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Writing the Queer Self: Autofiction and Autoethnography in Chike Frankie Edozien's *Lives of Great Men: Living and Loving as an African Gay Man*

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This article examines Chike Frankie Edozien's *Lives of Great Men: Living and Loving as an African Gay Man* as a queer life writing that operates at the intersection of autofiction and autoethnography. While the memoir is conventionally identified as an autobiographical account of Edozien's experiences as a Nigerian gay man, this article argues that its narrative strategies extend beyond straightforward autobiography. Rather, it is a complex form of self-writing in which autofictional and autoethnographic strategies are employed. The analysis employs a qualitative research method through close textual analysis and finds that autofiction allows the writers to move beyond the conventional autobiographical emphasis on factual narration by creatively reorganising memory, experience, and identity, while autoethnography connects personal experience to the cultural, religious, political, and social contexts in which queer identities are produced.

Keywords: Life writing, African queer life writing, autofiction, autoethnography, autobiography

Traditionally, life writing has been understood as a way of recording lived experience and preserving personal or collective history. However, scholars such as Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson argue that life writing is not simply a reflection of life but a form of storytelling shaped by memory, language, culture, and power. In classical autobiography, the writer is expected to present a coherent life story, usually in chronological order, and to speak from a stable and unified sense of self but many scholars now disagree with this view. They argue that the self is fragmented, changing, and relational. Stephane Hubier speaks on the “conviction that life is indescribable and elusive” (124) while Ricarda Menn argues that “the narrated self is not a fixed, factual entity, but instead conceptualised through fictive and narrative strategies (164). This is more evident in narratives that involve trauma, migration, marginalization, or social exclusion, where linear storytelling may fail to capture lived experience. Also, the narrative voice in life writings often relies on retrospection, where past experiences are interpreted from the perspective of the present. This makes life writing not only stand out and distinct but also reveals its constructed nature because memory is selective and shaped by the writer’s current position, perspective and understanding.

Life writing therefore raises the question of truth and accuracy. When someone writes about their own life, readers usually expect that the events described actually happened. This expectation, according to Hywel Dix, is what Philippe Lejeune calls the “referential pact” (5). As he explains, readers are “entitled to think that what they read contains an accurate representation of one or more prior events or experiences unless clearly told otherwise” (193). However, the idea that autobiography is completely truthful is problematic and often questioned because memory is not always reliable. People remember events differently, forget some details, and sometimes emphasise certain experiences more than others. What a person remembers and how they narrate it can be influenced by emotions, beliefs, personal ideology, and the social context in which they are writing.

More so, beyond questions of truth, life writing also raises ethical concerns. When people write about their own lives, they almost always end up writing about other people such as parents, partners, friends,

colleagues, and members of their community. These individuals may not have agreed to be included in the story, yet they become part of a public narrative. This creates a moral dilemma, does a writer have the right to tell their own story if it exposes the private lives of others? Judith C. Lapadat, drawing on the work of Carolyn Ellis, explains that this is especially complicated in autobiographical and autoethnographic writing because the author is a real, identifiable person. She explains that even if a writer changes names or hides certain details, the people who were actually involved in those events can still recognise themselves. They may feel exposed, misrepresented, or hurt by how they are portrayed. Once the text is published, the writer cannot control how readers interpret it or how it might affect the lives of those represented (5). This raises an important question: how can life writing claim honesty and transparency while still protecting the privacy and dignity of others? Writers must make choices about what to include, what to leave out, and how to portray other people. These choices are not only literary decisions but also ethical ones.

Contemporary life writing has therefore expanded beyond these traditional expectations. Many writers now experiment with fragmentation, non-linearity, pseudonymisation, and genre hybridity, combining personal narrative with fiction, theory, performance, or documentary forms. As a result, life writing is increasingly understood as a practice of self-representation rather than a simple record of facts. For marginalised writers, life writing can become a burden or more demanding, as their personal stories are expected to stand in for entire communities. One of such communities is the queer individuals.

Queer self-representation often relies on hybrid narrative forms, as queer scholars argue that queer life writing is not only about telling personal stories but also about challenging dominant narratives of identity, morality, and citizenship. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick emphasises that queer narratives often disrupt binary thinking and fixed identity categories. Similarly, Judith Butler's work on performativity shows that identity is produced through repeated acts rather than existing as a stable essence. Because queer lives are frequently lived under conditions of surveillance and risk, queer life writing often use irony, metaphor, fiction, or performance to protect themselves while still asserting their presence. These forms allow queer writers and filmmakers to combine personal experience with cultural critique, activism, and artistic expression. Rather than presenting the self as complete or resolved, queer self-representation emphasises

becoming, contradiction, and self-fashioning. In *Cruising Utopia*, José Esteban Muñoz describes queer self-representation as a practice of imagining alternative ways of living and belonging, especially in hostile social environments. Through storytelling, queer subjects create spaces of survival, pleasure, and resistance. Notably, queer life writing often documents trauma, violence, exclusion, and religious condemnation while refusing to be defined solely by suffering.

For queer individuals in Africa, life writing is especially cumbersome. Same-sex desire and gender nonconformity are widely framed as foreign, sinful, or culturally illegitimate, often reinforced by religious discourse, customary law, and colonial-era legal codes. In many African countries, queer identities are criminalised or socially sanctioned, making public self-representation risky or even dangerous. Queer African life writing frequently documents experiences of homophobia, religious condemnation, family rejection, and state violence. Importantly, African queer life writing often contests the claim that queerness is “un-African” by revealing indigenous histories of same-sex intimacy, non-normative gender roles, and fluid sexual practices that predate colonialism. Through life writing, queer subjects reclaim cultural presence and historical continuity.

Therefore, we can assert that, narrating queer lived experience is never a neutral act. This is because, in many societies, especially within African and Global South contexts, queer lives are shaped by strong cultural, religious, and political forces that regulate sexuality and gender. As a result, when queer subjects tell their stories through life writing, documentary film, or performance, they mediate directly in contested cultural and political spaces. The act of narration itself becomes a form of resistance, negotiation, and ethical self-assertion creating a distinct writing style that is inadequately described as just autobiography resulting in the need to examine and interrogate the texts.

Recent scholarship on African queer life writing has paid increasing attention to the political, ethical, and relational dimensions of autobiographical narratives. A notable contribution in this area is the study by Barrington M. Marais and Cheryl Stobie, which examines four South African collections of ‘queer autobiographical writing’, *Hijab: Unveiling Queer Muslim Lives* (Hendricks 2009), *Yes I am! Writing by South African Gay Men* (Malan & Johaardien 2010), *Reclaiming the L-word: Sappho’s Daughters Out in*

Africa (Diesel 2011) and *Trans: Transgender Life Stories from South Africa* (Morgan, Marais & Wellbeloved 2011). Drawing on selected narratives from these collections, Marais and Stobie explore how queer autobiographical selves narrate themselves, how their identities are shaped in religious and spiritual spaces, and how relationships with others (church leaders, families, religious communities) affect self-understanding.

The most relevant aspect of Marais and Stobie's paper to this present study is their admission that "queer autobiography" is a difficult term: "An initial point of concern that requires consideration is the decision to use the term 'queer autobiography' in this article...The term 'autobiography' is undeniably complex, and it may be argued that it cannot be directly applied to the individual accounts which have been isolated from the four collections named above" (2). They therefore avoid rigid definitions using Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's flexible idea of life writing:

Nonetheless, these accounts have been referred to as autobiographies based on the following definition provided by prominent life-writing scholars, Smith and Watson (2001): [Life writing] is an overarching term used for a variety of nonfictional modes of writing that claim to engage with the shaping of someone's life. The writing of one's own life is autobiographical, the writing of another's is biographical; but that boundary is sometimes permeable. (p. 197) Strictly speaking, each of the accounts examined, however short, is autobiographical because they are essentially literarily documented, first person, written accounts of a life lived (2).

Although the concern is mostly linked to the length of the texts, it also points to the demands or requirements of traditional autobiography. Marais and Stobie therefore show good theoretical awareness and avoid essentialism.

In response to the limitation of describing these texts as a straightforward autobiography, this study argues that queer life writing is more accurately understood through the lenses of autofiction and autoethnography as they provide alternative form of writing that is similar to but different from traditional autobiography.

Unlike the traditional autobiographical pact, autofiction acknowledges the interplay between fact and fiction, as well as the influence of memory, imagination, and narrative selection. Autofiction blends autobiographical experience with fictional techniques, allowing writers to reshape lived reality through narrative invention. The term 'Autofiction' was coined in 1977 by the French writer Serge Doubrovsky on

the cover of his novel *Fils*, where it was described as a “fiction of strictly real events.” Rather than aiming at factual completeness or transparency, autofiction foregrounds performance, fragmentation, irony, and self-conscious storytelling. As Ricarda Menn notes, “Autofiction allows the author and narrator to imagine him or herself in any chosen way, and thus potentially makes way for arriving at a more profound sense of selfhood and identity” (167). It also allows for experimental and non-linear forms of storytelling, which better reflect the complexities of queer identities.

Autoethnography on the other hand, combines personal narrative with cultural analysis, positioning the self as both lived experience and critical lens. It combines autobiography (writing about one’s own life) with ethnography (studying cultures and communities). According to Lisa Sheppard in *Autofiction in English*, it “explores both its subject and the societies to which it belongs. Rather than necessarily portraying the self at one with its society, and growing organically with it, the genre illustrates the tensions between individuals and the societies of which they are a part” (88). Unlike traditional autobiography, autoethnography situates the self within social structures such as religion, law, nationalism, and community norms. Autoethnography allows writers to use their personal experiences as a way of exploring cultural realities and social structures. As Carolyn Ellis et.al explains, autoethnography is a form of research and writing in which the author “uses personal experience to describe and critique cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences” (2). In this approach, the writer becomes both the subject and the analyst of the narrative.

Chike Frankie Edozien’s *Lives of Great Men: Living and Loving as an African Gay Man* (2017) stands as a landmark text in African queer literature. Described as Nigeria’s first gay memoir, the book received the Lambda Literary Award for Gay Memoir/Biography and has been recognised for its significance in documenting queer African experiences in contexts where such narratives remain marginalised or politically sensitive. Yet despite its cultural importance, the memoir has received limited scholarly attention, and existing discussions tend to approach it primarily as autobiographical testimony or social commentary rather than examining its literary form and narrative strategies.

This article addresses this gap by reading *Lives of Great Men* through the frameworks of autofiction and autoethnography. It argues that Edozien's text is not merely an autobiographical record but a complex narrative that combines personal testimony with literary experimentation and cultural analysis. Through autofictional strategies, Edozien moves beyond conventional autobiographical emphasis on factual narration to creatively reorganise memory, experience, and identity. Through autoethnographic practices, he connects personal experience to the cultural, religious, political, and social contexts in which queer identities are produced. The article therefore analyses autofictional elements under three sub-headings: The Autofictional Pact: Blurring of Fact and Fiction, Autofiction and Unreliability of Memory, and Genre Hybridity. On the other hand, autoethnographic elements are discussed under four sub-headings: Personal Experience as Cultural Data, Ethnographic Observation from an Insider Perspective, Giving Voice to Marginalized Communities, and Political Critique.

The Autofictional Pact: Blurring Fact and Fiction in *Lives of Great Men*

Philippe Lejeune's concept of the "autobiographical pact" traditionally positions autobiography as an agreement between writer and reader that the events described are true accounts of lived experience, with the author, narrator, and protagonist understood to be identical. According to Dix, Jacques Lecarme opposes Lejeune's autobiographical pact with an 'autofictional pact', where those assumptions are rendered mutually contradictory (6). Edozien demonstrates this by blurring fact and fiction and including the stories of many others. The author's note openly acknowledges the blurring of fact and fiction: "Names have been changed to protect the innocent" (preliminary 4). This statement does more than provide information, it assures the reader of what to expect. Edozien admits that some details have been altered, even referring to one of his aunts as "Aunt Orange Mummy" (35). The acknowledgment that telling the complete truth may place others at risk leads to a choice of ethical responsibility over factual completeness.

This ethical responsibility shapes the entire narrative. Rather than claiming total transparency, Edozien positions himself as someone who reveals what can safely be revealed while respecting the privacy and safety of others. Characters such as Lamido, Smiley, Paulie, and Christopher appear under pseudonyms.

His siblings are mentioned only by their first names (Roy, Annette, Don, Gil, Victor). This selective disclosure demonstrates that life writing is always shaped by ethical choices.

The sincerity pact of autofiction is also portrayed by Edozien's willingness to reveal his own contradictions and weaknesses. He admits remaining emotionally attached to Lamido even though he knows their relationship cannot succeed. At some points, he seems to have moved on, yet memories of Lamido continue to return. These conflicting emotions are not resolved, reflecting the complexity of real human experience. He admits lying to immigration officers, hiding his sexuality, avoiding confrontation with a homophobic consular officer, and staying in relationships that had already ended emotionally. This vulnerability invites readers' trust precisely because it does not attempt to create a heroic self like many traditional autobiographies.

The memoir's opening passage further foregrounds this autofictional approach. Instead of beginning the narrative with his childhood experiences, Edozien opens with an intimate reunion with Lamido: "I stretch and see our naked selves in the mirror, legs intertwined on crisp white sheets. All afternoon we've been canoodling. Then having furtive, furious sex" (1). The vivid imagery and sensory details make the scene novel-like. Rather than simply telling readers he reunited with Lamido, Edozien recreates the moment in ways that emphasise emotional experience. This represents what Karen Ferreira-Meyers describes as the autofictional "contract of sincerity" in which readers are encouraged to trust the authenticity of emotions rather than the exact accuracy of facts.

Autofiction and Unreliability of Memory

Edozien also highlights the uncertainty of memory. For example: "This siesta has probably lasted twenty minutes..." (1). The word "probably" shows that the narrator is unsure. Instead of pretending to remember everything perfectly, Edozien openly admits the limitations of memory. This honesty adds authenticity to the narrative.

Another example appears when Scott discovers an old family photograph in Asaba: "Gazing at this picture, one I had forgotten about and am surprised Daddy framed and kept here in Asaba, sends me down memory lane fast" (26). The photograph brings back a memory that the narrator had forgotten.

The scene demonstrates that the past often survives only in fragments. Edozien's memories also gain new meanings as he reflects on them later in life, especially after Scott's reaction: "Scott stares and dissolves into a fit of laughter. 'You were sooo gay!' he squeals" (25). This explains that sometimes the future self is reflected in the past or present, as his sexuality was already reflected in a photograph when he was still unaware.

The memoir's non-linear structure further emphasises memory's fragmentation. The narrative begins *in medias res* with the reunion with Lamido in Lagos and then suddenly moves back to memories of adolescence and boarding school years. Later chapters shift between Nigeria, America, Ghana, Uganda, and other places without following a strict timeline. The prelude, "Forgetting Lamido," opens with a present-day reunion with Lamido. It is then abandoned for hundreds of pages before being revisited. This structure resembles a novel more than a traditional chronological memoir.

Edozien also links music with memory, showing the fragmented movement of consciousness: "That Diana Ross 'Dirty' floats in and out of my consciousness: Touch me in the morning / Then just walk away..." (2). The song triggers emotions and memories, demonstrating how consciousness moves associatively rather than chronologically. This technique, more common in fiction than autobiography, aligns with what Serge Doubrovsky identified as autofiction's use of stream of consciousness and non-linear time.

Genre Hybridity

A defining feature of autofiction is the refusal to remain within established literary categories. Edozien's background as a professional journalist shapes his approach to genre hybridity. His discussions of the Standard Chartered Bank controversy (100-101), the Uganda anti-gay bill (101-102), the Ghanaian anti-gay media campaign (109-115), and especially the shooting of Amadou Diallo (62-68) go beyond personal reflection and take on the tone of investigative journalism. Through detailed explanations of these events and their effects on Black immigrants in America, the narrator acts both as a witness and a reporter.

The text also frequently adopts the style of travel writing. Edozien's descriptions of places such as Kampala (97-100), Victoria Falls (105-106), Cape Town (150-151), and the Aburi mountains (156-157) could stand alone as travel essays. Describing Aburi in Ghana, he writes:

Aburi is a mountainside enclave where many of Accra's middle-class residents have country homes... one arrives in a wonderland, an Eden. The view from each colonnaded, two-story villa is of rolling hills and yet more greenery, but it's the colours that hit you: scarlets, golds, magentas, royal purples, turquoises; every sort of flower seems in perpetual bloom (156).

This passage resembles travel literature because it combines geographical description with social commentary.

The memoir further incorporates oral testimony by including the voices of many queer Africans. People such as Atta, Kwame, Muiwa, and others share stories about love, secrecy, migration, and discrimination. At these moments, Edozien steps back and allows others to become storytellers. As a result, the memoir moves beyond individual autobiography and becomes a collective archive of queer African experiences.

This hybrid nature reflects what Dix explains that Philippe Gasparini identifies as autofiction's characteristic genre hybridity; the combination of autobiography, fiction, memoir, oral testimony, political commentary, and other forms depending on the author's purposes. This formal diversity mirrors the complexity of the self it represents. As an African, immigrant, journalist, activist, and gay man, Edozien occupies several social positions that cannot easily be represented through a single genre.

Autoethnographic Elements in *Lives of Great Men*

While *Lives of Great Men* functions as autofiction through its reconstruction of personal memory and narrative experimentation, it also operates as autoethnography by consistently interpreting experiences within the cultural, religious, and social worlds that shaped them. Carolyn Ellis defines autoethnography as "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience" (1). Heewon Chang similarly argues that the primary purpose of autoethnography is to connect the self with others and with the social world, treating the self as a product of cultural relationships and social structures.

Edozien consistently uses personal experiences to illuminate broader cultural structures. He begins *Lives of Great Men* with his reunion with Lamido, a former lover now married to a woman with children: It's been ten years plus since we last met. Even after all this time our bodies haven't lost that feral magnetism for each other... He still has dimples, and the whites of his eyes still shine against his groundnut-coloured skin (1). At first, this appears to be a personal moment between two former lovers. However, Edozien uses the personal emotion to explore what Lamido's life represents within Nigerian society. Lamido is now married to a woman and has children, yet he continues to experience same-sex attraction. Rather than presenting Lamido as an exception, Edozien uses his story to portray a recurring pattern among many Nigerian men who are obligated by cultural expectations to marry women despite their sexual orientation. The reunion therefore points to a wider discussion about masculinity, marriage, family responsibility, and social conformity in Nigeria.

Edozien explicitly poses this question: "Was it the price of living hassle-free in Naija that meant all these TB guys had to find wives? Could they not just be discreet, and live without having to marry women they had little interest in?" (12). This question is significant because Edozien is not simply expressing disappointment about his friends' decisions. Instead, he is examining a cultural system that places marriage above personal interest and identity. His personal experience becomes a window into understanding how social expectations like; parents expecting grandchildren, communities expecting conformity, and society rewarding traditional roles compel queer individuals to suppress their identities.

Similarly, Edozien demonstrates how religious conservatism has transformed public attitudes towards sexuality in Nigeria. During one visit to Asaba, he describes a large anti-abortion statue:

The sign, which is huge, reads STOP ABORTION. IT IS EVIL AND DANGEROUS. I hadn't noticed it on my prior visit, but later learn it was commissioned by a church group, the Knights of Saint Mulumba, in 2009. I am horrified. In recent times many Nigerians have embraced a rabid religiosity that veers towards conservative and literal interpretations of religious texts. (24)

At first glance, the statue appears unrelated to homosexuality. However, Edozien interprets it as evidence of a broader cultural shift towards religious conservatism. He recognises that the same religious

attitudes used to condemn abortion are also used to condemn sexual minorities. Rather than merely describing what he sees, he explains what it represents within Nigerian society.

Ethnographic Observation from an Insider Perspective

Autoethnographers write from the position of insiders. Because the writer belongs to the queer community being studied, they can interpret everyday behaviours and beliefs with greater depth and accuracy. Edozien demonstrates ethnographic observation through his detailed descriptions of queer social spaces. While visiting Cape Town, he observes: I soon notice a huge number of surely queer men milling around, their oiled black bodies glistening in the sun. Some I recognise from Chester's but others are picked up by my gaydar. They are enjoying the beach like all the heterosexual couples (126). This description illustrates Edozien's role as both participant and observer. He is part of the community he describes, yet he also steps back to analyse what he sees. His observation emphasises the ordinariness of queer life. Rather than portraying queer people as unusual, he presents them as individuals enjoying public spaces in the same way as everyone else. By recording such everyday scenes, Edozien challenges stereotypes that often associate queer identities only with secrecy or deviance.

Edozien also carefully documents the hidden networks through which many queer Africans support one another. In the memoir, he introduces readers to underground communities, coded language, discreet meeting places, and informal support systems that enable people to survive in hostile environments. He describes the "TB boys" in Lagos, secret clubs, online platforms such as Manjam and PlanetRomeo, and the practice of referring to same-sex partners as "cousins" to avoid suspicion. These observations provide readers with an insider's understanding of how queer communities create spaces of connection even within societies where discrimination persists.

Giving Voice to Marginalised Communities

A central purpose of autoethnography is to make visible the experiences of individuals and communities whose voices have often been ignored or misrepresented. Edozien's focus on ordinary and marginalised lives is apparent from the title: *Lives of Great Men*. Rather than referring to presidents or military heroes,

the title celebrates people whose greatness lies in their resilience and ability to survive. The plural form "Lives" rather than "Life" is also significant because it shows that the memoir is not only about the author but also about a wider community.

The proverb by an anonymous author that appears at the beginning of the memoir captures this commitment: "Until the lion has his historian, the hunter will always be a hero" (11). This explains that those who control stories determine who becomes visible and who is forgotten. By writing about queer Africans, Edozien becomes the lion's historian and challenges dominant narratives that have traditionally silenced non-heteronormative experiences.

Throughout the memoir, Edozien introduces readers to a wide range of individuals whose experiences reflect the diversity of African queer life. One example is the story of Norbert Edet, a Nigerian asylum seeker who fled persecution because of his sexuality. Through Norbert's experiences, readers understand that anti-gay legislation extends beyond legal punishment, it affects people's families, careers, emotional wellbeing, and sense of belonging. Similarly, Edozien recounts the experiences of Ugandan transgender activist Victor Mukasa, broadening the memoir beyond his own experience as a gay Nigerian man.

The memoir also gives considerable attention to queer women. Characters such as Kainene, Gemma, and Sabine remind readers that the experiences of African lesbians are often overlooked within both mainstream society and discussions of queer identity. Through their stories, Edozien demonstrates that discrimination affects different groups in different ways while also revealing shared experiences of marginalisation, secrecy, and resilience.

Political Critique

One of the strongest characteristics of autoethnography is that it does not merely describe personal experiences but also questions the socio-political systems that shape those experiences. Edozien critiques the contradiction between constitutional equality and everyday discrimination. He repeatedly demonstrates that legal protection does not automatically produce social acceptance. Reflecting on South Africa's progressive constitution, he observes: "South Africa has one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, but constitutions do not change hearts" (66). His experiences at school, church,

work, and within various communities reveal the limits of legal reform. Although institutions may adopt inclusive policies, many individuals continue to hold conservative beliefs rooted in tradition or religion. Edozien therefore illustrates that democracy is not sustained by constitutions alone but also depends on cultural transformation.

Edozien also critiques the claim that homosexuality is a Western import:

They insist homosexuality is a Western import; one that—despite all evidence to the contrary, and despite the fact that all their anti-gay laws are themselves Western imports—former colonial masters and imperialists want to shove down the throats of sovereign African nations. (114)

This observation contributes historical knowledge that enables readers to understand the relationship between colonial rule and present-day legal systems. Rather than discussing colonial history in abstract terms, Edozien demonstrates how its legacy continues to influence the lives of ordinary people.

The analysis so far has shown that *Lives of Great Men* functions as both autofiction and autoethnography. However, these two forms of life writing should not be understood as separate or competing approaches, rather, they complement one another. While autofiction enables the authors to reconstruct memories, and reinterpret experience through narrative, autoethnography enables them to examine the cultural, religious, political, and social environments within which those identities are formed. Together, they transform life writing into an ethical practice of self-creation and cultural interpretation.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that Chike Frankie Edozien's *Lives of Great Men: Living and Loving as an African Gay Man* is a queer life writing that operate at the intersection of personal testimony, cultural critique, and literary experimentation, challenging conventional understandings of autobiographical life writing while creating new possibilities for queer African self-representation. By reading these texts as autofictional and autoethnographic works, the study shifts attention from 'what' they represent to 'how' they construct meaning and identity, enriching our understanding of queer African cultural production.

Finally, this study affirms that life writing matters not only for the individuals who write, but for the communities they represent and the readers who encounter their stories. By documenting experiences

that have often been silenced, these texts preserve cultural memory, challenge social exclusion, and expand the possibilities of human identity and expression. They demonstrate that the act of writing the self is not only personal but also political, ethical, and creative. Through autofiction and autoethnography, African queer writers turn their lives into works of art, transforming lived experience into narratives of becoming that offer testimony, critique, and hope.

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