

2017 International Conference on Life Writing:
Self-Representation, Medical Narrative and Cultural Memory

Co-Sponsored by the College of the Humanities and Social Sciences
and the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, at Kaohsiung Medical University

September 29-30, 2017

Life writing is a genre and a practice of criticism (Marlene Kadar, 1992) that refers to history, literature, and documentary and includes the sub-genres of memoirs, biography, oral testimonies, diaries, epistolary works and personal narratives. The genre writing has been a favorite one for research in the humanities serving to explore identity formation and inner dialogue with the self as well as with critical transitions, such as cultural adaptation, diaspora, migration, and other traumatic experiences. Life writings are an important resource to understand individuals, communities and the cultural impacts of historical periods. The immediate effects of personal letters and journals disclose the past of individuals and collectives. Research on life writing discovers human values and they address issues on memories, affect, and cultural aspects of identity formation. In the field of psychological sciences, life writing also serves as “scriptotherapy,” that is, the healing power of self-narrative which helps to foster not just self-awareness; it helps traumatized subjects confront the unspeakable past. In philosophy and literature, the examination of one’s life is important, for instance the platonic Socrates urging that the unexamined life is not worth living, Descartes’ idea that I think therefore I am, the exploration of self in Montaigne, the existentialist exploration of self and existence in Kierkegaard, Sartre, Camus and others, the examination of self in the soliloquies of Shakespeare as in *Hamlet*, the sense of self in the discourses of education and human rights in Montaigne, Locke, Rousseau, Montesquieu and others. Nietzsche questions the traditional sense of self and morality and provokes further debates on that, so that our lives have no one story and that truths are constructed. Feminist philosophers, such as De Beauvoir and Elaine Showalter, challenge the kind of life-writing that men have constructed and try to introduce gender to the debate. The sense of life and the idea of writing are contested. Writing the self or subject has private and public dimension in art, philosophy, medicine and life of people.

The 2017 International Conference on Life Writing will be co-hosted on September 29-30, 2017 by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies at Kaohsiung Medical University in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. We welcome papers and abstracts in English with a focus on life writing in the Eastern or

Western world. For individual proposals, please submit a one-page, double-spaced abstract in English before September 10; for panels, please send presenters' names and abstracts together before September 15, 2016. For submissions and queries, please contact organizing committee at ichunwang316@gmail.com

Suggested but not limited domains include the following:

Film biography

War, colony and life writing

Life writing and illness

Reading the self and private life

Life writing and ethnic memory

Oral history

Medical narrative

Letters and censorship

Life writing in transcultural context

Politics of life writing

Emotion and self-narration

Subjectivity and Imagining the Self

Writing the self and Others

(Re)appropriation of life-writing in popular culture

Collective history and the individual

Life writing as subjective narratives

Teaching Life Narratives