

## THE EVOLUTION OF BIOGRAPHY: FROM HISTORY TO FICTION

*Habibova Manzila Nuriddinovna*

*Teacher at the Department of Uzbek*

*Language and Literature, Russian and English Languages,  
Bukhara State Medical Institute named after Abu Ali ibn Sina*

*Tel: 97 852-55-05; e-mail: [habibova.manzila@bsmi.uz](mailto:habibova.manzila@bsmi.uz)*

*<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3574-0391>*

**Abstract:** This introduction explores the genre of biography, its evolution, and its various forms, offering an in-depth understanding of how life stories are crafted. It highlights notable works, such as *A Beautiful Mind* by Sylvia Nasar, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* by Catherine Clinton, and Megan Mayhew Bergman's *Almost Famous Women*. The paper further discusses the blending of historical fact with fictional elements in biographical fiction and its emergence as a unique subgenre. The role of biography in modern literature, its narrative structure, and its significance in understanding influential individuals and their contributions are examined.

**Keywords:** Biography, biographical fiction, literary biography, historical biography, popular biography, critical biography, life stories, biography genre.

**Аннотация:** Введение исследует жанр биографии, его эволюцию и различные формы, предлагая глубокое понимание того, как создаются жизненные истории. Особое внимание уделяется таким заметным произведениям, как *Прекрасный ум Сильвии Нассар*, *Гарриет Табман: Путь к свободе Кэтрин Клинтон* и *Почти знаменитые женщины Меган Мэйхью Бергман*. В работе также обсуждается сочетание исторических фактов с вымышленными элементами в биографической фантастике и ее становление как уникального поджанра. Рассматривается роль биографии в современной литературе, ее нарративная структура и значение для понимания влиятельных личностей и их вклада.

**Ключевые слова:** Биография, биографическая фантастика, литературная биография, историческая биография, популярная биография, критическая биография, жизненные истории, жанр биографии.

### INTRODUCTION

A biography is a written account of someone's life, created by another person, typically organized chronologically and containing key details about the subject's experiences. While historical writings about real individuals have existed since the dawn of writing, biographies only emerged as a distinct literary genre in the 18th century. Autobiographies and memoirs are closely related to biographies but differ because the subjects write these works themselves. Biographies often serve as the foundation for documentaries, films, and TV shows.

Although biographies are often associated with famous individuals, they can also focus on people who have made significant contributions, experienced extraordinary events, or demonstrated remarkable talents. They can also spotlight individuals who have undergone tragic experiences or committed unspeakable acts. As a literary tool, biographies provide readers with the opportunity to explore someone else's life story, offering inspiration and fostering connection.

Biographies are widely enjoyed by readers curious about specific individuals or their field of expertise. Sometimes, biographies gain attention due to the subject's captivating life or the way the story is told, attracting readers who may not typically read biographies. Some renowned biographical works include Alexander Hamilton by Ron Chernow, Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson, A Beautiful Mind by Sylvia Nasar, and Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo by Hayden Herrera.

The biographical novel, a fictionalized account of someone's life, gained popularity in the 1930s with authors like Robert Graves and Irving Stone. These works often blur the lines between historical and fictional storytelling. In some cases, biographical novels might include fictional elements, such as in Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter, which blends biography with vampire fiction. Some novels, such as Oliver Goldsmith's The Vicar of Wakefield, use a biographical lens to explore a character's life.

The genre's roots trace back to Ancient Rome and Greece, with early biographies like Cornelius Nepos' Lives of the Generals and Plutarch's Parallel Lives. During the Middle Ages, biographies were largely replaced by religious ones focusing on saints and church leaders. The modern biography, as we know it, began with James Boswell's The Life of Samuel Johnson in 1791, which marked the shift toward biographical works focused on a single subject. This approach continued evolving, influenced by advancements in psychology and sociology.

Biographies can take various forms, including:

- Popular biographies for general readers, like Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer.
- Critical biographies, which examine the relationship between a subject's life and their work, such as The Billionaire Who Wasn't by Conor O'Clery.
- Historical biographies, such as John Adams by David McCullough, exploring how a person's life was influenced by or influenced their time.
- Literary biographies, focusing on writers and artists, like Savage Beauty by Nancy Milford.
- Reference biographies, often scholarly, covering multiple individuals, such as Black Americans in Congress.

Biographies offer a deep dive into the lives of notable figures, giving readers insight into their backgrounds, motivations, and the lasting impact they made. Writers aim to make these life stories both informative and engaging, often using traditional narrative structures to shape the subject's life into a compelling story. Modern biographers, such as Kitty Kelley and David McCullough, have shaped the genre and expanded its reach. The Life of Samuel Johnson stands as a milestone in biography writing, as it captured not just the subject's life but also the context of his times, offering readers a glimpse into his world through the eyes of someone who knew him personally.

Sylvia Nasar's A Beautiful Mind (1998) is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated biography of mathematician John Nash that introduces readers to his extraordinary life and intellect. The book begins with Nash's childhood and traces his journey through education, career, personal life, and his battle with schizophrenia, culminating in his receipt of the 1994 Nobel Prize in Economics. Alongside a Pulitzer nomination, A Beautiful Mind won the National Book Critics Circle Award for Biography, became a New York Times bestseller, and served as the inspiration for the 2001 Academy Award-winning film.

Catherine Clinton's Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom offers an extensive biography of the iconic abolitionist. The narrative spans Tubman's early life as a slave, her escape to freedom, her critical role in the Underground Railroad, her Moses-like leadership, and her

passing in 1913. Since Tubman could not read or write, she left no personal papers behind, so Clinton reconstructed her life using various other sources. This biography is often regarded as the definitive account of Tubman's life.

Megan Mayhew Bergman's *Almost Famous Women* is a collection of fictionalized stories based on the lives of real women who were linked to fame, such as actress Marlene Dietrich, aviator Beryl Markham, and Marion "Joe" Carstairs. While not strictly a biography, the book reimagines these women's lives in new, colorful scenarios, offering them the recognition and admiration they may not have received from history.

A literary biography explores the lives of writers and artists, often blending their personal stories with an analysis of their works. This type of biography can be complex, as the author must integrate commentary on the subject's literary creations with their life history. Literary biographers also deal with a variety of sources, particularly autobiographical ones, which allow them to create rich narratives. However, some authors, like Kafka and Auden, discouraged biographical works about their lives, arguing that such details should remain private. Notable examples of literary biographies include Richard Ellmann's *James Joyce* and George Painter's *Marcel Proust*.

Biographical fiction, a subgenre of historical fiction, reinterprets the lives of historical figures while incorporating fictional elements into the narrative. Unlike traditional biography, biographical fiction doesn't always prioritize strict factual accuracy and may selectively present or alter historical details. This genre emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with works like George Meredith's *Diana of the Crossways* and Somerset Maugham's *The Moon and Sixpence*. Today, biographical fiction may blend historical and contemporary storylines, as seen in works such as Gore Vidal's *Lincoln* and Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*.

## CONCLUSION

Biographies, whether traditional, literary, or fictionalized, offer a rich and diverse lens through which readers can explore the lives of influential individuals, from renowned historical figures to lesser-known personalities whose stories may otherwise be forgotten. Through these works, readers not only gain insight into the experiences, challenges, and triumphs of the subjects but also into the times and circumstances that shaped their lives. Whether in the form of factual accounts or creatively reimagined tales, biographies allow us to connect with human experiences across different cultures, eras, and fields of expertise. As the genre continues to evolve, blending fact and fiction or exploring uncharted narratives, biographies will remain an essential medium for understanding both the human condition and the legacies we leave behind.

## REFERENCES:

1. Paula R. Backscheider, *Reflections on Biography* Paperback – September 14, 2013
2. Karl, Frederick R. "Joseph Conrad" in Meyers (ed.) *The Craft*
3. Longford, Elizabeth "Wilfrid Scawen Blunt" of Meyers (ed.) *The Craft*
4. Meyers, Jeffrey "Introduction" in Meyers (ed.) *The Craft*
5. Benson, Jackson J (1989). "Steinbeck: A Defense of Biographical Criticism". *College Literature*.
6. Mullan, John (30 April 2005). "Heavy on the source John Mullan analyses *The Master* by Colm Tóibín. Week three: biographical fiction". *The Guardian*.
7. "Melvyn Bragg on autobiographical fiction". *The Sunday Times*. 8 February 2009. Retrieved 9 June 2011.12

8. Habibova, M. N. (2021). Jorjina Houellning “Queen of the desert” biografik asarida gertruda Bell timsoli tasviri. *Academic research in educational sciences*, 2(2), 770-778.
9. Habibova, M. N. (2021). The theme feminism in the epistolary novels in modern times. *ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science*, 11(103), 1101-1105.
10. Habibova, M. N. (2022). THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN EPISTOLARY NOVEL IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. *EURASIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE*, 2 (3), 135–139.
11. Habibova, M. N. (2022). EVALUATIVE OBSERVATION ON DH LAWRENCE'S EPISTOLARY ACHIEVEMENT. *EURASIAN JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH*, 2 (4), 489–494.
12. Habibova, M. (2022). THEORIES OF INTERTEXTUALITY AND THE BASIC FRAMEWORK OF KRISTEVA'S FORMULATION OF HER THEORY OF INTERTEXTUALITY. *Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences, Philosophy and Culture*, 2(5), 301-307.
13. Habibova, Manzila Nuriddinovna (2022). A BIOGRAPHY IS A SPECIALIZED FORM OF HISTORY AND BASIC TYPES OF BIOGRAPHIES. *Oriental renaissance: Innovative, educational, natural and social sciences*, 2 (5), 495-503.
14. Habibova, M. N. (2022). Epistolary Novel as a Scientific Problem. *American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research*, 3(10), 211–214. Retrieved from <https://www.grnjournals.us/index.php/ajshr/article/view/1575>
15. Habibova, M. N. (2022). The Epistolary Form and Art in Modernist Literature. *American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research*, 3(10), 206–210. Retrieved from <https://www.grnjournals.us/index.php/ajshr/article/view/1574>
16. Habibova, M. . (2022). WRITING THE NOVEL OF LETTERS AND THE ANALYSIS OF LETTER FICTION AND DIARY FICTION. *International Bulletin of Applied Science and Technology*, 2(11), 260–264. Retrieved from <https://researchcitations.com/index.php/ibast/article/view/317>
17. Habibova, M. . (2022). EPISTOLARY NARRATOLOGY AND CITATIONS FROM AN EPISTOLARY SOURCE: SAMUEL RICHARDSON'S PAMELA AND CLARISSA AND FRANCES BURNEY'S EVELINA. *Евразийский журнал академических исследований*, 2(12), 1131–1135. извлечено от <https://in-academy.uz/index.php/ejar/article/view/6655>
18. Manzila Nuriddinovna Khabibova. (2022). JOYCE'S DEVELOPMENT AS AN AUTHOR AND HIS EXPERIMENTS WITH THE EPISTOLARY FORM. *American Journal Of Philological Sciences*, 2(11), 73–81. <https://doi.org/10.37547/ajps/Volume02Issue11-10>
19. Manzila Nuriddinovna Habibova. (2022). LETTER WRITING AS ALLEGORY FOR THE WOMAN WRITER. *American Journal Of Philological Sciences*, 2(11), 88–92. <https://doi.org/10.37547/ajps/Volume02Issue11-12>
20. Habibova, M. N. . (2023). Origins of the Epistolary Novel and the Principal Epistolary Works. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS*, 2(2), 70–74. Retrieved from <https://inter-publishing.com/index.php/IJLLAL/article/view/1159>
21. Khabibova, M. N. . (2023). The Historical Influence of the Epistolary Novel. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS*, 2(2), 75–79. Retrieved from <https://inter-publishing.com/index.php/IJLLAL/article/view/1161>

22. Habibova, M. (2023). SPECIFIC POSSIBILITIES WRITING TECHNIQUES USED IN EPISTOLARY FORM AND THEIR EFFECTS ON BOTH THE CHARACTERS AND READERS. Eurasian Journal of Academic Research, 3(5),172–177.Retrieved from <https://in-academy.uz/index.php/ejar/article/view/14085>
23. Habibova, M. (2023). EPISTOLARY COMPARISONS AND TRENDS. Евразийский журнал академических исследований, 3(5 Part 4), 330–338. извлечено от <https://in-academy.uz/index.php/ejar/article/view/16170>
24. Manzila Nuriddinovna Habibova. (2023). THE CONCEPT OF THE WHITE MAN’S SUPERIORITY AND THE PORTRAYAL OF THE ARABIC CHARACTERS IN “THE LAWRENCE OF ARABIA” AND “THE SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM”. Academia Repository, 4(10), 24–31. Retrieved from <https://academiarepo.org/index.php/1/article/view/96>
25. Habibova, M. N. (2023). Letter Fiction and Diary Fiction. American Journal of Public Diplomacy and International Studies (2993-2157), 1(9), 153–158. Retrieved from <http://grnjournal.us/index.php/AJPDIS/article/view/1386>
26. Habibova, M. N. (2023). Women and the Epistolary Novel. American Journal of Science on Integration and Human Development (2993-2750), 1(9), 119-124.
27. Manzila Nuriddinovna Habibova. (2024). Pragmatics of Epistolary Technique Used in Biographical Works. American Journal of Language, Literacy and Learning in STEM Education (2993-2769), 2(2), 135–139. Retrieved from <http://grnjournal.us/index.php/STEM/article/view/3061>
28. Khabibova, M. (2024). EPISTOLYAR MATNDA LINGVOPRAGMATIK MAQSAD VA HARAKATNI IFODALANISH VOSITALARI. Евразийский журнал академических исследований, 4(5), 26–34. извлечено от <https://in-academy.uz/index.php/ejar/article/view/30903>
29. Manzila Nuriddinovna Habibova. (2023). T.E. Lawrence and the Arab Revolt . American Journal of Language, Literacy and Learning in STEM Education (2993-2769), 1(10), 381–386. Retrieved from <http://grnjournal.us/index.php/STEM/article/view/2024>
30. Habibova, M. (2023). PRAGMATICS AND COGNITION. Current approaches and new research in modern sciences, 2(10), 90-96.
31. Habibova, M. (2023). TE LAWRENCE AND ARAB NATIONALISTS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE. THEORY AND ANALYTICAL ASPECTS OF RECENT RESEARCH 2 (20), 183-193
32. Habibova, M.N. (2024). [THE EPISTOLARY TRADITION AND ITS CONNECTION BETWEEN LETTER WRITING AND THE ARTISTIC PROCESS.](#) INTELLECTUAL EDUCATION TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS AND INNOVATIVE DIGITAL TOOLS 2 (24), 192-198
33. Habibova, M.N. (2024). [THE ROLE OF PRAGMATICS IN BIOGRAPHICAL WORKS.](#) SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO THE MODERN EDUCATION SYSTEM 2 (22), 223-229