



Interpreting the Self: Two Hundred Years of American Autobiography

Diane Bjorklund

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In this ambitious study, Diane Bjorklund explores the historical nature of self-narrative. Examining over 100 American autobiographers published in the last two centuries, she discusses not only well-known autobiographies such as Mark Twain and Andrew Carnegie but also many obscure ones such as a traveling book peddler, a minstrel, a hotel proprietress, an itinerant preacher, a West Point cadet, and a hoopskirt wire manufacturer. Bjorklund draws on the colorful stories of these autobiographers to show how their historical epoch shapes their understandings of self.

"A refreshingly welcome approach to this intriguing topic. . . . [Bjorklund's] extensive and systematic approach to her source material is impressive and enriches our understanding of this essential subject."—*Virginia Quarterly Review*

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