



<https://mylifeineurope.nkey.it/>

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



Strategic Partnerships Adult Education N°2020-1-IT02-KA204-079571



# The Game and the Manual

## Narrative and autobiographical methodology

GRAZIA CHIARINI – SARA CALCINI  
LUA

# The final products of the MY LIFE Project

2

The Manual

The Game

Quick Guides

# The methodological manual for trainers

- ▶ Online and free, it will be a useful tool for individual training and for the training of operators able to implement repetitive training courses in different contexts.
- ▶ It will contain all the basic instructions to introduce autobiographical writing in therapeutic and recreational paths.
- ▶ In all those places where writing about yourself and sharing with others helps to feel less alone, to feel better, to feel part of a larger world, like the European Community.

# Contents of the manual



A general theoretical part dedicated to Life-Writing and its potential realized in synergy with all partners favoring the multidisciplinary contribution.



A practical part dedicated to autobiographical methodologies, in which information will be given on the use of the game, the characteristics of the cards, the role of the facilitator.



The results of the trial of the game

# Some of the topics covered in the Manual: Narratives

5

The human being has the natural predisposition to organize his experiences in narrative form.

Through narratives, myths, legends human being tries to explain the world around him.

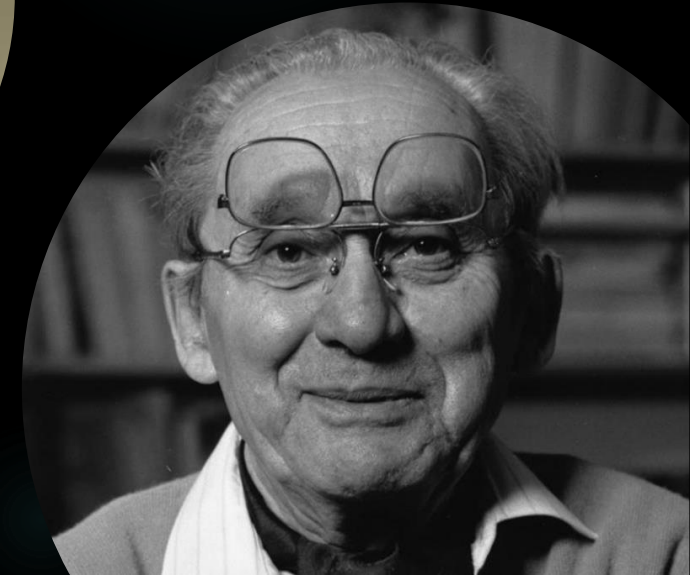
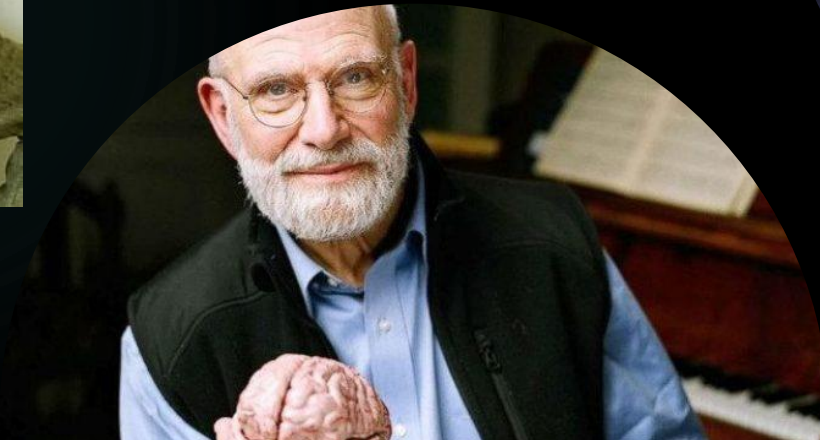
Through narratives we know , we understand ourselves, others, the world, the life.

The story becomes a map with reference points to guide the events of our history.





**Over the years, many scientists, psychologists, philosophers, anthropologists, pedagogists, neurologists have studied narratives and their meaning for the human being, from different points of view.**



# Some reflections

## **Narration as need to rebuild reality**

The narrative of themselves responds to the individual's need to rebuild reality by giving it a specific meaning at a temporal or cultural level. (Jerome Bruner, 1988)

## **Narration as a space for reflection**

The narrative is a space for reflection through which the picture of one's own existence emerges. (Jerome Bruner, 1988)

## **Emotional involvement**

The narrative genre is characterized by the emotional involvement of the reader/listener. This happens because in the narration the actions are always accompanied by the description of the protagonist's experiences, with which one can identify. (Jerome Bruner, 1990)

## **Give order and meaning to lived experiences**

We are in that we tell, only in this way can we bring back into unity the multiplicity of experiences lived, giving order and bringing out a sense. Human action is endowed with meaning and is configured just like a text. Faced with a text to be understood the mind is affected by the historical and cultural environment in which it was formed.( Paul Ricoeur 1984)

**Stories help define and preserve our identity.** ( A. Smorti. 1998)

**Each of us is a biography, a story. each of us is unique.** ( Oliver Sacks, 1985)

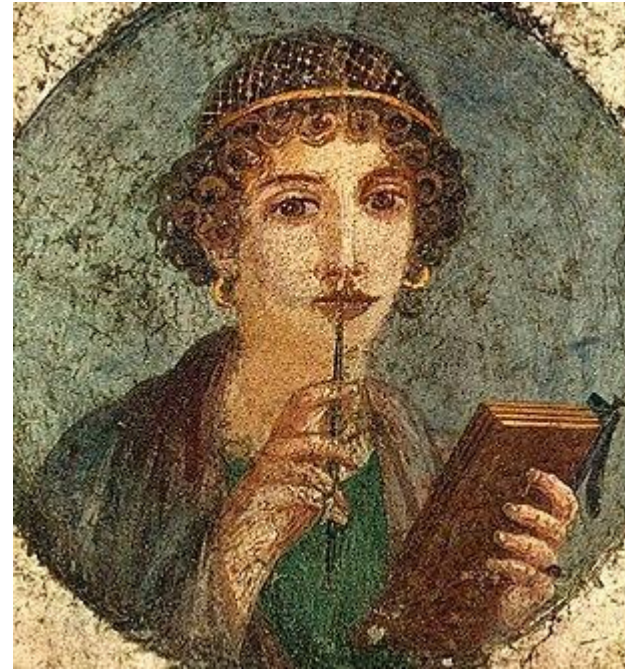
**As a living thing, narrative has many dimensions and powers.**

“Narrative structures such as novel, newspaper articles, and letter to friends enable us to recount events, to depict characters, to suggest causes for events, to represent the passage of time, to use metaphor to convey meanings otherwise elusive. As an instrument for self-knowledge and communion, narrative is an irreplaceable- and often silent or at least transparent- partner to human beings as they make and mark meaning, coping with contingencies of moral and mortal life.” ( R. Charon, 2006)



# Writing is a free space that allows us:

- ▶ The manual action of writing
- ▶ To take time
- ▶ Reflection
- ▶ Introspection and awareness
- ▶ Sharing, contact with each other
- ▶ To exercise empathy
- ▶ To get better



Writing is a  
practice that  
requires  
commitment

---

**What can you write?**

Episodes of life, pain, illness, emotions...

---

**In what form?**

Diary, autobiography, biography, fragments of writing, letters...

---

**Who can write?**

Who wants to leave a trace of himself

---

**Where you can write?**

Where you want, in a setting suitable for us

---

**When can you write?**

When you feel the need, every day, on indication

---

**For whom to write?**

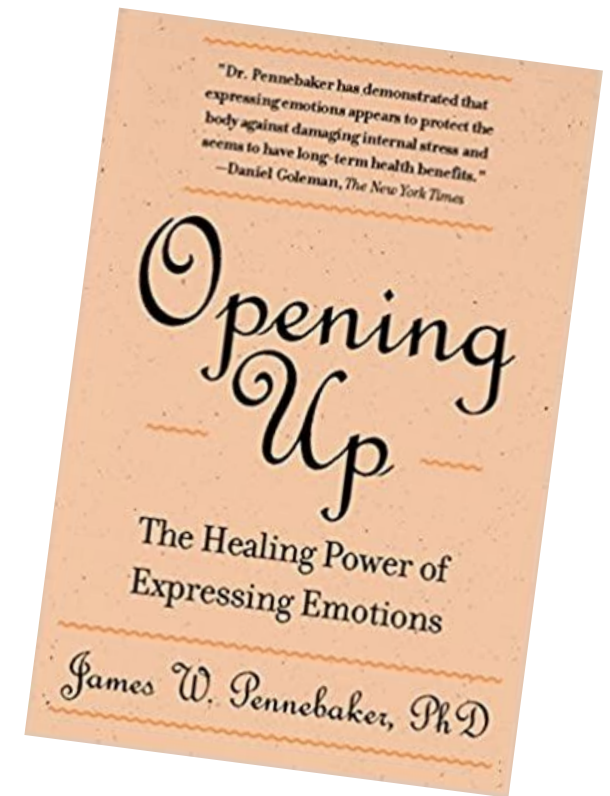
For themselves, for others

# An example: Opening Up: The Healing Power of Expressing Emotions

(James Pennebaker, 1983)

- ▶ What you are thinking or worrying about
- ▶ What you are dreaming of
- ▶ What makes you suffer
- ▶ What you've been avoiding for days

In this book Pennebaker presents evidence that personal self-disclosure is not only good for our emotional health, but boosts our physical health as well.



# Examples of self-writing

(for time dedicated not for judgment)

- ▶ **Minor Scriptures :**

Drawings, tracks, scribbles, post-it notes

Autobiographical fragments (sms, affective card, postcard, petit onze, MY LIFE game scripts)



**Major Writings:**

Poetry

Diary

Autobiography: weaving autobiographical fragments

Letters



# Diary

Diary from the Latin “dies” (day)

Diary is a narration, through writing, almost daily. It is written for itself, or to an imaginary interlocutor. It is often written at a young age and the linguistic register is informal.

## Types of diary:

**Personal** : thoughts, emotions, reflections,

**Literary**: to be published.

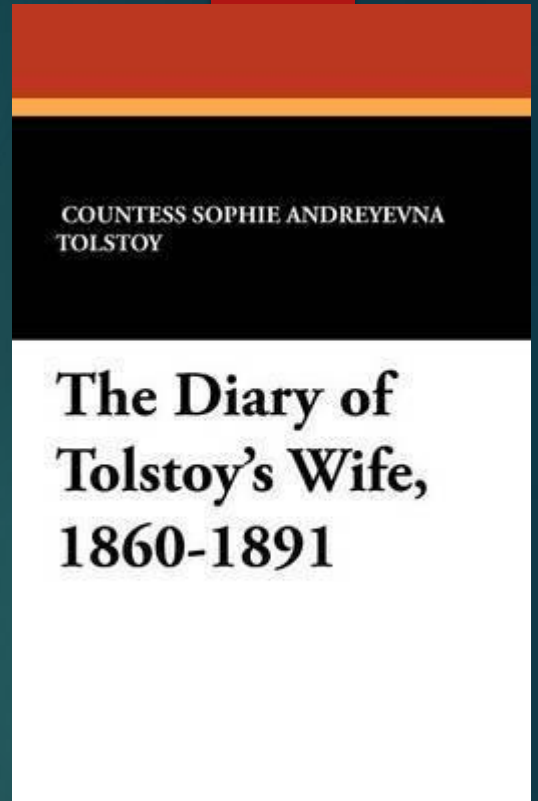
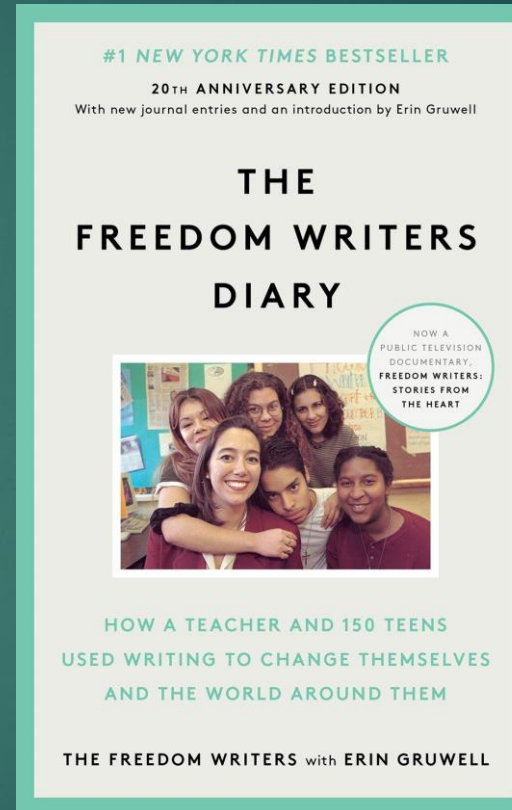
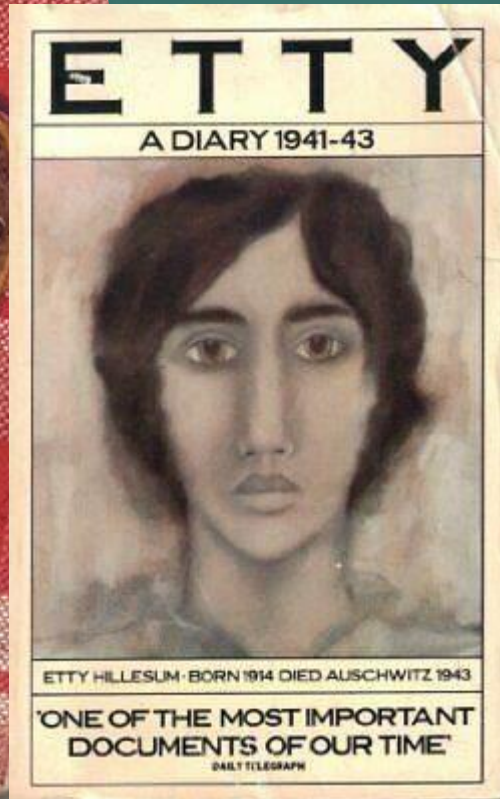
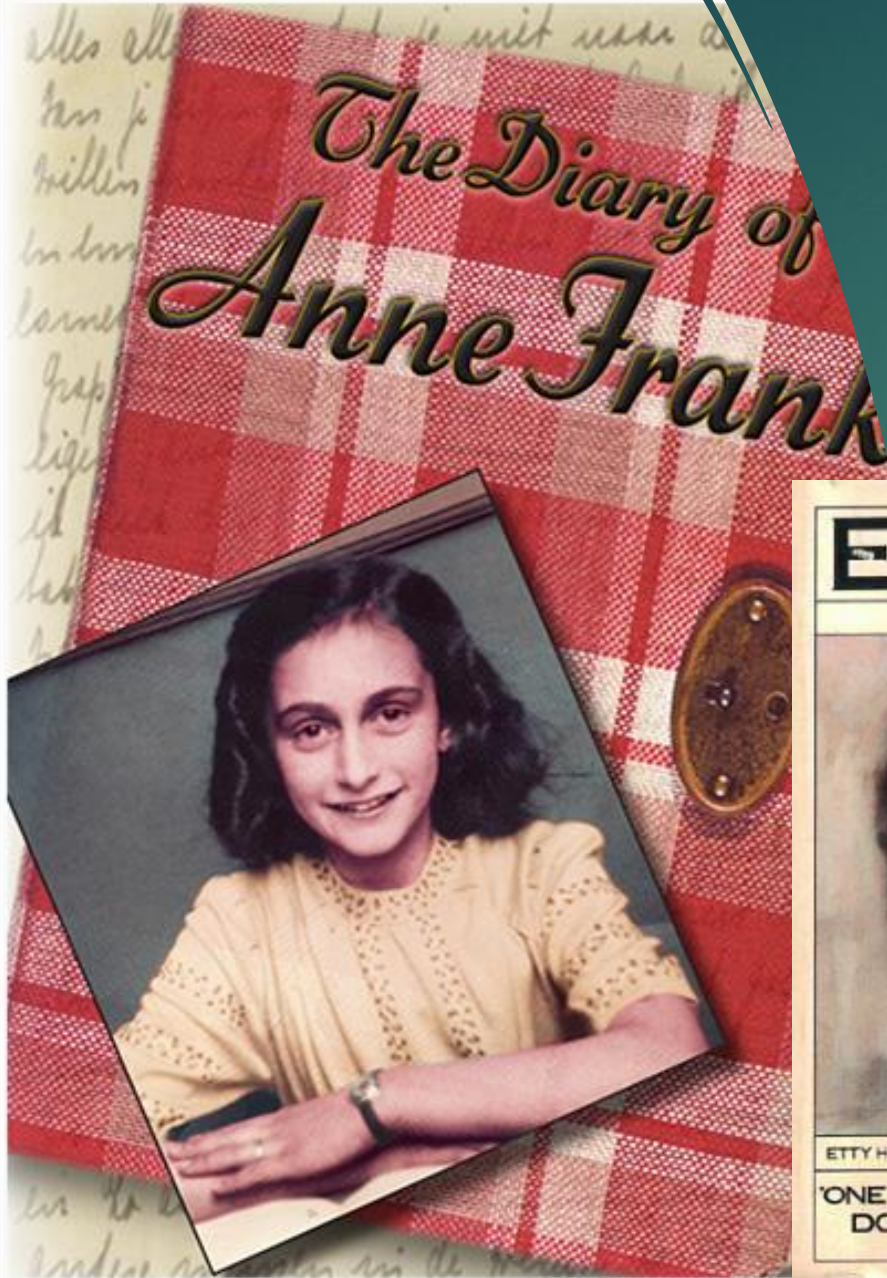
**Traveling**

**For notes**: a sentence, a poem, a dream





# DIARIES



# Autobiography

15

Dr.ssa Grazia Chiarini e Dr.ssa Sara Calcinì

The word Autobiography comes from the greek αὐτός «myself», βίος «life», γράφω «write» : I write about myself

If I write about you or him, her or them I write a Biography.

Autobiography is an ancient literary genre for all those who want to tell of themselves and their lives, of what they have done and learned over the years.

When we want leave testimony of our life to others, we write an Autobiography.

# Autobiography is an autoformative method

16

Autobiography is an autoformative method that everyone, alone or with the help of a facilitator, can experience in the first person: self-correcting, self-evaluating, discovering narrative potentials.

Practicing daily writing, stimulates to remember, to concentrate, to reason , to appreciate solitude and meditation. It helps personal growth.





The autobiography is also a self-healing method because it gives meaning to memories, generates reflection, explores the identity of each of us .

With autobiographical writing we take care of ourselves and others

(D. Demetrio, 1996)



# The multiplicity of the self

In the autobiographical practice we distance ourselves from ourselves.

Distance includes time ( past- present) and space ( here- there).

We become characters in a story where author and protagonist is the same.

Duccio Demetrio calls "cognitive bilocation" , the ability to divide ourselves without getting lost, in order to be able to "look at" ourselves.





From « Narrative Medicine. Honoring the  
Stories of illness»  
R. Charon, 2006

“Any time a person writes about himself or herself , a space is created between the person doing the writing and the person doing the living, even though, of course, these people are identical. Called "the autobiographical gap", this space between the narrator-who-write and the protagonist-who-acts confers the very powerful distance of reflection, without which no one can consider his or her own actions, thoughts, or life. Within this reflective space, one beholds and consider the self in a heightened way, revealing fresh knowledge about its coherent existence.”

# NARRATIVE MEDICINE

*Honoring the Stories  
of Illness*



RITA CHARON

## The autobiography can have many forms

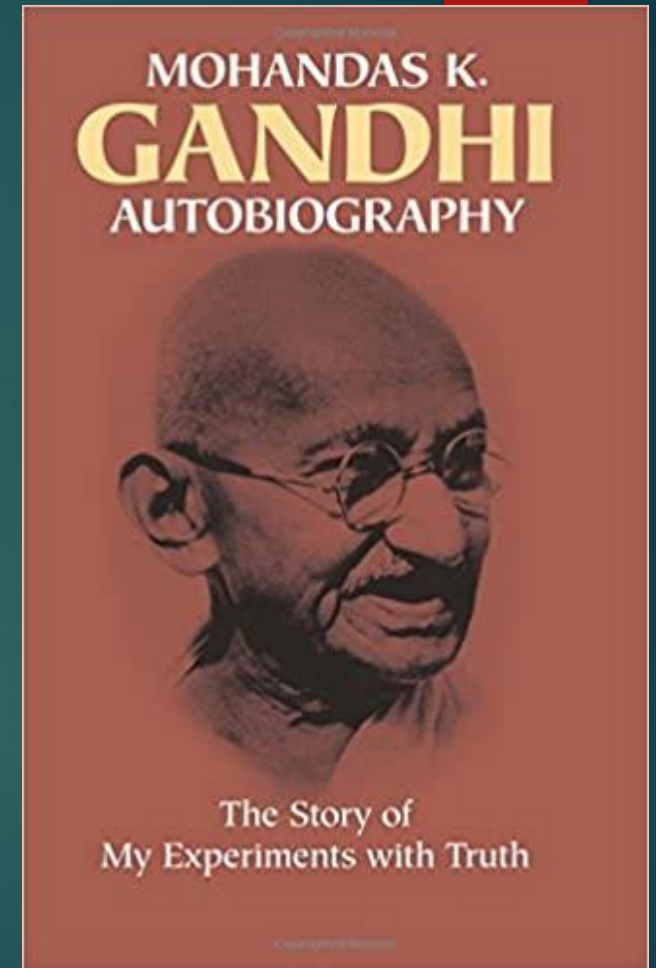
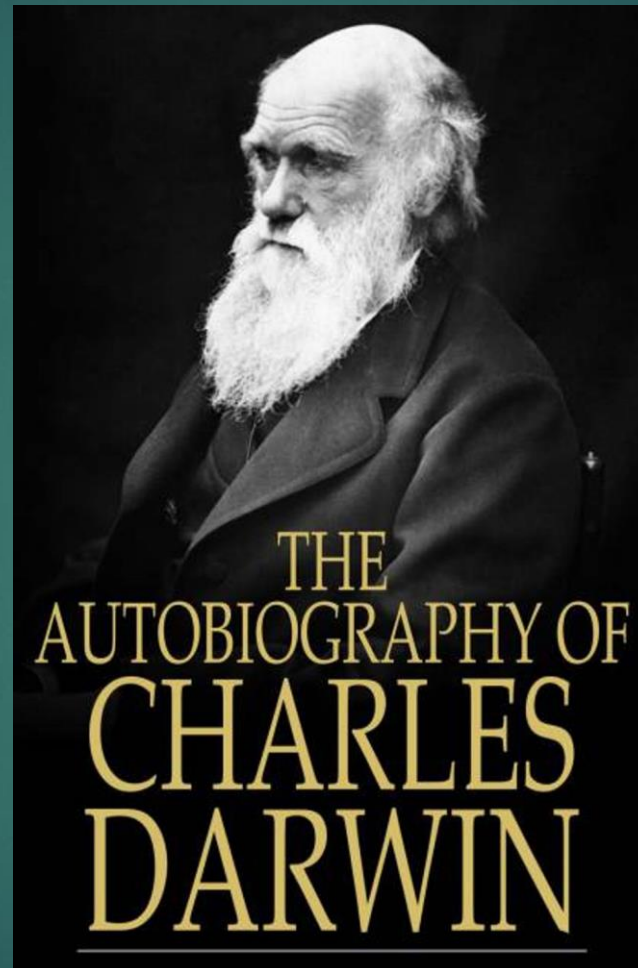
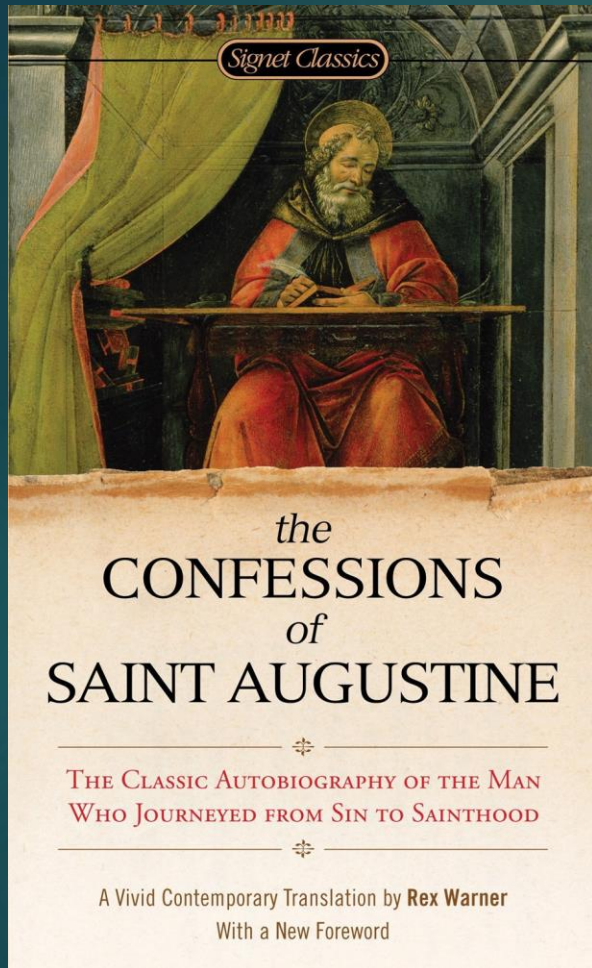
It can be a story in prose, in verse, a documentary, a film, a photo book, a comic book, a drawing...





# Autobiographies

21

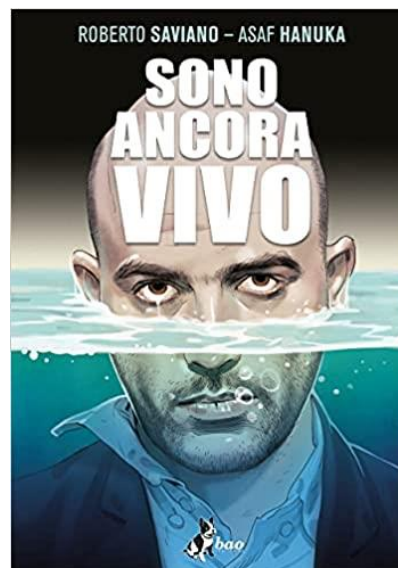
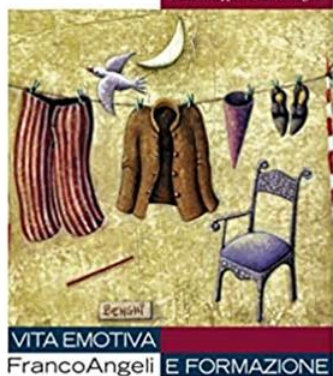




### *Frammenti autobiografici dal carcere*

Laboratori di scrittura sulla paternità tra uomini detenuti e uomini liberi

A cura di  
Carla Chiappini e Marco Baglio



## Some examples of Italian Autobiographies

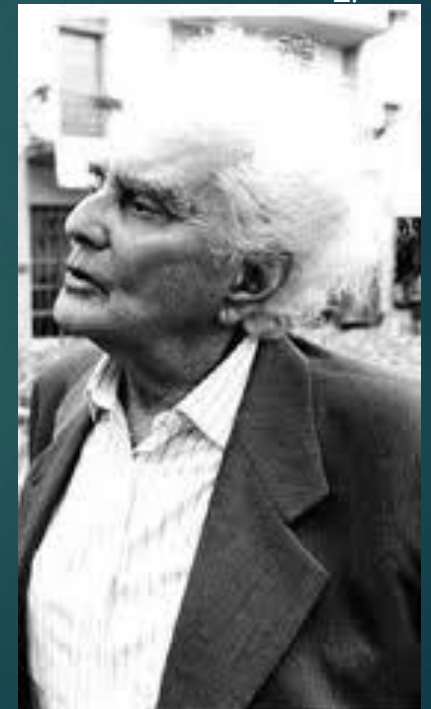
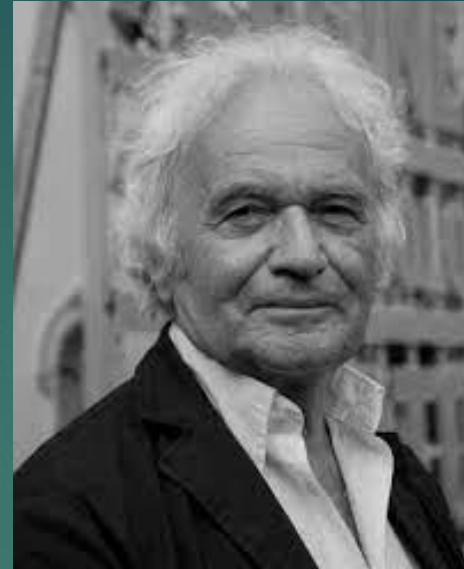
# A Community of autobiographical writers

The Free University of the Autobiography of Anghiari was founded as a non-profit cultural association by Duccio Demetrio and Saverio Tutino in 1998.

The association promotes training and research through various activities : the school, specializations, seminars, the Study Center, the Master.

All information on the site:

<http://lua.it/>



Dr.ssa Grazia Chiari





Anghiari - Piazza del Popolo  
Scuola Mnemosyne IX Edizione  
3 settembre 2009

# The autobiographical methodology of the LUA

25

The methodology has a formative, introspective and reconstructive dimension.

In the meetings a circumscribed space-time is created, a space of well-being and freedom in which everyone can take time for himself, opening up to new possibilities and perspectives.

Through exercises guided by a facilitator, readings and commentaries of literary passages and sharing of testimonies, we develop deep self-listening and reflection on lived experiences.





# The architecture of autobiographical writing paths is the same. Teachers' contributions change.

26

Dr.ssa Grazia Chiar

- Silent free writing for 10 minutes
- Slow reading aloud of narrative pieces, reflective fragments, poems...
- to stir up memories like the plough does with clods
- Write according to stimuli
- Share freely without judgment
- Listening
- Reflect on
- Rebuild links
- Meta-reflection.
- Acquire existential posture



# Teamwork

27

The group participates in the history of each and gets in touch with the history of all.

Emotional, content, self-reflective aspects emerge, mixing meanings.

The formative context becomes a narrative context because it allows the narration without the fear of the judgment of others.



# References

- Bruner J.S., The culture of Education, Harvard University Press, 1996
- Bruner J.S., Acts of meaning, Cambridge Mass, Harvard University Press, 1990
- Demetrio D., La scrittura clinica. Consulenza autobiografica e fragilità esistenziali, Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 2008.
- Demetrio D., Raccontarsi. L'autobiografia come cura di sé, Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 1996.
- Mortari L, Filosofia della cura, Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 2015.
- Pennacker J.W., Opening Up: The Healing Power of Expressing Emotions, Guilford Press, (1997).
- Ricoeur Paul, Time and Narrative, The University of Chicago Press, 1984
- Smorti A. (a cura di), Il sé come testo, Giunti Editore, Firenze, 1997.
- Paul Watzlawick, Janet Helmick Beavin, Don D. Jackson, Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes, W W Norton & Co Inc; Reprint edizione, 2014