



Journal of Contemporary Poetics

Journal Homepage: <https://www.iiu.edu.pk/english/jcp>



Memoirs of a Rebel Princess: A Different Selfhood

Rohma Saleem* 

Department of English Literature, Air University, Islamabad, Pakistan

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Autobiography
Self
Relation
Identity
Politics

ABSTRACT

This study examines *Memoirs of a Rebel Princess* through Georges Gusdorf's theory of autobiographical selfhood and Susan Stanford Friedman's theory of women's autobiography. Using textual analysis, it argues that Abida Sultaan's memoir occupies a distinctive position within autobiographical writing because it resists rigid gendered classifications of self-narration. While Gusdorf's model privileges an autonomous, self-assertive, and individualistic subject, Friedman's framework foregrounds relational identity, interdependence, and the socially situated nature of women's self-representation. Abida Sultaan's memoir draws on both traditions without fully belonging to either. On the one hand, it presents a confident, assertive, and politically conscious self that recalls masculine-coded conventions of autobiography, particularly through its emphasis on public authority, political history, rebellion, and personal independence. On the other hand, the text also foregrounds relational and familial attachments, especially through Sultaan's devotion to her son, her concern for kinship ties, and her repeated sacrifices for family. The study therefore argues that *Memoirs of a Rebel Princess* constructs a hybrid autobiographical self that is simultaneously autonomous, relational, political, and maternal. In doing so, the memoir unsettles fixed distinctions between male and female autobiographical modes and secures a unique position within life-writing.

Article History:

Received: June 5, 2025; Revised: April 7, 2026; Accepted on June 1, 2026

© 2026 The Authors. Published by Department of English, International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan.
This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

*Corresponding Author

Email Address: rohma.saleem@au.edu.pk

Introduction

This study conducted a textual analysis of *Memoirs of Abida Sultaan*, using the autobiographical framework suggested by Georges Gusdorf and Susan Friedman. Both of them hold oppositional positions as far as the theory of self-narration is concerned. Gusdorf's concept of self is modelled on Western individualistic existence, where a disassociation of the self from others is a necessary accompaniment of writing an autobiography. In writing their accounts, the writers imagine themselves at the centre, making other relations or characters of their life recede in the background. It is their isolated selves that they want to reveal and disclose to the world.

Gusdorf has many followers in his excessive emphasis on the individualistic self. Olney, for one, has been the translator of Gusdorf's seminal essay, "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography". Among others, who tend to agree with Gusdorf, Elizabeth Bruss, and Karl J Weintraub can be named. This stress naturally offers an oblique criticism of those societies where individualism is discouraged or given a secondary position to collective interest. Gusdorf considers the pre-eminence of collective lives a negation of the very conception of the self and ego. He terms the autobiographical works of the East as "cultural transplant" (qtd. in Friedman 35), which cannot delineate a true portrait of self. If Gusdorf was the initiator of the theory of individualistic self, the works of critics like Olney seem to reinforce the need for "a separate selfhood" in his seminal work *Metaphors of Self* (23). This, according to him, is an essential precondition for the genre of autobiography.

Gendered Models of Autobiographical Selfhood

Georges Gusdorf enjoys the reputation of being the "dean of autobiography" (Friedman 34). As mentioned earlier, his theory centres on the Western individualistic self. Disassociation from others is an essential prerequisite. "Separate selfhood is the very motive of [autobiographical] creation", asserted Olney (22), echoing, very obviously, his mentor. Gusdorf is of the opinion that the desire to write about oneself is far from universal. The genre expresses a concern that is only "peculiar to Western man" (29). If notable men like Gandhi, for instance, have emulated the tradition, they, according to Gusdorf, are using "Western means to defend the East" (29). A little further in his essay, he asserts, "Autobiography is not possible in a cultural landscape, where consciousness of self does not, properly speaking, exist" (Gusdorf 30).

But this emphasis on individualistic self has been critiqued heavily as lopsided and lacking in a nuanced approach. Many critics have explored the limitations of these definitions. Female writers like Patricia Meyer Spacks, Estelle Jelinek, Nancy Chodorow, and Susan Friedman hold that this model of individualistic self does not consider the marginalised groups, such as non-whites or females. According to Friedman:

The self, self-creation, and self-consciousness are profoundly different for women, minorities, and many non-Western peoples. The model of separate and unique selfhood that is highlighted in his [Gusdorf] work and shared by other critics established a critical bias that leads to the misreading and marginalisation of autobiographical texts by women and minorities in the process of canon formation (34).

The elements of identification, a sense of community, and interdependence, which are crucial factors of women's memoirs, have been dismissed by Gusdorf as unimportant for the sense of self. But Friedman maintains that these three have a pivotal influence on the formation of a female's personality. Woman, Friedman posits, explores her identity through relations. She is highly conscious of the prescriptive role that society allocates to her. Hers is therefore a dual consciousness: "the self as culturally defined and the self as different from cultural prescription" (Friedman 39). In other words, her identity is split into two: the individual self and the role that society expects of her. It is because of

this dichotomy that a woman in her autobiographies seldom occupies the central position. The fringes are best suited to her, and it is through this peripheral position that she discusses her concept of self. Chodorow observes that relational abilities and preoccupations have been extended in women's development (169).

This study analyses the *Memoirs of Abida Sultaan* [1] in the light of these two theories. It seeks to inquire if the conditions of autobiography as enunciated in MAS have characteristics of female autobiographies in it, as proposed by Susan Friedman, or does it enjoy a unique position in exhibiting a different selfhood which shares the characteristics of both male and female sense of self. In other words, I will try to analyse if MAS has elements of male autobiographies according to the theory of Georges Gusdorf, or is it more in consonance with female autobiographies in its emphasis on relations and a depiction of a self which is culturally prescriptive. Thus, this study seeks to investigate the uniqueness of MAS among varying kinds of autobiographies. Through textual analysis of the primary text, it is likely to find unparalleled characteristics in it, which will establish the exclusiveness of MAS as an autobiography that defies categories. True to Gusdorf's proclamation, an exaggerated idea of the self is what acts as a prompt for many Western writers of autobiography. The self-story springs from a desire to fix one's own image lest it should disappear like all other ephemeral phenomena in this world. The writers of autobiographies consider themselves an important part of history and are at pains to leave behind a document in the form of their memories. For example, men like Edward Said thought of recording their life history when faced with the prospect of their death. *Out of Place* is a *record* of an essentially lost or forgotten world. Several years ago, I received what seemed to be a fatal medical diagnosis, and it therefore struck me as important to leave behind a subjective account of the life I lived. (xi)

It is as if the writer does not trust the truthfulness of historical accounts, and this subjective recollection is an attempt at leaving a personal record. Autobiographies, therefore, are prompted by the need to project a distinct self. This model of self, however, was vehemently opposed by critics like Susan Friedman, who argue that self-formation is entirely different for women. In contrast to the celebratory nature of male autobiography, female autobiography is intrinsically different. Critics like Patricia Meyer Spacks, Estelle Jelinek, Nancy Chodorow, and Susan Friedman have expressed their reservations against the over-emphatic projection of self in the theories of male autobiographies. Female autobiographies do not portray the assertive self. Patricia Spacks labels the differences of female writing as "delicate divergence" (qtd. in Showalter 249), thus defining the elusive nature of female writing. Elaine Showalter, in her book *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), agrees with Spacks' position. According to her, to pick up the difference of female writing is a "slippery and demanding task" (Showalter 249). Showalter maintains that the difference can be small but crucial. Rowbotham advances this point by positing that a woman is never unconscious of the role society prescribes for her. She defines and projects herself in association with others. The assertive self, so important an element in male autobiographies, is no longer the predominant strain. In contrast, the reader clearly discerns the sense of dual consciousness. Rowbotham notes in her *Women's Consciousness, Man's World* (1973):

But always we were split in two, straddling silence, not sure where we could begin to find ourselves or one another. From this division, our material dislocation came from the experience of one part of ourselves as strong, foreign, and cut off from the other, which we encountered as tongue-tied paralysis about our own identity...the manner with ourselves was not variance with ourselves as an historical being—woman. (46)

Nancy Chodorow, in her book *Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*, demonstrates how the concept of a separate selfhood is impossible for women. In contrast, a woman has a relational identity and fluid ego boundaries. She posits that the "basic feminine sense of self" is always forging a connection with the world, whereas "the basic masculine sense of self is separate" (169).

A female autobiography would not seek self-glorification. There is a denial of public acclaim. Patricia Meyer Spacks focuses on this element of women's autobiography in her essay aptly called "Selves in Hiding". Sorting out the lives of five women, she demonstrates how these autobiographies are the "stories of unusual female achievement" and yet the narratives are peculiar in the way that these are marked by "a singular absence of personal satisfaction in achievement" (132). All these five great women of public accomplishment, Emmeline Pankhurst, the English Suffragist; Dorothy Day, a founder of the radical 'Catholic Workers'; Emma Goldman, the fiery anarchist; Eleanor Roosevelt; and Golda Meir, make the 'personal' more important than the political. Spacks confirms that, by doing so, these great achievers "use autobiography paradoxically as a mode of self-denial 'public'(132).

It has also been noted by critics that women's autobiographies do not mirror the history of their times. There is a peculiar evasiveness in making an autobiography a record of historical events. The emphasis is more on domestic details, family difficulties, close friends, and especially people who influenced them. The female autobiography may be passive in its public aspect, yet it is deeply satisfying emotionally. Women never really let go of the emotional side of their story. Most women portray with pride their motherhood, the sacrifices they made as mothers, and their children's numerous achievements. Mary Mason calls this aspect "delineation of identity by alterity" (231).

Another aspect in which female autobiography is crucially different from male autobiography is its lack of linear sequence. A female autobiography is usually characterised by a fragmentary structure. Women can only capture the multidimensionality of their roles through diffusion. Jelinek states that the controlled chaos of Kate Millet's autobiography, *Flying, Sita*, with its mixed chronology, flashbacks within flashbacks, and its stream of consciousness, clearly reflects the fragmentation she experiences in her multiple roles as writer, teacher, filmmaker, critic, sculptor, political activist, bisexual, and feminist (29).

With this background in mind, the study at hand aims to explore the male/female characteristics of *Memoirs of Abida Sultaan*. Before starting with the discussion and analysis, I would begin with a brief background of the writer and the text.

Abida Sultaan and the Politics of Self-Narration

Abida Sultaan was the heir apparent of the princely state of Bhopal, being the eldest daughter of Nawab Hamidullah Khan. Born in 1913, she was brought up under the authoritarian guidance of her grandmother, Shah Jahan Begum. The state enjoyed a history of female rulers who were renowned for "their active administrations, prudent relations with the British and generous patronage of religious and cultural activities" (Hurley xiv). Abida Sultaan, in accordance with her future responsibilities, was given rigorous training. She did not receive only academic and religious education, the best possible for that era, but also was taught to play, shoot, hunt, and carry out all the chores that are, strictly speaking, the domain of the male world. Hers was "an adventure-loving free spirit" (Princess Abida Sultaan Passes Away). She learnt flying and received her flying license in 1942 when there were few women in that field. (Sultaan) She was a fearless hunter who had the pride of shooting seventy-three tigers in Bhopal. However, her tenure of stately responsibilities was cut short by the twist of history. Subsequent to partition, she was compelled to migrate because of certain unfortunate events. She had to adapt herself to an ordinary citizen's role for a brief period. Very soon, she was selected for numerous official duties. She served as ambassador to Brazil and was an active supporter of Fatima Jinnah in the presidential elections of 1964. She was quite articulate and was known for her "frank, fearless and trenchant views on Pakistani politics" (Princess Abida Sultaan Passes Away). She breathed her last in 2002, leaving a son behind.

The *Memoirs of a Rebel Princess* was published after her demise in 2004. It has been compiled with the “help of a diary that I had kept for seventy-one years – since 1930...these diaries have enabled me to reconstruct the story of my life- a story that has spanned the glorious era of the princely states” (Abida Sultaan xli). This acknowledgement is extremely crucial since the writer is conceding to her dependence on diary entries. The “I” that emerges through such recollection is an ambivalent being. The reconstruction of self is retrospective in nature, mediated through memory and archival fragments.

Breaking the Glass Cage: Rebellion, Autonomy, and the Heroic Self

With this brief overview, let us proceed to the detailed analysis of the text. As has been stated before, this paper aims to inquire into and classify the unique, exceptional characteristics of MAS using the theoretical framework of Georges Gusdorf and Susan Friedman regarding autobiography. The text, at first, is analysed through the lens of Georges Gusdorf's description of the self. Such traits in *Memoirs* are located, which make it a different biography than a purely female one. The study would then shift its focus to trying to locate the feminine streaks of autobiography in MAS. In this reading, the theoretical framework of female autobiography proposed by Susan Friedman will be applied.

The title of Abida Sultaan's book itself epitomizes the rebellious trait of her personality. She has never been a submissive, docile girl to be moulded and cast in the desired shape. Rather, as Sahibzada Yaqub Khan testifies in the foreword of MAS, she was a rebel incarnate from the early years of her childhood. The clashes with her grandmother ignited that “fire of rebellion” so that she delighted in “defiance of expression, vying for superiority over her male peers in all walks of life and in qualities of leadership, demanding physical and moral courage of the highest order” (ix).

Gusdorf has emphasised the heightened projection of self in male autobiographies. We see the self of MAS not occupying a liminal position but remaining at the centre. The ‘I’ of the *Memoirs* is assertive, self-confident, not feeling any compunction when Abida Sultaan radically breaks societal prescriptive role. The rebel in her was very strong and pronounced from a very early age. This trait of her personality resonates very well with Gusdorf's argument who posits that in male autobiographies, the “I” is always presented as a universal model of courage and bravery. Sultaan's insistence on being treated like a male and her grittiness in “breaking the glass cage” both illustrate her heroic construction of selfhood. The same is true for her rebellion against purdah and her token act of cutting her hair. These cannot be merely termed as personal acts of defiance; they are framed, apparently with full deliberation, as universal statements of independence, echoing Gusdorf's claim that male autobiographies cast the self into a heroic mould.

It seems pertinent to point out how rebelliousness and aggression are always valorised as masculine traits in literary discourse. Critics like Stefan Horlacher, in *Configuring Masculinity in Theory and Literary Practice* (2011), suggest how rebellion is culturally coded as masculine, and in females, this has been termed a deviation.

Realising at a very early age her responsibilities, she set out with a conscious attempt to cultivate in her the qualities of an accomplished stateswoman. She wisely thought that conventional education was not enough for her and therefore began a series of correspondence courses from England in accountancy, office management, secretarial work, and mathematics” (131). Discarding purdah, she candidly observes, “in defiance of my grandmother, was the happiest event of my life” (81). On cutting her long tresses, again a radical stance is described as, “the short hair was my statement to be recognized as an adult whose life was now to inhabit a man's world” (81).

Her rebellious acts, echoing throughout the text, affirm and reaffirm her central position, her uniqueness in her autobiography. She does not seem to be defined by her societal role, nor does she appear to be a mere member of a group lacking agency or distinct identity. Her assertive self feels the bondage of marriage antithetical to her personality. Like any male, who can sever the relation when it runs counter to his personality, she dared approach her husband in the dark night, demanding from him the custody of her son at gunpoint. She candidly admits, “I was not cast in the mould of a dutiful life but was a free, independent and aggressive spirit” (99). She calls herself a “tomboy, adventurous, and totally disdainful of romantic escapades” (108). For the many traits of her personality, she feels indebted to her grandmother. Whether it is the decision to leave her luxurious lifestyle and opt for Pakistan against the desires of her family members, or it is to express her distaste for the Islamisation act of General Zia, she asserted an independent will that can only be called masculine. Hers is a narrative of autonomy, resilience, and confrontation, closely aligning herself with Gusdorf’s heroic self rather than the relational self-enunciation by Susan Friedman, with its emphasis on emotional vulnerability. In a conventionally written female autobiography, one accepts the frequent recurrence of tears, complaints, and bitterness that would accompany an unsuccessful marriage and the numerous difficulties of life. But Abida Sultaan could never submit herself to the defined roles of society, nor does she surrender to the problems that keep appearing with regular frequency. She resists converting her memoirs into one of complaints and bitterness; instead, it becomes a chronicle of her unyielding resistance to life.

Public History and the Political Self in *Memoirs of a Rebel Princess*

Critical accounts of autobiographical practice have noted that narratives written by men tend to project an image of determination, courage, and resilience. Estelle Jelinek, in her book, *The Tradition of Women’s Autobiography from Antiquity to the Present*, argues that men aggrandise themselves in autobiographies, “cast them into heroic moulds to project their universal import” (14-15). Perhaps this points to a predisposition in male autobiographies for performative amplification bordering on mythic rather than a realistic figure. In contrast, the women’s autobiographies often reveal an inclination for self-consciousness, a certain veneration for societal norms. There is a foregrounding of private and relational aspects of life. *The Memoirs*, however, resist this definition. We find Abida Sultaan a “daredevil” (164) type of woman who can be anything but apologetic or self-conscious. Her action embodied candour, resilience, and agency, whether it is to end her marriage, or claiming the rights of her son at gunpoint, she never seems to justify her radical acts. Instead, she heroically admits her fault: “I blame myself entirely for the failure of our marriage” (99).

The Memoirs seems to be aligning itself more closely with traditions that are frequently linked with male autobiographies than with the essentialist notions of female reticence. There is no evasiveness, no attempt at camouflaging feelings. On the contrary, we have a candid discussion of the disgust of her conjugal act, a taboo as far as autobiographies of the East are concerned. *The Memoirs* is brimming with evidence of her independent free spirit, not to be bowed down by the adversity of events or the antagonizing remarks of her peers and family members. When her younger sister’s health kept on deteriorating, and no one dared to broach the subject to her father, Abida Sultaan candidly assumed the burden of responsibility, “I decided to have a head-on confrontation with my father” (136). These acts underscore a forthright and candid person who consistently defies conventional expectations.

The Memoirs neatly integrates the personal and the political in defiance of the claims made by critics like Patricia Spacks, who posit that female autobiographies rarely mirror public history or

institutional conflicts. Abida Sultaan foregrounds the political incidents of the period as much as the family traumas.

Undoubtedly, we are given a detailed description of family problems, yet these do not occupy the scene more than the discussion of the political crisis of that period. There is an exhaustive detail of the long battle, for instance, which Sarkar Amma had to fight, both at the domestic and political front, for the succession of her son Hamidullah Khan. The political quagmire in which the different independent states found themselves in, in the fateful year of 1947, is also dealt with clarity and precision. Abida Sultaan vividly recalls her meeting with such historical figures as Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu. She brilliantly sketches the dilemma of Bhopali inhabitants. They were averse to leaving the comfort and luxury which the land offered, and yet couldn't imagine them under Hindu dominance. This consistent shift between private and public establishes how Gusdorf's heroic self and Friedman's relational networks intersect in her life.

The Memoirs maintains this tentativeness, resisting easy categorization. The protagonist repeatedly mentions her public role of heir apparent to the state of Bhopal and the special kind of upbringing she was given because of that. Later, when she assumed her duties officially, her father frequently left her in charge of the state affairs. In view of her increasing responsibility, she had to "preside over the cabinet meeting and take important decisions" (132). These momentous judgments include such difficult cases as the murder of a Christian headmistress, Miss Brown, by a Muslim whom she found guilty and therefore ordered his execution. On more than one occasion, she proves herself equal to her designated position. Her independent spirit refuses to budge even when confronted with her former idol, her own father, whom she praised lavishly throughout half the narrative. She dubs him as her role model and a source of pride for her. And yet, this iconic figure shatters his image very badly by marrying a second time to a girl befitting to be his daughter. This crisis led to many significant changes not only in personal history but also at the political level. It was basically this incident that caused estrangement between father and daughter, compelling the princess to decide for Pakistan, where she could have a level plain field for herself and her son.

Relational Selfhood: Family, Motherhood, and Kinship Ties

The Memoir challenges and disrupts another presumed binary: the idea that women's narration is essentially fragmented in nature and follows a nonlinear sequence. Abida Sultaan's cohesive and chronological account not only underscores her strong narrative control but also exemplifies the heroic self of Gusdorf. The remarkable ease with which she manages her administrative tasks, the immaculate efficiency in presiding over cabinet meetings, and settling legal disputes testifies to the kind of public engagement that Gusdorf associates with exemplary autobiography. Beyond the seamless proficiency of her public role, the relational side exemplified by Susan Friedman also remains pronounced in the memoir. For instance, her emphasis on bridging the gap between the Jalalabadi's and Baqi-khel's is purely a feminine streak. It is a reflection of the fact that her selfhood is not dependent upon solitary assertions; familial ties and bonds constitute an important dimension of her personality. "I alone, therefore, was the willing spirit behind establishing close personal ties with these families. Not only did I visit their homes regularly, but my house was open to them" (103). Again, she could not bear the reserve of Shamlae-wali Amman and broke her aloofness with her "persistent knocking" to "discover a loving and affectionate soul" (100). This is another testimony of Friedman's position that female autobiography is premised upon the creation and sustenance of relations. Female autobiographical self, Friedmann posits, does not oppose herself to all others; she "does not feel herself to exist outside of others, and still less against others, but very much with others in an interdependent existence that asserts its rhythms everywhere in the community. (56)

Besides her focus on relations, her detailed description of attire and parties situates her selfhood in a communal and cultural context. And last but not least, her “obsession” for her only child, Mian Shehryar, is what only a mother can feel and write about. She described in detail the struggle she had for her possession, how she thought of letting go of princely privileges just for the sake of her son. It reveals her maternal, relational identity, underscoring once again that *Memoirs* is not only projecting a heroic self-propounded by Gusdorf, but also reinforces Friedman’s position of female autobiography, foregrounding relational, maternal, and social bonds. The *Memoirs*, thus, becomes a hybrid text, heroic in its linear narrative structure and in its recapturing of the political history of its time, and relational in its intimate, affectionate portrayal of family ties and bonds.

Conclusion

This study aimed to analyse *The Memoirs* in the light of two theories propounded by Gusdorf and Friedman, both of whom delve into the distinct nature of male and female ways of narrating their selfhood. Gusdorf believed in the portrayal of a self that is at the centre, whereas Friedman posits that a relational sense of self is what a woman’s biography is all about. A detailed analysis of *The Memoirs* reveals that Princess Abida Sultaan’s sense of self is uniquely positioned since it cannot be bracketed into a neat binary. Abida Sultaan’s memoir is singular in the sense that she exhibits traits of both genders. Her account embodies the tradition of male-centred self-exemplification by Gusdorf in her defiance of purdah, in assuming political authority, and in candidly confronting familial and state disputes. She remains straightforward, unyielding, and assertive. However, her efforts to maintain kinship ties, the maternal devotion to her son, and her detailed account of dress and attire reveal a relational side of her personality, aligning her representation to Friedman’s description of relational selfhood. The concurrence of these dual modes, heroic self and relational identity, establishes the uniqueness of her memoir. It cannot be bracketed in either Gusdorf’s or Friedman’s categorizations.

Considering the recent development in the theoretical field of autobiography, one might ask if Sidonie Smith’s notion of a fluid self, of identity being a performative act, can appropriately describe Abida Sultaan’s identity? The answer would then be that even that theoretical lens partially answers the inherent complexity of Abida Sultaan’s self. While Smith’s idea of identity not being a neat, transparent essence might resonate with the rebellious nature of Abida Sultaan, there is a very assertive spiritual side to her personality that cannot be pinned down to that frame. Therefore, *The Memoirs of a Rebel Princess* occupies a middle ground between female and male autobiographies. It deconstructs rigid gendered boundaries between centralized and relational selfhood. As the title suggests, it records the radical life of a daring woman who remains an iconic figure throughout her life. She was a rich amalgam of Eastern and Western values, was a practicing Muslim, and yet such a harsh critic of some of its beliefs. *The Memoirs* not only register the upheavals of the royal family of Bhopal but documents in detail the turmoil faced by the public in such momentous times of pre-partition. *The Memoirs* cannot be pinned down to a single category. This evasiveness and defiance can be one of the many reasons for its potential for eternal appeal in the years to come. It is a powerful document challenging the traditional, gendered paradigms of autobiography, simultaneously autonomous, relational, and spiritual, and resistant to categorization.

Works Cited

- Chodorow, Nancy. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. University of California Press, 1978.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. "Women's Autobiographical Selves: Theory and Practice." *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings*, edited by Shari Benstock, University of North Carolina Press, 1988, pp. 34–62.
- Gusdorf, Georges. "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography." *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, edited by James Olney, Princeton University Press, 1980, pp. 28–48.
- Horlacher, Stefan. *Configuring Masculinity in Theory and Literary Practice*. Brill, 2011.
- Hurley, Susan L. "Introduction: A Princess Revealed." *Memoirs of a Rebel Princess*, by Abida Sultaan, Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. xiii–xxxix.
- Jelinek, Estelle C. *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography from Antiquity to the Present*. Xlibris, 2003.
- Mason, Mary G. "The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers." *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, edited by James Olney, Princeton University Press, 1980, pp. 207–35.
- Olney, James. *Metaphors of Self: The Meaning of Autobiography*. Princeton University Press, 1972.
- "Princess Abida Sultaan Passes Away." *Dawn*, 12 May 2002, dawn.com/news/33373/princess-abida-sultaan-passes-away.
- Rowbotham, Sheila. *Woman's Consciousness, Man's World*. Penguin Books, 1979.
- Said, Edward W. *Out of Place: A Memoir*. Granta Books, 1999.
- Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*. Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Smith, Sidonie. "Performativity, Autobiographical Practice, Resistance." *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1995, pp. 17–33. Taylor & Francis Online, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08989575.1995.10815055>.
- Spacks, Patricia Meyer. "Selves in Hiding." *Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism*, edited by Estelle C. Jelinek, Indiana University Press, 1980, pp. 112–32.
- Sultaan, Abida. *Memoirs of a Rebel Princess*. Oxford University Press, 2004.

[1] Hereafter called MAS