

THE CRISIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY:  
AUGUSTINE, ROUSSEAU, AND WORDSWORTH

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ABSTRACT

This project, which on the broadest level can be defined as a comparative study of Augustine's *Confessions*, Rousseau's *Confessions*, and Wordsworth's *Prelude*, is an attempt to bridge a notable gap in the critical literature. The primary aim of the essay is to explore the ways in which all three authors cope with both the anxiety of self-definition and the anxiety of self-narrative within the mode of the crisis autobiography. The focus is both historical and psychological, as the autobiographical act marks the moment of intersection of self and history. Through this comparative analysis, I hope to contribute to the field of autobiographical studies and to clear up some of the generic and conceptual vagaries which trouble that discourse.