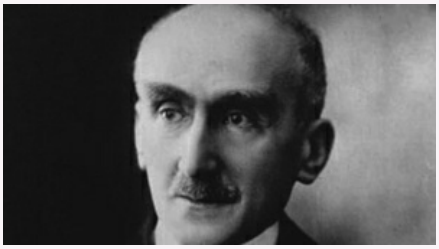
Henri Bergson (1859-1941)



Creative Evolution

"The Evolution of Life – Mechanism and Teleology" (1907): An evolution in which a free emergence of the individual intelligence could be recognized. Bergson based his theory on the distinction between matter and the élan vital, or life force, the progress of which he saw as a line continually bifurcating or diverging from its course.

Duration: the subjective experience of time → connected to memory

Élan vital: the vital impetus linked to creative intuition (not thinking) that motivates evolution

Theory of Knowledge vs. Theory of Life

The Mold of Individuality

"who can say where individuality begins and ends, whether the living being is one or many, whether it is the cells which associate themselves into the organism or the organism which dissociates itself into cells? In vain, we force the living into this or that one of our molds. All the molds crack. They are too narrow, above all too rigid, for what we try to put into them"

Reality vs. Imitation

"'It is no longer reality itself,' it says, 'that will reconstruct, but **only an imitation of the real, or rather a symbolical image; the essence of things escape us always**; we move among relations; the absolute is not in our province; we are brought to a stand before the Unknowable.' – But for the human intellect, after too much pride, this is really **an excess of humility**"

On autobiography

One's identity isn't fixed but rather ever-c-hanging, which implies that the author of an autobiography could not be the same as the character in it, having had more experience while writing.

Duration states

"The truth is that we change without ceasing, and that the state itself is nothing but change [...] the transition is continuous" (2).

Observing an object: perspective, time, emotion

Unforeseen events are part of duration; we only focus our attention on them because they are interesting

Artificial bond: we must reunite these events. We imagine these events like "beads of a necklace" on a "colorless substratum" (ego)

Cerebral Mechanism: drives back into the unconscious almost the whole of the past, allowing through only what is useful

Impulse: we vaguely feel that our past remains present and it is this past with which we desire, will, and act (not think)

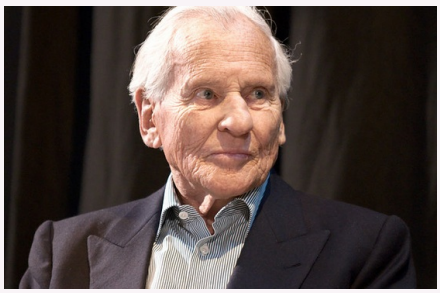
Paul de Man (1919-1983)



Summary De-facement

De Man seeks to explore the limits of autobiography. He combats the idea of autobiography as a closed construction as produced by life itself and instead questions whether the very shape of this outcome defines or alters whom it references to in the first place. By doing so, he posits that the distinction between fiction and reality as posited to underlie autobiography is "und-ecidable" (921), as its limits cannot clearly be demarcated. The autobiography should not be considered a literary genre because it does not seem to fit within any generic definition. Autobiography logically seems to depend on reality, unlike literature which is fictive. De Man however theorizes that "the distinction between fiction and autobi-ography is not an either/or polarity" and in effect autobiographies require a different way of reading or understanding. Every text in this sense contains an autobiographical element..

Philippe Lejeune (1938-)





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Le Pacte Autobiographique (1975)

Philippe Lejeune talks of the “autobiographical pact” – the reader’s implicit belief that the author, narrator and protagonist of an autobiography are one and the same. Lejeune does see autobiography as fitting within literature, and emphasises the importance of the language an author uses in order to represent (what he perceives as) reality.

Autobiographical Pact

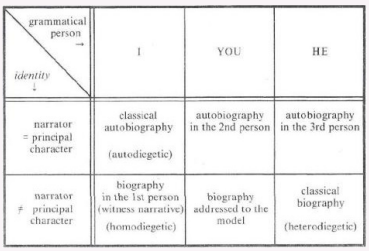
"Is there not confusion, in most of the arguments concerning autobiography, between the notion of identity and that of resemblance?"

Autobiographical pact: there is no real difference between the narrator, author and protagonist in both autobiographies and autobiographical novels

Biography: "retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality"

Identity, Resemblance, Grammatical person, identity of the individual, Autodiegetic, Heterodiegetic, Homodiegetic

Diagram Lejeune



grammatical person → / identity ↓	I	YOU	HE
narrator = principal character	classical autobiography (autodiegetic)	autobiography in the 2nd person	autobiography in the 3rd person
narrator ≠ principal character	biography in the 1st person (witness narrative) (homodiegetic)	biography addressed to the model	classical biography (heterodiegetic)



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