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Editors' Notes

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Biography, Volume 44, Number 1, 2021, pp. v-viii (Article)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/bio.2021.0000>

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EDITORS' NOTES

International Year in Review

With this issue, *Biography's* International Year in Review reaches the five-year mark, and it is a pleasure to introduce our latest installment. While this collection of essays reflects the broad international scope and variety of the previous four, the cover image we selected for the issue points to a prominent thread running through it: the global impact of COVID-19. We wish to thank the Danish artist Janne Skyt for permission to use a detail from her "Embroidered elements from a Corona lockdown," and we are grateful to Marianne Høyen for connecting us with her.

We had anticipated that many of this year's contributions would touch on the pandemic, but we were struck by the number of essays that describe large-scale *collective* efforts to document the crisis by gathering personal accounts of isolation, illness, and loss. Giving particular attention to entries from residents of Wuhan, where the virus was first identified, Chen Shen reports on "Diaries in the Lockdown City," an initiative launched by Chinese writers on social media platforms such as WeChat and Weibo. Alana Bell's entry includes an overview of *Telegrams from Home*, a three-volume collection of lockdown narratives by Canadian writers that appeared in the Toronto-based newspaper *West End Phoenix* between May and August 2020. Leena Kurvet-Käosaar and Maarja Hollo examine selected responses to a call for personal stories from the Cultural History Archive of the Estonian Literary Museum, and as Kirsi Tuohela reports, the Finnish Literary Society has been soliciting COVID diaries to be preserved in the National Archives of Finland. Ilaria Serra devotes part of her essay to the Free University of Autobiography of Anghiari's project to gather personal stories from across Italy, pointing in particular to a vivid account from a nurse in Treviso, and Ana Belén Martínez García reviews the film *Madrid Interior*, which documents the experiences of one hundred locked-down residents of the city. In April 2020, sociologists from the University of Warsaw and the Polish Academy of Sciences announced a competition seeking the most compelling diaries about the pandemic in Poland, and in his essay, Paweł Rodak relates his impressions of some the submissions.

Several essays point out how the pandemic has thrown longstanding social inequities and political divisions into sharper relief. In his discussion of documentation projects in Rio de Janeiro and elsewhere in Brazil, Sergio da Silva Barcellos makes the important observation that imperatives to self-isolate have posed

especially difficult challenges for people living in close quarters and those who must leave home for work to sustain their families. Marianne Høyen describes how public responses to the pandemic have raised the question of what it means to be Danish for immigrants in Denmark, as well as for adoptees and students from Asia, while Sleiman El Hajj focuses on texts that bear witness to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on activists fighting for the rights of women and LGBTQ communities in Lebanon. Although the US publications Leigh Gilmore covers—Paul Lisicky’s *Later*, Claudia Rankine’s *Just Us*, Lacy Crawford’s *Notes on a Silencing*, and Michelle Bowdler’s *Is Rape a Crime?*—were all in production before the start of the pandemic, Gilmore frames her review by highlighting how powerfully their respective depictions of the legacy of the AIDS epidemic, Black Americans’ ongoing confrontations with racism, and the American justice system’s failures to protect survivors of sexual violence resonate within the present crisis.

Alongside these engagements with life writing in the time of COVID-19, contributions to this year’s International Year in Review range across many other forms and contexts of auto/biographical production. Serial diarists appear in the essays by Kylie Cardell (Australia), who reviews *One Day I’ll Remember This*, the second volume of Helen Garner’s diaries, and by Cláudia Maria Ferreira Faria (Portugal), who takes up the third volume of Rita Ferro’s diary series. Tracing the “parallel lines” in Hungarian publications that look back to the state-socialist period, Ágnes Major and Zoltán Z. Varga describe the reception of *Coming Out*, a memoir by the controversial theater critic Péter Molnár Gál, who never apologized for collaborating with the secret police. Ioana Luca introduces us to several documentary films on the lives of individuals and families in Romania, including Radu Jude’s *Upper-case Print*, which is based on Securitate files on Mugur Călinescu, a dissident who died at age nineteen in 1985. Heui-Yung Park explores two Korean prison memoirs, one by Im Pang-gyu, an unrepentant Communist who was incarcerated in South Korea for more than three decades, the other by Ch’oe Sŏ-wŏn, who was sentenced to prison for corruption in 2020. Reporting on the posthumous publication of a memoir by Hyacinthus Thomas Erasmus, Rose Mary Allen and Jeroen Huevel show how Erasmus’s narrative serves both to document the movement for Aruba’s self-determination and to perpetuate the Papiamentu language. A newcomer to the International Year in Review, Hülya Adak discusses memoirs by two women who are prominent advocates for academic freedom at universities in Turkey, and Tom Overton’s essay focuses on Dan Hicks’s trenchant *The Brutish Museums*, a reckoning with the Pitt Rivers Museum’s complicity in the depredations of British colonialism.

The genre of biography is well represented this year. Tobias Heinrich’s essay examines three treatments of the life of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, a joint biography of Walter Benjamin and his wife Dora Kellner, and an exploration of the

career of the filmmaker Leni Riefensthal. Wilhelm Hemecker and David Österle survey biographies of Karl Krauss, Max Reinhardt, and Felix Salten, all prominent figures in Viennese Modernism. Gerardo Necochea Gracia's essay includes discussions of a biographical novel about the Mexican journalist Carlos Denegri and a biography of the drug lord Vicente Zambada Niebla. Hans Renders and David Veltman deal with a variety of biographies of Dutch artists and politicians. Nick Mdika Tembo reviews a biography of Rose Chibambo, an influential politician in Malawi. In his capacious tally of biographies published in France during the past year, Joanny Moulin offers examples of the genre's enduring role in shaping perspectives on French history and present-day public opinion.

After an exciting and gratifying five-year run, the International Year in Review will take a hiatus in the coming year, which will allow our editorial team to reflect on the most productive future direction for the feature. *Biography* is committed to sustaining its capacity to bring attention to influential lifewriting publications throughout the world and to strengthen networks among scholars in our field, and we aim to build on its success. We thank all the authors whose work has contributed to that success, and we send our best wishes to all our readers.

John David Zuern

Annual Bibliography of Works about Life Writing

Last year's installment of this bibliography—like the journal, now in its forty-fourth year—documented publications largely appearing before the arrival of COVID-19. This year's entries came into the light from out of the shadows of lockdowns and massive upheavals to almost every aspect of life, including the operations of the presses and venues that distribute critical and theoretical work on life writing.

Given these circumstances, the stability of production is striking. The total number of entries in this year's bibliography is virtually identical (just over 800) to last year's, as are the number of special issues and edited collections (right at forty), and the number of articles appearing in regular issues of periodicals (just over 200). The number of essays published in those special issues and collections has dropped from 500 to about 450, but this is partly because at least four collections are reprints of earlier special issues, so our annotations direct you to the entries in earlier installments of this bibliography that document the contents of the original special issue.

The most striking fluctuations this year are in the number of monographs—which spiked from thirty-seven to fifty-seven—and especially in the number of dissertations—from seventy-five, which was already significantly more than the previous year, to 108. COVID-19 might have something to do with this. Many

academics and publishers found that lockdowns, quarantines, and virtual working conditions created the time necessary for the steady, often solitary work that goes into completing a project, or editing and preparing a manuscript for publication.

One lesson to be drawn from this year's bibliography is the importance of Palgrave Macmillan and Routledge as venues for lifewriting scholarship. Palgrave issued eight of the monographs and five of the edited collections. Routledge also published eight of the monographs, and one edited collection, but in addition, its journals division was responsible for eleven of the special issues, and its book division put out four edited collections that were previously special issues. Both publishers' lifewriting series are significant sources of new scholarship.

Another lesson this year underscores is the continuing expansion of lifewriting scholarship to all regions of the world, and its strongly interdisciplinary nature—something *Biography* anticipated in 1978 with its subtitle, *An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*, but which is indisputable in 2021.

Most face-to-face conferences have been suspended for almost two years. Research travel has been almost impossible due to flight restrictions, to the closing or severe curtailment of library and archive services, and to the barring of access to field studies. But as this year's bibliography confirms, Zoom sessions, virtual conferences, and unanticipated opportunities to dig deep into our reading and writing, even if only as a distraction from the other forces acting upon us, have preserved and sustained the field, and prepared the soil for the less constrained, more informed work that is sure to come.

Craig Howes