest in the work of Stanley Kubrick.

Disgraceful Lapses, Transitional Textualities: Framing Memory in the Autobiographical Graphic Novel

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Autobiographical memory structures the way human beings tell the stories of their lives—to the world, but primarily to themselves. Our self-stories are often as much visually constituted as they are streams of words. Such visual schemata are well represented in the pages of graphic novels, which have become noted for their capacity to present personal life narratives. Focusing on the graphic novels of Alison Bechdel *Fun Home* (2006) and *Are You My Mother?* (2012), I will explore the use of graphic tropes to represent various types of memory -- autobiographical, collective, transactive -- to assimilate intertexts and to catch “the running tap of life.”

Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic deals primarily with the author’s relationship with her father and explores her own emerging gender identity along with her father’s closeted homosexuality and eventual suicide. Its graphic quality is superb, including visual equivalents for a range of sophisticated effects more conventionally associated with verbal narrative: focalization, subtext and mise-en abyme. The later book, *Are You My Mother? A Comic Drama* shifts the focus to the author’s mother and a concomitant quest for mothering that occupies half a lifetime, taking forms both literal and literary. However, on closer inspection, this second

graphic novel can be seen to revisit the scenes from the first, revealing interesting effects of autobiographical memory in both mother and daughter. In the course of *Are You My Mother?* the narrative negotiates Virginia Woolf's „lapses“ to reintegrate the working self through a series of intertexts, each functioning psychoanalytically as a Winnicottian „transitional object“ in the ongoing project of self-integration.

Dr MICHELLE GADPAILLE is an associate professor in the Department of English and American Studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor. She was educated at Yale University and the University of Toronto. After several years teaching in Toronto, she relocated to Slovenia, where she currently teaches at the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor. Having begun her research in fiction genres (*The Canadian Short Story*, Oxford), she now studies primarily nineteenth-century Canadian writers (*“As She Should Be”*: *Codes of Conduct in Early Canadian Women's Writing*, Heidelberg, 2010). She was the co-editor of the essay collection *Words and Music* (Cambridge Scholars, 2013) and most recently of the essay “Eating Dirt, Being Dirt: Backgrounds to the Story of Slavery” in the current issue of the Austrian journal *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik*. Michelle's long-term interest in the relation of word to image has found new impetus in studying and teaching graphic novels.

Kierkegaard's Diaries as a Source for Understanding his Life and Works

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This paper is focused on the famous Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard, who significantly marked the development of contemporary philosophy. Often called the „father of existentialism“, he offered a new philosophical approach, which gave the primacy to the existence and the existential thinking over the primacy to essence. He promoted an active attitude towards thinking about existential questions, which bother every man individually, and human kind in general. His existential approach was best exemplified in a distinctive kind of rhetoric that he developed, which relied primarily on his own search for a deeper understanding of self. The aim of such rhetoric was to reach the individuals and to force them to think for themselves so that they could know themselves better and take responsibility for their existential choices and life's most important issues. The crucial mechanism in this kind of rhetoric was the use of pseudonyms, which enabled him to offer different perspectives and different points of view to his readers, thus helping them 'to see clearly' the best solutions to their problems.

However, we can only understand Kierkegaard's existentialism if we focus on a more personal form of expression that he left behind: his diaries. Published posthumously by his brother, Kierkegaard's diaries are brimming with autobiographical references and can be easily read as his testimonials. They reveal a deep commitment in his attempt to reach a

more profound sense of understanding oneself in order to connect with God and, therefore, create a deeper and more meaningful relation with Him. Given the extent to which some of the issues from his diaries were later developed in his philosophical works, it is obvious that we cannot gain a full account of his philosophy unless we rely on his autobiographical writings. We can consider his autobiographical writings as the source of his thoughts, opinions and attitudes about various issues, many of which were developed in his philosophical works. They encompass a wide variety of genres, which can be classified as autobiographical romance, philosophical essay and religious meditation. In order to understand better the relationship between his diaries and his other works, this paper sets out to explore the relevance of his diaries as a form of his autobiographical expression.

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The Genre of James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Autobiographical Memory

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The generic hybridity of James Joyce's *Ulysses* has often been taken for granted and his work has been placed under the rubric of autobiography. Therefore, to state that *Ulysses* is autofictional wouldn't be something new. However, the complex dynamics underlying its autobiographical mode has seldom been thoroughly examined in relation to other genres that the work accommodates. My contention is that new light can be shed on *Ulysses* and its relation to autobiography if we focus on the issue of memory.

In his seminal study on «The Genre of *Ulysses*» A. Walton Litz examines the «rewards and dangers, of reading *Ulysses* with a particular view of the novel as a form constantly in mind». Indeed, in the long process of writing *Ulysses* Joyce seldom called it a novel; in his famous letter to Italian translator Carlo Linati he referred to *Ulysses* as «an epic of two races (Israelite-Irish) and at the same time [as] the cycle of the human body as well as a little story of a day (life)» (*Letters*, 21 September 1920). While conceiving life as narrative, Joyce in fact seeks an alternative genre that could constitute a modern epic and reconcile the individual and collective, the story of the self and the story of the nation.

This paper departs from the assumption that the burgeoning field of memory studies could give new insights into the traditional theoretical frameworks dealing with genre and narrative. Joyce's *Ulysses* features the plurality of memories, often rendered in figures and sites of memory as well as various counter-narratives and counter-memories. The collective

memory of Ireland in *Ulysses* features as a complex and multilayered dynamics of representative modes and contingent mnemonic traces within a wider, encyclopaedic space of cultural memory.

My paper will consider the convergence between the historical and the personal at the intersection of various mnemonic modes; it will particularly focus on the controversial status of autobiographical memory in *Ulysses* and problematize it in relation to the concepts of autobiography and autofiction. In line with Philippe Lejeune's considerations of autofiction, it will address the question whether autofiction can house autobiographical memory at all and what consequences this question bears on the genre of *Ulysses*.

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**“I am not a story” –
Autobiography and Postmodernism in
J. M. Coetzee’s and Doris Lessing’s Writings**

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Although both Coetzee and Lessing hail from Africa and a considerable part of their fictional and non-fictional writings concentrate on the continent, the wide range of their interests and influences prevent them from being categorised as merely postcolonial writers. Furthermore, a significant part of their oeuvre experiments with various forms of self-writing, which, similarly, offer more than just the postcolonial perspective.

Both Coetzee and Lessing have written explicit autobiographies (Coetzee: *Boyhood, Youth, Summertime*; Lessing: *Under My Skin, Walking in the Shade*) but perhaps what is more interesting is the way self-writing is implicitly interwoven in their fictional works as well. In *Under My Skin*, Doris Lessing writes that “there is no doubt fiction makes a better job of the truth”, which, indeed, seems to make the case for both herself and Coetzee. Her five-volume novel series, *The Children of Violence*, which bears striking similarities to her later autobiographies, explores women’s – including her own – fundamental experiences from Africa in the 1930s to a dystopic London. Coetzee, on the other hand, writes in a less concentrated manner as, to some extent, almost all his works seem to hinge on negotiating the self, particularly in relation to the act of writing itself.

The paper looks at some of Coetzee’s and Lessing’s non-

fictional and fictional works featuring autobiographical elements, with the aim of pinpointing the intriguing writerly tricks and games that render these texts more postmodern than postcolonial. Both of these writers use the double coding of postmodernism (Charles Jencks), which, in turn, has been adopted by postcolonialist critics as well (such as Cameron McCarthy and Greg Dimitriadis). These latter claim that postcolonial literatures use double codes when they mobilise two or more fields of reference (e.g. European and African) at the same time. The paper aims to prove that these particular autobiographies and self-writings are not merely interesting for their (post)colonial authorship but more so for the postmodern, generic and textual games they play with their readers.

KATA GYURIS (1989) is currently a Ph.D. student at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary. In her research she focuses on the different spaces of violence in Anglophone and Francophone African authors' writings. She has published articles on J. M. Coetzee, Doris Lessing and J. M. G. Le Clézio.

Family (His)stories: Tributes to Ordinary Citizens and their Shared German Past, in Birgit Weyhe's Graphic Novel: *Im Himmel ist Jahrmarkt*¹

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I would like to present an ongoing project that is actually a part of my current seminar dealing with the commemoration of WW1, which includes the subject of passing down personal memories and family histories. Noticeably the intention behind the exhibitions covering the First World War that I have visited in the U.K., Austria and Germany, such as the excellent „Jubel und Elend. Leben mit dem Grossen Krieg“ (Schallaburg, Austria) has been to focus on the ‘Home Front’ and ordinary people’s lives. Looking at so many personal documents and such a wide range of artefacts inspired me to begin research into the subject of personal histories and family biographies. Also, public interest in such testimonies is substantial, if print publications, popular series and docutainment programmes on TV are anything to go by.

There are many examples of personal testimonies that can be found in, for example, diary form such as Vera Brittain’s *Chronicle of Youth*, but also in other text types such as graphic novels that explore possibilities of mixing text types and genres in innovative ways. Birgit Weyhe has produced graphic novels dealing with her own family history, in which she also refers to the question of facts, (unreliable) memory, and fiction

¹ "Heaven is a Fair." (transl. by M.H.)

in such histories. She explicitly states that she has bridged the gaps in her documentation with fiction, but does it in a plausible way.

In her graphic novel „Im Himmel ist Jahrmarkt“, Weyhe not only plays with her own family history but incorporates a (sketchy) history of Germany in the 20th century, dealing with many issues specific to both World Wars, and specific generations as well as timeless issues that affect the fabric of family life everywhere. My view is that Weyhe’s personal approach encourages the reader to critically engage with her subject matter and relate it to their own selves and situations. One of the goals of my course „Focus on Culture: Commemorating the Great War“ is that my students should themselves become sufficiently interested in engaging in a similar project relating to their own families – before it is too late to gather personal witnesses and testimonies of the past. It should aid them in the process of self-discovery and understanding their own and others’ identities. My presentation will explore the possibilities and limitations of the approach I have taken in my seminar.

MARGRET HOLT is a senior lecturer at the Department of English and American Studies, at the University of Klagenfurt, Austria, and independent researcher. She has taught in the fields of English Language, Literature and Culture, specialising in 19th century British literature and culture, particularly in the work of Charles Dickens. The main foci of her research are the 19th century novel and Children’s and Young Adult fiction. Regarding the latter, she has taught courses across a broad spectrum of topics in the areas of fantasy, horror and science fiction, war, fairy tales, myths and legends, puppet theatre and drama, “Harry Potter”, ideologies in children’s fiction, and the art of illustrations and picture books. Her research work has been strongly oriented towards her students. Her recent publications include: *Twinkle Sleepyhead – Zvezdica Zaspanka - problems with the reception of texts unprofessionally translated* (2006), *Racism in British Children’s Literature, or from Little Black Sambo to Harry Potter* (2008), *Bambi and what became of him: a case study in global and local exploitation* (2011).

Self-Fashioning in Richard Murphy's *The Kick: A Life Among Writers*

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Richard Murphy's autobiography *The Kick: A Life Among Writers* was widely acclaimed on publication in 2002. Writing in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Patrick Crotty referred to "a unitary achievement" between Murphy's poetry and his memoir and "a life's work truer, broader and deeper than criticism has suspected" (*TLS*, 4 October 2002). What surprised many was the autobiographical candour of *The Kick* which included revelations of Murphy's bisexuality, treatment of the complex personal lives of such poets as Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath and Theodore Roethke who were friends of Murphy, its descriptions of life on the Irish seaboard in Connemara where Murphy lived for two decades and Murphy's own personal journey as an Anglo-Irish poet at the tail-end of Empire seeking an identity in independent Ireland. Ted Hughes had described Murphy's verse as "classical" while Seamus Heaney had referred to his impersonality and "control"; yet *The Kick* appeared to tend towards confessionalism and revelation in a way which brought into question Murphy's allegedly impersonal poetic voice.

This paper will seek to assess Murphy's achievement as autobiographer in *The Kick*. It will affirm Crotty's intuition that Murphy's poetry is best re-read in the light of the autobiographical information made available in 2002. It will be suggested that his poetry's classical virtues should now be read in terms of their often personal subject matter, which is sometimes veiled by the historical themes of such poems as *The Battle of Aughrim* (1968), or the nature poetry of *High Island* (1974). The "epic objectivity" (Ted Hughes) of Murphy's best work will be seen to have a deeply autobiographical context. This paper will further consider the

construction of Murphy's unfolding self-narrative in *The Kick* from dozens of notebooks and family memorabilia, some of which are incorporated verbatim into the text, which Murphy has condensed into a chapterless sequence of scenes or snippets of experience. The strategic use of these raw materials arguably amounts to a carefully edited and artfully constructed act of self-fashioning which, in a certain way, is no less "classical" than the poems for which Murphy has been most praised.

Professor BENJAMIN KEATINGE is Dean of the Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication and Head of English at the South East European University, Macedonia. He is co-editor of *France and Ireland in the Public Imagination* (Peter Lang, 2014) and *Other Edens: The Life and Work of Brian Coffey* (Irish Academic Press, 2010) and he has published widely on twentieth-century Irish literature. He is a recipient of an International Research Fellowship from the New Europe College, Bucharest, Romania for 2014-15. He is currently editing a book of essays on Richard Murphy titled - *Making Integral: Critical Essays on Richard Murphy*.

The Art of Lying in the Autobiographies of Harry Furniss

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Harry Furniss was born in Wexford, Ireland, in 1854 and described himself as the son of a Yorkshireman and a Scottish mother. He rose to prominence as a caricaturist for *Punch* but achieved notoriety for his “Artistic Joke” exhibition in 1887, a collection of large black and white paintings that imitated the style of many famous Royal Academy artists. He is best remembered for his *Punch* cartoons and for his illustrations in Lewis Carroll’s *Sylvie and Bruno* and in Edwardian editions of Dickens’ works. In his later years, he acted in some of the first silent films in America. As well as his drawings and paintings, Furniss left a variety of memoirs behind him. Understandably, many readers have been interested to see how Furniss depicts personalities such as Lewis Carroll or Oscar Wilde’s mother Speranza. Furniss’ books are full of mischievous false information, however, and nothing that he writes is at all reliable. His writing is very ironic and frequently his intended meaning is quite literally the opposite to his stated meaning. This is most obvious whenever he states that he is not an Irishman, because there is always a deliberate clue that contradicts his assertion.

At the beginning of his 1901 two-volume memoir *Confessions of a Caricaturist*, Furniss looks back on his life of artistic “crime,” such as the irreverent Artistic Joke exhibition. Amusingly, he also commits a literary crime by lying cheerfully and transparently to the reader throughout the volumes. The lies are often too easy to spot, as if Furniss is characterising himself as an unreliable narrator in the style of Daniel Defoe’s *Moll Flanders*. This paper will examine Furniss’ playful stories in *Confessions of a Caricaturist* and in his other written works.

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Autobiography, Heterotopia, Imagination

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This paper examines the status of autobiography as a literary text that shows features of heterotopia, a place outside of all places and a mirror of real life in which an individual observes and expresses his past and gives account of his lived experience. One can argue that an individual is positioned as «doubled self»: one “self” belongs to the present moment, while the other “self” moves in the virtual or imaginative space of the past. The evocation of the past in autobiography suggests that an individual’s identity is a reconstruction created by memory, oblivion and imagination. These procedures are active in the formation of the autobiographical self, which features as “the position” where the reality (i.e. what belongs to memory) meets the virtual (i.e. what belongs to imagination). This paper, therefore, seeks to highlight the genre of autobiography in terms of a rivalry between the truth/reality and its interpretation in which the remembered trace of reality coexists with its imaginative supplementation. Autobiography also presupposes the accumulation of (all) remembrance in one place. This makes autobiography a medium in which time is transferred into space (outside of all spaces) and therefore saved from oblivion and ravage (Cf. Foucault). In this sense, the author of autobiography becomes a mediator between remembrance and reality (Cf. Ricoeur), or features as “the position” in which difference between two intentionalities (fictional vs. memory) comes to light.

DANIJELA MAROT KIŠ graduated from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka with B.A. in Croatian Language and Literature in 1999 and earned Ph.D. in Humanities (Theory and History of Literature) at the University of Rijeka in 2006. Her dissertation is entitled *The Identity of Border – Reading the Croatian Borderline Literature from the Perspective of Postcolonial Theory*. She is currently an assistant professor of Literary Theory and Stylistics at the Department of Croatian Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka where she teaches a number of undergraduate courses: *An Overview of Stylistics: Schools and Directions*, *History of the Novel*, *Interpretation of the Novel*, *Discourse Theory and Discourse Analysis*. Her main scientific and research interests include theory of discourse and discourse stylistics, interdisciplinary approach to literature and the philosophy of literature, cognitive poetics, in particular the language-mind relationship, and the language-culture-identity relationship. She has published papers in several Croatian and international scientific journals and other scientific publications. Danijela Marot Kiš is a co-author of two books: *Poetics of Mind – Capturing, Questioning, and Rescuing of Meaning* (with Marina Biti) and *Personific(a)tion: Literary Subject and the Politics of Impersonality* (with Aleksandar Mijatović).

Autobiography and the Re(construction) of African American Self-identity and Society in the Works of Zora Neale Hurston

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From their literary beginnings African Americans have desired to reform conventional American notions of race with a general concern for social acceptance and participation. The development of their artistic culture should be seen as deriving significantly from this reformatory spirit as well as from the need to create culture as a form of protest. The formal beginnings of African American literary theory can be traced to the early part of the twentieth century when African American authors wrote mainly in magazines to report on their society, when many African American authors started voicing their concern with the use of literature as a means of affirming blacks, while counteracting traditional notions of race and prejudices that stem from it. Early African American literary critics and editors realized that the value of black literature is to be found in its ability to nurture positive self-images in the face of adversity. Early African American editors noted the interdependence between authors and the reading community and claimed that the black public has the responsibility of advancing the development and survival of black authors who, in their opinion, have a vital role in undoing the damage done by racism.

During the 1920s, a number of young writers such as Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes and George S. Schulyer emerged to be some of the key authors in the realization of the Harlem Renaissance. Their works

addressed, among others, issues of self-identity, cultural identity and psychological reconstruction. Regarded by many to be the central cultural and literary event in the history of black America, the Harlem Renaissance generated a literary and cultural environment that would establish the black author as a crucial social force. During that period the role of writers and their work towards the improvement of African American identity became increasingly recognized. Consequently, the augmented establishment of literary critical concerns played a central role in the evolution, definition and identity of black society in the United States.

The writings of the authors belonging to the Harlem Renaissance created the canon which would later be analyzed by literary critics and theorists. Black theorists could build on the political, cultural and aesthetic concerns articulated by authors such as Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) and Larry Neal, to name just a few of them. The importance of Zora Neale Hurston and her work that spans from novels and essays, to folklore and anthropological works, is essential both for the Harlem Renaissance and a number of later (African) American authors.

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Larger than Life: Orson Welles's Forging of the Artistic Self

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Orson Welles never wrote an autobiography: “[d]estroy all biographies”, he declared in 1962, “[o]nly art can explain the life of a man—and not the contrary.” At first glance it appears relatively straightforward to understand Welles, one of the most noted *auteurs* in the history of cinema, through his art, as his life seems to have revolved around his film work. He was constantly making, trying to raise money to produce, appearing in, and talking about, films. Taking these, therefore, as fragments of a would-be autobiography, this paper looks to trace a possible way of understanding Welles via, in particular, his contribution to *Return to Glennascaul* (1953) and his 1974 film *F for Fake*. Through an exploration of what might be considered a tension between the signature of the *auteur* and the chameleon, protean character of the actor, it will be argued that while Welles's notoriously larger-than-life character pervades his work, it also constitutes something of a void: he is there and not there all the time.

AIDAN O'MALLEY obtained his Ph.D. from the European University Institute, Florence, and is currently teaching at the University of Rijeka as well as at the University of Zagreb, where he is the visiting lecturer in Irish Studies. He is the author of *Field Day and the Translation of Irish Identities: Performing Contradictions* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), and has published other articles and chapters on Irish literature

and cultural translation. In 2013 he co-edited (with Ina Gjurjan) a special issue of the *European Journal of English Studies* (17/2, 2013), 'Myths of Europe: East of Venice', that examines literary and cultural interactions between Central and Eastern Europe and the Anglophone world in the post-Cold War period. He has also recently co-edited with Eve Patten a collection of essays, *Ireland, West to East: Irish Cultural Connections with Central and Eastern Europe* (Peter Lang, 2014).

Fact and Fiction: Autobiography Across Cultures

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Autobiography confronts us with issues like truth, the role of memory, the temptation of fiction. These are aspects I will touch on in presenting some examples of life writing from various parts of the world.

As it happens two male writers represent the “normal” kind of autobiography, *My Days* by R.K. Narayan and John Hewitt’s *A Northern Light*, written some fifty years ago but only recently published; the former looking at himself in the same ironical way as in his autobiographical essays and the latter more of an autobiographical eye than an autobiographical “I”.

Aboriginal writer Sally Morgan wrote a family autobiography in a significantly postcolonial way and met with protests about her aboriginality and about her grandmother’s story from the colonist family she had served. On the other hand, facts were later found to prove that things had been much worse than her family had been able to imagine.

“Etty Hillesum” is an autobiography or diary that has gone through many stages. Even if we neglect how facts and events of life are transferred into diary notes, we have to take into consideration the collecting and editing of them, then the translation from Dutch into English, first in parts and apparently not very adequately done – something that led to misunderstandings – but finally a complete and reliable translation. The final stage is, then, Janice Kulyk Keefer’s boiling the more than 700 pages down into some 70 short poems, which, even so, seem to contain the essence of the larger book. The distance from what happened to the poems we read is matter for consideration.

Another Canadian, Marian Engel, produced a novel, *Monodromos* or *One-Way Street* which in everything except the framework is based on her one-year-long stay on the island of Cyprus. This is where we come closest among these five works to an autofiction, a term in need of some explanation.

This palette of differently coloured approaches to the story of the self is what I will further discuss.

BRITTA OLINDER, University of Gothenburg, has taught English literatures for over thirty years, has edited collections on postcolonial, especially Canadian and Irish literature and has published books and articles on Restoration literary theory and drama, particularly John Dryden, on African and Australian writing but also on Irish authors such as John Hewitt, Anne Devlin, Christina Reid, Deirdre Madden, Eavan Boland, Paula Mehan, James Joyce, Canadian writers like Aritha van Herk, Janice Kulyk Keefer, Marian Engel, Gloria Sawai and Indian ones, notably R.K. Narayan, Anita Desai and Sashi Deshpande. Of special interest is the publication *A Sense of Place* (1984) including Salman Rushdie's contribution to his first international conference and papers by Anita Desai, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Wilson Harris, Randolph Stow and many others. Articles published this year include "John Hewitt and the Sister Arts", "John Hewitt as the Travelling European", "The Northern Athens or a City of Horrors? Belfast as Represented by Some Women Writers" and in Swedish an article on Sally Morgan with an additional five on Joyce, Marian Engel, Janice Kulyk Keefer, Sally Morgan and Deirdre Madden in the pipeline.

Autobiography as the Biography of Other: Jamaica Kincaid's *The Autobiography of my Mother* and Claudio Magris' *Blindly*

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When we discuss identity we must distinguish between its two inseparable aspects: the subjective and objective. One's subjective identity is what the person conceives himself to be while the objective identity is how one might be seen independently of his own self-perception. Only under the condition that one sees himself and is seen by others, can one claim the fullness of his/her identity. In that sense, autobiography can be considered not just an account of the author's life told in first-person-introspective-narrative but also a reflection of the author's self in the mirror of others. Therefore, this paper departs from the assumption that autobiography, even in its most personal, self-reflecting, introspective aspects always implies a narrative about the other, even when one writes about himself/herself. While writing, the author of an autobiography is, in fact, performing a self-inscription into a textual space that imposes on him a demand to "step out of one's self" and to view himself/herself from a seemingly alienated perspective of the other.

Relying on close reading, my paper seeks to illustrate these complex issues of identity formation in a comparative analysis of Jamaica Kincaid's *The Autobiography of my Mother*, and Claudio Magris's *Blindly*. At the core of Kincaid's narrative lies the blending of two main character(s): the mother and the daughter. Using "the ingredients" that belong to the mother and her daughter the narrator desires to build a single character that fuses the multitude of the two in order to build one whole and complete literary

persona. What mobilizes Kincaid's narrative logic, enabling it to articulate the character of Xuela Richardson, is the absence of her own voice—the void that echoes the physical absence of her mother. On the other hand, in the case of Claudio Magris, the fact that he writes the autobiography of Salvatore Cipico rests upon an almost opposite set of reasons. The novel opens with the main character's monologue as the response to a psychotherapy session held in Trieste at the beginning of 1990s in which he directly addresses the genre of autobiography. The multiplicity and confusion of Cipico's voices and names, physical locations; the impossibility of locating the source of his narration (i.e. the reader is not certain whether the voice is a human one, or comes from a PC, from a tape recorder...) almost forces the narrator to declare the impossibility of autobiography as a genre while actually writing the autobiography of his principal character(s).

While hoping to widen the existing framings of autobiography, the aim of this paper is to contextualize the examples from Kincaid's and Magris's novels within the opening theoretical distinction between the two inseparable aspects of identity: the subjective and the objective one.

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Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's *Autobiography*: The Confessions of “a Sensitive Thinking Being”

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Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić wrote her *Autobiography* at the request of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts of which she was the first female member. Her narrative begins with a declaration that her autobiography can never be „an interesting history of the life of a distinguished author“ since she leads a peaceful family life but it can only be a record of the development of „a sensitive thinking being“. As her introduction reveals, gender is at the heart of her story. Distinguished authors are implicitly male, their lives are public, eventful. On the other hand, she is a woman, her life is in the private sphere and thus uninteresting to the public. Therefore, it is only the story of the gender neutral sensitive thinking being that's worthy being told, and it is as such that she is their equal and not an intruder into the all-male national literary canon.

Her artistic development is depicted following two plotlines: the first, seemingly dominant, records the outward influences on the author, starting with a childhood memory of a wild nature which made a strong impact on her imagination and thus triggered her creativity. Nature is given credit as the original source of inspiration. She proceeds to describe the influence that different, predominantly male members of her prominent family, as well as some other great minds of her time, had on her mind and sensitivity, shaping, thus, the value system she adhered to all of her life. The other plotline, running parallel to the first, tells the story of the author's voice finding its way out. As long as she could remember she had

a passionate desire to write. Her writing is also marked by her self-imposed denial of self-expression which originates from her conviction that writing is in conflict with her duties as a woman. Thus, the two identities she held equally dear – that of herself as a writer and that of herself as a dutiful woman – were conflicted, and the peaceful resolution of this conflict is the happy ending of both this plot and the *Autobiography*.

In this paper I intend to analyze the strategies the author uses to depict her self-portrait with special emphasis on the role gender plays in the image created for posterity. I will also comment briefly on the creative strategies and motifs from the *Autobiography* that found expression in her prose.

VIVIJANA RADMAN (Split, 1966) graduated from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb in 1991, majoring in English language and literature and Russian language and literature. In 1997 she earned a postgraduate degree in literature with the thesis entitled “The Female Character in the Postmodern Cinema”. She is currently enrolled in the Doctoral programme in literature, performing arts, film and culture at the same Faculty. Her main research interest is in gender studies approach to literature and film. She is a Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Foreign Languages, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb where she teaches English for Academic Purposes.

The Representation of “Voice” in Four Short Stories by Alice Munro

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In this paper I will explore one aspect of Alice Munro’s writing – the representation of the voices of her characters in four of her short stories: “Walker Brothers Cowboy”, “The Peace of Utrecht”, “Ottawa Valley” and “Child’s Play”. In the exploration of the phenomenon of ‘the voice’, I will distinguish between two basic levels of analysis: the level of realization, and the level of expression, each level presented by a three-term relationship. The level of realization is the level of articulation (the physical sound of mother’s voice), perception (impressions and emotional reactions that the sound of mother’s voice sparks in Munro’s subconsciousness), and description (literary description) of the actual sound. The level of expression is the level of voicing attitudes, opinions, etc., the interpretation of attitudes, opinions, etc., and writing in an individual literary style (literary voice). In the first three stories, both levels of the representation of voices of the mother characters will be analyzed, while in the last story I will analyze the function of a ‘pleasant and unpleasant voice’ in the characterization, and its importance for the psychological subplot of the text.

Much has been written about Munro’s relationship with her mother (e.g. Sheila Munro, Robert Thacker, Thomas E. Tausky, Halivard Dahlie, etc.). Until now most of the research has been focused mainly on the influence that her mother’s illness generally had on Munro’s writing (e.g. Magdalene Redekop, Coral Ann Howells, Marianne Hirsch,

Beverly Rasporich, etc.). The most striking feature of Munro's mother's illness was her distorted, barely intelligible voice. Her mother's voice was the basic and the immediate manifestation of illness that followed Munro during her formative years, and that caused her much shame. Feelings of shame and guilt which are present in many of Munro's works are subject to many previous analyses in the works of above-mentioned critics. In contrast to that, in this short analysis I will focus exclusively on the representation, frequency, and the function of voice at above-mentioned two levels of analysis, and within the above mentioned four short stories. All the manifestations of voice will, in fact, be the only element taken over from Munro's life and then traced and analyzed in her work. The aim of this paper is to explore the multilayered aspects of the "voice" as it features at the fictional and factual levels of these stories and forges the autobiographical pretext of Munro's writing.

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Mad about the Boy:
**The Phenomenon of Fictional
Autobiography**

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Chick-lit has been subjected to accusations that it is too “realistic”, that the women who write autobiographical works about homely matters such as motherhood, relationship issues and family problems forget the fundamental imperative of writing fiction, “making stuff up” (Gray 2007). It is to be found on the great divide between two “literatures”, “good” one which teaches and the “popular” one which “sells real life”. Instead of innocence and naiveté of traditional heroines, chick-lit describes the tales of singles: young, emancipated women who live and work in big Western centres. The protagonists openly question traditional forms of feminine behaviour promoted by romance novels, such as affection for cooking, laundry and cleaning, and, more importantly, reject the passivity of women in relationships, which can be visible in the active search of protagonists for a man. The traditional border between the private and public sphere is particularly blurred, while the protagonists enjoy and participate in all the aspects of modern city life. The usage of first-person narration and a deliberately naive form of realism encourages the readers and critics to substitute these fictional characters for real-life personas, and to consider novels as autobiographical works, which lead to the phenomenon of Bridget Jones as the “everywoman”.

Shari Banstock, who claims diaries and journals are autobiograph-

ical writing, suggests that autobiography demonstrates Jacques Lacan's claim that language "is a defence against the unconscious knowledge" but that it is not very successful, as it capitulates to social pressures (1988). The latest *Bridget Jones* novel, *Mad about the Boy* (2013), placed in the literary context of fictional women's diaries, attempts to convince readers of its authenticity using various devices, such as self-depreciation, allowing the reader to feel superior to the protagonist and offering the reader a direct feed of Bridget's consciousness.

SELMA VESELJEVIĆ JERKOVIĆ (1982) is a senior teaching assistant in the Department of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tuzla, where she teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in literary theory, English and American literature and Cultural Studies. She received her college education at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tuzla, where she studied English language and Literature. In 2005 she completed her B.A. dissertation on the topic of "Aspects of the American Dream in Theodore Dreiser's novel *American Tragedy*". Between 2006 and 2012 she was a doctoral student at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek. She was one of the co-editors of *Književna revija*, a magazine devoted to literary and cultural issues published by Ogranak Matice hrvatske Osijek. Veseljević Jerković defended her doctoral thesis entitled "(Post)feminism and the Phenomenon of Chick-lit in Anglo-American Literature" in 2012. The thesis investigates the interplay between consumer culture, (post) feminism and popular literature in the new millennium.

Epistemological Status of Autobiography in Philosophy

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Philosophy has always been concerned with understanding the nature of *self* and its relation with other selves and with the world. In an attempt to reach a fuller understanding of how the self comes to grasp its place in the world, some philosophers have turned to a distinctive mode of writing, the one that refers to *themselves* and their personal experiences, and have built their philosophical systems on those grounds. Augustine's *Confessions* can be seen as a form of autobiography, with the author retelling his life, before moving on to a more teleological and philosophical concerns. The point of such a narrative is not only 'to tell a story' as narratives usually do, or to tell a story of one's life, as autobiographies do, but to confess sins and ask God for forgiveness – in that sense, Augustine's autobiography is a sort of a personal *apologia* directed to God. Yet, at the same time, *Confessions* also have the purpose of telling a story of God's greatness and goodness, with the aim of persuading readers – another addressee of *Confessions* – to accept a particular view of the Almighty. Such autobiographical references are incorporated into philosophical systems of other philosophers as well, such as Descartes or Nietzsche, and one significantly influential philosophical field – phenomenology, understood as the study of experience or consciousness – relies exclusively on the first person perspective.

Given this reliance on personal experiences and this distinctive mode of writing about self, we have to wonder about the epistemological status of autobiographical references in the overall philosophical system.

It seems that in philosophy the purpose of autobiography is not to reveal something about one's life but to provide justification for one's philosophical system. This in turn reveals a certain duality in autobiography: it refers to the self, from the point of view of *that* very self, but at the same time it grounds the system that is to be taken as the explanation of *other* selves, i.e. of human experience generally and not individually. On a more general level, this raises the issue of the philosopher's authority, as well as issues about the very nature and distinctness of philosophy itself.

IRIS VIDMAR is a senior assistant at the Department of Philosophy, Rijeka, where she teaches seminars on Epistemology, Modern philosophy, Philosophy of art, Philosophy of literature and Contemporary analytic aesthetics. Her main areas of expertise are philosophy of literature, epistemology and aesthetics, and her research interests include cognitive value of literature, the nature and phenomenology of reading experience, the problem of interpretation, narration, similarities between philosophy and literature and the testimony as a source of knowledge. She defended her Ph.D. thesis on the cognitive value of literature. She has published a number of book reviews, articles and translations of philosophical texts and she has presented her research at more than thirty national and international conferences. She is a co-organizer of the Philosophy of Art conference at the Inter University Centre Dubrovnik. She is a member of The Croatian Society for Analytic Philosophy, Croatian Philosophical Society and The European Society for Aesthetic. Most recently, she has been awarded a status of visiting scholar at Columbia University, New York.

Memoir, Autobiographical Fiction and the Second World War in Northern Ireland

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This paper explores the effects of the Second World War on memoir and autobiographical fiction in Northern Ireland. The texts examined provoke questions of identity that exist, at best, on the margins of Irish and British socio-historical or literary narratives of the war. In addressing the war, writers of a nationalist background have sometimes occupied an uneasy space somewhere between the Irish nationalist autobiographical identification of subject and nation and the British People's War narrative of collective endeavour, as can be seen in Brian Moore's autobiographical novel *The Emperor of Ice Cream*. The neutrality of the southern state, combined with deep seated nationalist antagonism towards Britain, precluded or problematised nationalist involvement in the British war effort, and Benedict Kiely's contortions in the novel *Land Without Stars* and two further volumes of memoir show how the war and its legacy caused severe problems for nationalist life writing which addressed the period. Conversely, writers from Protestant and unionist backgrounds have been more likely to describe the war's formative effects on their identity and their perceptions of others in a positive light: the journalist Sam McAughtry, a navigator in the Royal Air Force during the war, shows in his memoirs the flexibility of Northern Protestant identity within the British armed forces, whilst Robert Harbinson's boyhood memoirs *Song of Erne* and *Up Spake the Cabin Boy* describe how his wartime experiences, first as an evacuee in rural Fermanagh and then in industrial Belfast, challenged his nascent loyalist dogmatism and cured him of sectarian prejudice. Such works show how the war encouraged transgressions of traditional borders, boundaries and expressions of identity in Northern Ireland.

GUY WOODWARD was awarded a doctorate by Trinity College Dublin in 2012, and from 2012-13 held a Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship at Trinity, awarded by the Irish Research Council. He has lectured at universities in Dublin and Mexico and has presented his work at conferences in Ireland, Britain, Portugal and the Czech Republic. He is the editor of *Across the Boundaries: Talking about Thomas Kilroy* (2014) and with Dorothea Depner has also edited *Irish Culture and Wartime Europe, 1938-1948* (2015). His book *Culture, Northern Ireland, and the Second World War* will be published by Oxford University Press in 2015.

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Autobiography in Context

International Interdisciplinary Conference
Rijeka, 21st and 22nd November 2014

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The conference was supported by:
The Open Society Foundations,
The Foundation of the University of Rijeka,
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
University of Rijeka

**The publication of this book was supported by:
The Open Society Foundations
The Foundation of the University of Rijeka**

