

On the Genre of Autobiography or African American Autobiography

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the genre of autobiography with a specific focus on African American and African diasporic autobiographical traditions. It examines how autobiography functions not only as a literary form but also as a socio-cultural and political instrument for identity construction, resistance, and historical representation. Drawing on a wide range of theoretical and critical literature, the paper highlights the distinctive characteristics of African American autobiography, including its emphasis on collective identity, narrative agency, and the interplay between personal memory and shared history. The study further investigates the evolving nature of the genre, particularly its hybridity with memoir, autofiction, oral traditions, and digital storytelling. Key themes such as trauma, resilience, transnationalism, and intersectionality are critically discussed to understand the complexity and diversity of autobiographical narratives. The research adopts a conceptual methodology, synthesizing existing scholarship to provide a comprehensive theoretical framework. The findings suggest that African American autobiography challenges dominant literary paradigms and contributes significantly to inclusive and transformative knowledge production in literary and cultural studies.

Keywords: Autobiography, African American Literature, Narrative Identity, Diaspora, Resistance, Life Writing, Intersectionality, Memory, Genre Hybridity.

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Introduction

The genre of autobiography has long occupied a central position in literary and cultural studies, functioning as a powerful medium through which individuals narrate personal histories while simultaneously engaging with broader socio-political realities. Within this expansive field, African American autobiography—and more broadly, Black diasporic life writing—emerges as a particularly significant and dynamic tradition. It is not merely a literary form but a critical mode of resistance, identity construction, and historical documentation. The evolution of this genre reflects the intersections of race, power, memory, and narrative agency, making it an indispensable site for understanding both individual subjectivity and collective experience (Watson, 2021; Bethlehem, 2017, 2019).

Autobiography, in its conventional sense, is understood as a retrospective narrative written by an individual about their own life, emphasizing personal development and self-reflection. However, African American autobiography challenges and expands this definition by foregrounding the communal, political,

and often contested nature of self-representation. Unlike traditional Western autobiographies that often celebrate individual achievement within stable social structures, African American autobiographies are frequently rooted in histories of displacement, marginalization, and systemic oppression. As a result, the “self” in these narratives is rarely isolated; instead, it is deeply embedded within collective struggles against racism, colonialism, and socio-economic exclusion (Banerjee, 2022; McLennan, 2021). Historically, the foundations of African American autobiography can be traced to slave narratives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These narratives, such as those by Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs, were not only personal testimonies but also political documents aimed at exposing the brutality of slavery and advocating for abolition. The legacy of these early narratives continues to inform contemporary autobiographical practices, where storytelling becomes a means of reclaiming agency and contesting dominant historical discourses (Levi, 2018; Watson, 2021). In this context, autobiography functions as both literature

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and activism, blurring the boundaries between personal narrative and socio-political critique.

In recent decades, scholarly attention to African American and African diasporic autobiography has expanded significantly, reflecting broader shifts in literary theory and cultural studies. Contemporary critics emphasize the fluidity of the genre, noting its intersections with memoir, testimony, autofiction, and even digital storytelling (Attridge, 2024; Attwell, 2024; Feder, 2026). This hybridity challenges rigid genre classifications and highlights the adaptability of autobiographical forms in response to changing cultural and technological landscapes. For instance, the incorporation of oral traditions, performative elements, and multimedia platforms underscores the evolving nature of self-representation in the digital age (d'Abdon et al., 2020; Englund, 2023). A key theoretical concern in the study of autobiography is the question of authenticity and truth. Scholars argue that autobiographical narratives are not straightforward representations of reality but are constructed through selective memory, narrative strategies, and ideological positioning (Kopf, 2022; Larsson, 2022). In African American autobiography, this issue is further complicated by the historical silencing and misrepresentation of Black voices. Consequently, the act of writing one's life becomes an assertion of epistemic authority—a claim to the right to define one's own identity and history (McLaughlin, 2022; Nicol, 2021). This perspective aligns with postcolonial and critical race theories, which emphasize the importance of counter-narratives in challenging dominant power structures. Moreover, African American autobiography often engages with themes of trauma, resilience, and transformation. The narratives frequently explore experiences of racial discrimination, economic hardship, migration, and cultural dislocation, while also highlighting strategies of survival and resistance (Mngadi, 2025; Mututa, 2024). These stories serve not only as personal accounts but also as collective archives that document the lived realities of marginalized communities. In doing so, they contribute to a broader understanding of history that goes beyond official records and institutional narratives (Ogone & Odanga, 2025; Sewlall, 2024). Another important dimension of the genre is its transnational and diasporic scope. While rooted in African American experiences, the themes and narrative strategies of these autobiographies resonate across the African diaspora, encompassing regions such as the Caribbean, Africa, and Europe. Scholars

have highlighted the interconnectedness of these narratives, noting how they reflect shared histories of colonialism, migration, and cultural exchange (Fleishman, 2023; Ricci, 2025; Tomaselli, 2024a, 2024b). This transnational perspective challenges narrow, nation-centric approaches to literary analysis and underscores the global significance of Black autobiographical writing.

In addition, recent scholarship has explored the role of gender, sexuality, and intersectionality in shaping autobiographical narratives. African American women's autobiographies, for example, offer distinct perspectives on identity and resistance, often addressing issues such as patriarchy, domestic labor, and bodily autonomy (Chapman, 2026; Maguire, 2025). Similarly, queer and non-binary voices within the genre have begun to receive increased attention, further diversifying the field and highlighting the multiplicity of Black experiences (Fagan, 2025; Scherman, 2026). These developments reflect a broader commitment within literary studies to inclusivity and the recognition of marginalized voices. The methodological approaches to studying autobiography have also evolved, incorporating insights from interdisciplinary fields such as sociology, anthropology, and media studies. Researchers increasingly adopt qualitative and interpretive frameworks to analyze narrative structures, thematic patterns, and cultural contexts (Aroch-Fugellie, 2022; Macqueen & Kochajkiewicz, 2024). This interdisciplinary orientation allows for a more nuanced understanding of autobiography as both a literary and social phenomenon. Furthermore, digital humanities have opened new avenues for analyzing and disseminating autobiographical texts, enabling scholars to explore large corpora and engage with diverse audiences (Biney, 2026; Wajiran et al., 2026).

Despite these advancements, several challenges persist in the study of African American autobiography. Issues of representation, canon formation, and accessibility continue to shape the field. While certain texts and authors have achieved canonical status, many voices remain underrepresented, particularly those from marginalized or non-mainstream backgrounds (Bodiat, 2025; Nxongo, 2024). Addressing these gaps requires ongoing efforts to diversify literary scholarship and to critically examine the criteria by which texts are valued and preserved. In conclusion, the genre of African American autobiography represents a vital and evolving field of study that

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intersects with broader debates in literature, history, and cultural theory. It challenges conventional notions of selfhood, narrative authority, and genre boundaries, offering rich insights into the complexities of identity and experience. By foregrounding the voices of those historically marginalized, African American autobiographical writing not only redefines literary traditions but also contributes to a more inclusive and equitable understanding of human history. As scholarship continues to expand, the genre remains a powerful testament to the enduring significance of storytelling as a means of resistance, remembrance, and transformation (Xu, 2006; Walsh & Dossett, 2022; Osmond & Richardson, 2025).

Literature Review

The genre of autobiography, particularly within African American and broader African diasporic contexts, has generated extensive scholarly engagement due to its unique capacity to intertwine personal narrative with collective historical experience. Unlike conventional autobiographical traditions that privilege individualism and linear self-development, African American autobiography is often characterized by its dialogic nature, where the self is constructed in relation to community, history, and systems of power. This distinctive feature has led scholars to conceptualize the genre not merely as a literary form but as a socio-political and epistemological practice that challenges dominant narratives and reclaims marginalized voices (Watson, 2021; Bethlehem, 2017, 2019). Early studies on autobiography emphasized its formal characteristics, defining it as a retrospective narrative that seeks coherence and authenticity in recounting a life. However, contemporary scholarship complicates this definition by highlighting the constructed nature of autobiographical truth. Kopf (2022) and Larsson (2022) argue that autobiography is inherently shaped by narrative strategies, selective memory, and cultural frameworks, thereby questioning the notion of an objective or unified self. In the context of African American autobiography, this constructedness is further intensified by the historical conditions of racial oppression, where the act of self-representation becomes both a literary endeavor and a political assertion (McLaughlin, 2022; Nicol, 2021).

A significant body of literature traces the origins of African American autobiography to slave narratives, which functioned as powerful instruments of resistance and abolitionist advocacy. Levi (2018) and Watson (2021) highlight that these narratives were

not solely personal testimonies but collective interventions aimed at exposing the inhumanity of slavery and asserting Black humanity. This foundational tradition continues to influence contemporary autobiographical writing, where themes of resistance, survival, and identity formation remain central. The continuity between historical and modern narratives underscores the enduring relevance of autobiography as a tool for confronting systemic injustice (Banerjee, 2022; McLennan, 2021). Recent scholarship has increasingly focused on the hybridity and evolution of autobiographical forms. Attridge (2024) and Attwell (2024) emphasize that the boundaries between autobiography, memoir, and autofiction have become increasingly fluid, reflecting broader shifts in literary practices and reader expectations. This hybridity is particularly evident in African diasporic contexts, where oral traditions, performative storytelling, and digital media intersect with written narratives (d'Abdon et al., 2020; Englund, 2023). Such developments challenge rigid genre classifications and highlight the adaptability of autobiography in responding to changing cultural and technological landscapes.

The question of voice and agency occupies a central place in the literature on African American autobiography. Scholars such as McLaughlin (2022) and Nicol (2021) argue that autobiographical writing serves as a means of reclaiming narrative authority in the face of historical silencing and misrepresentation. This perspective aligns with postcolonial and critical race theories, which emphasize the importance of counter-narratives in disrupting hegemonic discourses. Furthermore, Aroch-Fugellie (2022) and Macqueen and Kochajkiewicz (2024) suggest that autobiography operates as a site of epistemic resistance, where marginalized individuals assert their right to define their own experiences and knowledge systems. Themes of trauma, memory, and resilience are also extensively explored in the literature. Mngadi (2025) and Mututa (2024) examine how autobiographical narratives engage with experiences of racial violence, displacement, and socio-economic marginalization, while simultaneously highlighting strategies of coping and resistance. These narratives often function as archives of lived experience, preserving histories that are frequently excluded from official records (Ogone & Odanga, 2025; Sewlall, 2024). The interplay between trauma and resilience underscores the transformative potential of autobiography, where storytelling becomes a means of healing and empowerment.

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In addition to thematic analyses, scholars have also examined the transnational dimensions of African American and African diasporic autobiography. Fleishman (2023) and Ricci (2025) highlight the interconnectedness of narratives across geographical and cultural boundaries, emphasizing shared histories of colonialism, migration, and cultural exchange. Tomaselli (2024a, 2024b) further argues that these transnational perspectives challenge nation-centric approaches to literary analysis, encouraging a more global understanding of autobiographical practices. This shift reflects broader trends in literary studies, where the focus has moved toward examining the circulation and reception of texts within global networks. Gender and intersectionality have emerged as critical areas of inquiry within the field. Chapman (2026) and Maguire (2025) explore how African American women’s autobiographies address issues of gendered oppression, domestic labor, and bodily autonomy, offering nuanced perspectives on identity and resistance. Similarly, Fagan (2025) and Scherman (2026) highlight the growing visibility of queer and non-binary voices within autobiographical writing, which further diversifies the genre and challenges heteronormative assumptions. These studies underscore the importance of intersectional analysis in understanding the multiplicity of experiences represented in African American autobiography. The role of narrative form and aesthetics has also received considerable attention. Cheyette (2024) and Feder (2026) examine how stylistic choices, such as fragmentation, non-linearity, and intertextuality, contribute to the complexity of autobiographical narratives. These formal innovations often reflect the fragmented nature of memory and identity, particularly in contexts marked by trauma and displacement. Additionally, Piekut (2018) and Voss (2024) highlight the influence of musical, oral, and performative traditions on autobiographical writing, suggesting that these elements enrich the expressive possibilities of the genre. Methodologically, the study of autobiography has become increasingly interdisciplinary. Researchers draw on insights from sociology, anthropology, history, and media studies to analyze autobiographical texts within their broader cultural and social contexts (Aroch-Fugellie, 2022; Macqueen & Kochajkiewicz, 2024). The rise of digital humanities has further expanded the scope of research, enabling scholars to analyze large corpora of texts and explore new forms of digital storytelling (Biney, 2026; Wajiran et al., 2026). This interdisciplinary approach allows for a more

comprehensive understanding of autobiography as both a literary and social phenomenon.

Despite these advancements, the literature also identifies several gaps and challenges. Issues of representation and canon formation remain significant concerns, as certain voices continue to be marginalized within academic discourse (Bodiat, 2025; Nxongo, 2024). Additionally, Englund (2023) and Osmond and Richardson (2025) point to the need for greater attention to emerging forms of autobiographical expression, particularly those facilitated by digital technologies. Addressing these gaps requires a commitment to inclusivity and a willingness to engage with diverse and non-traditional forms of narrative.

Another emerging area of research involves the ethical dimensions of autobiographical writing. Scholars such as Walsh and Dossett (2022) and Xu (2006) examine the responsibilities of authors and readers in interpreting personal narratives, particularly in contexts involving trauma and vulnerability. These discussions highlight the complex relationship between storytelling, representation, and ethical engagement, emphasizing the need for critical sensitivity in both literary analysis and pedagogy. In synthesis, the literature on African American autobiography reveals a rich and evolving field that engages with questions of identity, power, memory, and representation. The genre’s distinctive characteristics—its emphasis on collective experience, its engagement with socio-political realities, and its formal hybridity—distinguish it from traditional autobiographical forms and underscore its significance within literary and cultural studies. As scholarship continues to expand, African American autobiography remains a vital site for exploring the complexities of human experience and the transformative power of narrative.

Table 1: Literature Review Table

No.	Author(s) & Year	Focus Area	Methodology	Key Findings	Research Gap
1	Aroch-Fugellie (2022)	Autobiography as epistemic resistance	Conceptual	Autobiography enables marginalized voices to reclaim knowledge	Limited empirical validation

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				systems								
2	Attridge (2024)	Genre hybridity in autobiography	Theoretical	Blurring of memoir, autofiction, and life writing expands genre boundaries	Lack of focus on African American texts		(2025)	on		exclusion of marginalized autobiographical voices	inclusion of frameworks	
3	Attwell (2024)	Evolution of life writing	Critical analysis	Highlights transformation of autobiographical forms in modern literature	Insufficient focus on digital narratives		8	Chapman (2026)	Gender in autobiography	Feminist analysis	Women's autobiographies foreground intersection of race and gender	Limited focus on queer identities
4	Banerjee (2022)	Collective identity in autobiography	Conceptual	Emphasizes community-based self-representation in African narratives	Limited comparative perspective		9	d'Abdon et al. (2020)	Oral traditions and life writing	Qualitative	Oral storytelling influences autobiographical structures	Needs integration with digital forms
5	Bethlehem (2017, 2019)	Postcolonial autobiographical narratives	Theoretical	Autobiography challenges colonial discourse and reconstructs identity	Underexplored intersectionality		10	Englund (2023)	Narrative and memory	Interpretive	Memory is selective and shapes autobiographical truth	Limited cross-cultural analysis
6	Biney (2026)	Digital autobiography	Interdisciplinary	Digital platforms reshape autobiographical expression	Lack of theoretical integration		11	Fagan (2025)	Queer autobiographical voices	Critical theory	Expands representation of LGBTQ+ identities in life writing	Emerging field with limited data
7	Bodiat	Canon format	Critical review	Highlights	Needs broader		12	Fleishman (2023)	Diasporic narratives	Comparative	Highlights transnational connections in autobiographies	Needs empirical support
							13	Kopf (2022)	Authenticity in	Theoretical	Questions	Lacks applica

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)	autobio graphy		objectivi ty and emphasi zes narrative construct ion	tion in African context s
1 4	McL aughl in (2022)	Voice and agency	Concep tual	Autobio graphy as a tool for reclaimi ng narrative authority	Needs empiric al case studies
1 5	Mutu ta (2024)	Trauma and resilien ce	Qualita tive	Autobio graphies documen t lived experien ces of oppressi on and coping	Limite d longitu dinal analysi s
1 6	Toma selli (2024 a, 2024 b)	Transna tional autobio graphy	Interdis ciplinar y	Emphasi zes global intercon nectedne ss of African narrative s	Needs deeper regiona l analysi s

(2022), and Attridge (2024) are systematically analyzed to trace the evolution of autobiographical discourse and its intersection with themes of identity, power, memory, and resistance. A purposive sampling technique is employed to select relevant literature that aligns with the thematic focus of the study, ensuring both depth and relevance in the review process.

The analytical approach is interpretive and thematic in nature. Concepts such as narrative agency, genre hybridity, intersectionality, and transnationalism are examined through a critical lens informed by postcolonial theory, critical race theory, and literary criticism (Banerjee, 2022; Nicol, 2021; Tomaselli, 2024a, 2024b). Rather than testing hypotheses, the study seeks to build theoretical linkages across existing works, identifying patterns, debates, and gaps within the literature. To maintain academic rigor, the study follows a structured review process, organizing literature chronologically and thematically to highlight the progression of scholarly thought. This approach allows for a coherent synthesis of ideas while ensuring that multiple perspectives are adequately represented. By focusing on theoretical integration, the methodology contributes to a deeper conceptual understanding of autobiography as a dynamic and evolving genre within literary and cultural studies.

Discussion

The discussion of autobiography, particularly within African American and African diasporic contexts, reveals the genre as a dynamic and contested space where identity, memory, and power intersect. The reviewed literature consistently emphasizes that autobiography is not merely a personal narrative but a socio-political act that reflects broader historical and cultural realities. Unlike traditional Western autobiographical forms that foreground individualism and linear progress, African American autobiography is deeply embedded in collective experiences shaped by histories of slavery, colonialism, and systemic marginalization (Bethlehem, 2017, 2019; Watson, 2021). This collective orientation challenges dominant literary paradigms and redefines the concept of the “self” as relational and community-centered. One of the central themes emerging from the literature is the notion of narrative agency. Scholars argue that autobiographical writing enables marginalized individuals to reclaim their voices and assert control over their own representations. In contexts where Black identities have historically been constructed through oppressive discourses, the act of

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and conceptual research design to examine the genre of autobiography, with particular emphasis on African American and African diasporic autobiographical traditions. As a theory-driven inquiry, the methodology is grounded in an extensive review and synthesis of existing literature rather than empirical data collection or statistical analysis. The primary objective is to critically interpret and integrate diverse scholarly perspectives in order to develop a comprehensive theoretical understanding of autobiography as a literary and socio-cultural construct. The research relies on secondary data sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, edited volumes, and credible digital archives. Key contributions from scholars such as Watson (2021), Bethlehem (2017, 2019), McLaughlin

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self-writing becomes a form of resistance and empowerment (McLaughlin, 2022; Nicol, 2021). This aligns with the idea of autobiography as epistemic resistance, where individuals challenge dominant knowledge systems and offer alternative ways of understanding lived experiences (Aroch-Fugellie, 2022). The discussion thus highlights autobiography as both a literary and political tool that disrupts hegemonic narratives.

Another significant insight relates to the constructed nature of autobiographical truth. The literature problematizes the assumption that autobiographies present objective or factual accounts of life. Instead, they are shaped by selective memory, narrative strategies, and cultural contexts (Kopf, 2022; Larsson, 2022). This perspective is particularly relevant in African American autobiography, where memory often functions as a site of negotiation between personal experience and collective history. Englund (2023) further argues that memory is inherently interpretive, and autobiographical narratives should be understood as mediated reconstructions rather than direct reflections of reality. This understanding complicates traditional notions of authenticity while enriching the analytical depth of the genre. The theme of hybridity also emerges prominently in contemporary discussions. Scholars such as Attridge (2024) and Attwell (2024) note that the boundaries between autobiography, memoir, and autofiction are increasingly blurred. This hybridity reflects the evolving nature of literary forms and the influence of global and digital cultures. In African diasporic contexts, the integration of oral traditions, performative elements, and multimedia storytelling further expands the scope of autobiography (d'Abdon et al., 2020; Englund, 2023). Such developments suggest that autobiography is not a fixed genre but a flexible and adaptive form that responds to changing socio-cultural conditions.

Trauma and resilience constitute another critical dimension of the discussion. Many African American autobiographies engage with experiences of racial violence, displacement, and socio-economic hardship, while simultaneously highlighting strategies of survival and resistance (Mngadi, 2025; Mututa, 2024). These narratives function as archives of lived experience, preserving histories that are often excluded from official records (Ogone & Odanga, 2025; Sewlall, 2024). The interplay between trauma and resilience underscores the transformative potential of autobiographical writing, where storytelling becomes a means of healing, identity

reconstruction, and social critique. The transnational perspective further enriches the understanding of autobiography. The literature demonstrates that African American autobiographical traditions are interconnected with broader diasporic narratives that span continents and cultures. Fleishman (2023) and Ricci (2025) highlight how themes of migration, cultural exchange, and colonial legacies create shared experiences across the African diaspora. Tomaselli (2024a, 2024b) argues that this transnational lens challenges nation-centric approaches and encourages a more global understanding of autobiographical practices. This shift is particularly important in contemporary scholarship, where globalization and mobility have redefined the boundaries of identity and belonging.

Intersectionality is another key theme that shapes the discourse on autobiography. Studies focusing on gender and sexuality reveal that African American women's autobiographies offer unique insights into the intersections of race, gender, and class (Chapman, 2026; Maguire, 2025). Similarly, the inclusion of queer and non-binary perspectives expands the scope of the genre and challenges normative assumptions about identity (Fagan, 2025; Scherman, 2026). These developments highlight the multiplicity of voices within African American autobiography and underscore the importance of inclusive and nuanced analysis. Despite these contributions, the discussion also identifies several limitations within the existing literature. Issues of representation and canon formation remain significant, with certain voices continuing to be marginalized or overlooked (Bodiat, 2025; Nxongo, 2024). Additionally, while digital forms of autobiography are gaining attention, there is still a need for more comprehensive theoretical frameworks to analyze these emerging practices (Biney, 2026; Wajiran et al., 2026). Addressing these gaps is essential for advancing the field and ensuring that it remains responsive to evolving cultural and technological contexts.

The discussion underscores that African American autobiography is a rich and multifaceted genre that transcends traditional literary boundaries. It serves as a site of resistance, a medium of self-expression, and a repository of collective memory. By engaging with themes of agency, hybridity, trauma, transnationalism, and intersectionality, the genre offers profound insights into the complexities of identity and experience. The continued exploration of these dimensions will not only deepen our

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understanding of autobiography but also contribute to broader debates in literary and cultural studies.

Conclusion

The genre of autobiography, particularly within African American and African diasporic traditions, represents a powerful and evolving field of literary and cultural inquiry. This study has highlighted that autobiography is far more than a mere recounting of personal experiences; it is a complex narrative form that engages with broader socio-political, historical, and cultural dynamics. Through the review and discussion of existing literature, it becomes evident that African American autobiography occupies a distinctive position in literary studies due to its emphasis on collective identity, resistance, and the reclamation of marginalized voices.

One of the most significant conclusions drawn from this study is that African American autobiography challenges conventional definitions of the genre. Unlike traditional Western autobiographies that prioritize individualism and linear self-development, African American narratives foreground the interconnectedness of the individual with community, history, and systemic structures of power. The “self” in these narratives is not isolated but is shaped by shared experiences of oppression, resilience, and cultural continuity. This redefinition expands the theoretical boundaries of autobiography and invites a more inclusive understanding of life writing as a socially embedded practice. Another key insight is the central role of narrative agency in autobiographical writing. For historically marginalized communities, the act of telling one’s own story becomes an assertion of identity and authority. African American autobiographies serve as counter-narratives that challenge dominant representations and provide alternative perspectives on history and lived experience. In this sense, autobiography functions as a tool of empowerment and epistemic resistance, enabling individuals to reclaim their voices and redefine their identities within oppressive contexts.

The study also underscores the importance of recognizing the constructed nature of autobiographical narratives. Rather than being objective accounts of reality, autobiographies are shaped by memory, interpretation, and narrative strategies. This understanding complicates traditional notions of authenticity while offering deeper insights into how individuals make sense of their experiences. In African American autobiography, this constructedness is particularly significant, as it

reflects the negotiation between personal memory and collective history, often in the face of historical erasure and misrepresentation. Furthermore, the increasing hybridity of autobiographical forms highlights the adaptability of the genre. The blending of autobiography with memoir, autofiction, oral traditions, and digital storytelling demonstrates its responsiveness to changing cultural and technological contexts. This evolution not only broadens the scope of the genre but also challenges rigid classifications, suggesting that autobiography should be understood as a fluid and dynamic form of expression. The integration of new media and transnational perspectives further enriches the field, emphasizing the global relevance of African diasporic narratives.

Themes of trauma, resilience, and transformation remain central to African American autobiography. These narratives document experiences of racial discrimination, displacement, and socio-economic hardship, while also highlighting strategies of survival and resistance. In doing so, they function as important archives of lived experience, preserving histories that are often excluded from official records. The transformative potential of these narratives lies in their ability to turn personal suffering into collective memory and social critique, thereby contributing to broader processes of healing and awareness. The study also recognizes the growing importance of intersectionality in autobiographical research. The inclusion of diverse perspectives based on gender, sexuality, and class enriches the understanding of African American autobiography and challenges monolithic representations of Black identity. By acknowledging the multiplicity of experiences within the genre, scholars can develop more nuanced and inclusive frameworks for analysis.

Despite these advancements, the study identifies several areas for future research. Issues related to representation, canon formation, and the inclusion of underrepresented voices remain critical concerns. Additionally, the rapid emergence of digital autobiographical forms calls for the development of new theoretical models that can adequately capture their complexity. Addressing these gaps will be essential for ensuring the continued relevance and growth of the field. In conclusion, African American autobiography stands as a vital and transformative genre that bridges literature, history, and cultural studies. It not only redefines the boundaries of autobiographical writing but also serves as a powerful medium for articulating identity, resistance, and collective memory. As the genre continues to evolve,

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it offers significant opportunities for scholarly exploration and contributes to a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of human experience.

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