



# Apology to Apostrophe: Autobiography and the Rhetoric of Self-Representation in Spain (Post-Contemporary Interventions)

*James D. Fernandez*

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Who writes "I"? To whom are autobiographies addressed? What kinds of readers are inscribed in autobiographical narratives? In *Apology to Apostrophe*, James D. Fernández's offers a lucid and powerful meditation on the nature of autobiographical writing through his investigation of the historical conditions and literary stagings of autobiographical writing in Spain.

As Fernández demonstrates, recent developments in critical theory provide new and fruitful approaches to autobiographical works that have long been neglected, misunderstood, or, in some cases, virtually unknown. Focusing primarily but not exclusively on nineteenth-century Spain, Fernández exposes a rhetorical tension that often occurs in autobiographical discourse, between self-justification, or "apology," and the transcendence of this worldly impulse, or "apostrophe." This tension, he argues, is of particular interest in the case of Spain, but not peculiar to that nation, and his attention to the theoretical nature of autobiography leads to insightful considerations of many canonical European autobiographies, including those of Saint Augustine, Rousseau, Saint Teresa, and Cardinal Newman.

Considering Spanish autobiography in the context of first-person narrative in Europe and in the terms of current debates on the relationship between writing and selfhood, *Apology to Apostrophe* marks a significant advance in our historical understanding and critical discussion of the genre. The book will be of great value not only to Hispanists but also to those interested in autobiography and cultural history.

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