



# **Autobiography and Gender in Early Modern Literature: Reading Women's Lives, 1600-1680**

*Sharon Cadman Seelig*

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Early modern autobiographies and diaries provide a unique insight into women's lives and how they remembered, interpreted and represented their experiences. Sharon Seelig analyses the writings of six seventeenth-century women: diaries by Margaret Hoby and Anne Clifford, more extended narratives by Lucy Hutchinson, Ann Fanshawe, and Anne Halkett, and the extraordinarily varied and self-dramatising publications of Margaret Cavendish. Combining an account of the development of autobiography with close and attentive reading of the texts, Seelig explores the relation between the writers' choices of genre and form and the stories they chose to tell. She demonstrates how, in the course of the seventeenth century, women writers progressed from quite simple forms based on factual accounts to much more imaginative and persuasive acts of self-presentation. This important contribution to the fields of early modern literary studies and gender studies illuminates the interactions between literature and autobiography.

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