

Pattamon Kotrakoonsin 2007: An Analytical Study of the Evolution and Value of Autobiography from the Fifth through the Ninth Reigns. Master of Arts (Thai Literature), Major Field: Thai Literature, Department of Literature. Thesis Advisor: Assistant Professor Yada Arampee, Ph.D. 165 pages.

The objectives of this research were 1) to make an analytical study of autobiographies grouped in accordance with the authors' social status or occupation, 2) to study the evolution of autobiography in terms of content, form and narrative technique, and 3) to study the value of autobiography.

There were thirty autobiographies under study, chosen from those written in the reign of King Rama V to King Rama IX, to form a selection of writings by authors of different social or occupational areas and of different periods.

The research revealed that autobiographies generally depicted the authors' experiences from their childhood up to certain stage of life, the details of which naturally differ from one person to another. Authors belonging to the same areas tend to have one practice in common – the description of their own social or occupational context.

Regarding the evolution, the results were as follows: 1) There were changes in terms of content. In the past, little of the authors' family life was told; negative, mainly not serious, experiences in childhood were indirectly referred to; any negative issues about other people were narrated without mentioning names. While at present, more was told about ones' family and in a praising tone; working life and satisfactory events were proudly depicted, sometimes so proudly that it could be taken as a boast; more was said about severely negative experiences both about the authors themselves and about others, with names clearly given. There was an agreement between the purpose and the content in general, with only some exceptional cases where the authors intended to make excuses on their own behalf. 2) No obvious change was found in terms of form. Autobiography in both the past and the present had been written in prose. Other forms available are such as diary or letter. 3) No obvious change was found in terms of writing technique. Various techniques were applied: incidents were mostly put in chronological order even though flashbacks were sometimes used. The language was abound with expressions and figures of speech, suitable for the content, capable of convincing the audience and revealing the authors' identity. It is worth noticing that there is a mixture of non-fiction and fiction in autobiography. Regarding the value, the research has found that autobiography is a form of literature which provides the audience with knowledge, ideas and literary beauty.

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Mon / 18 / 2007