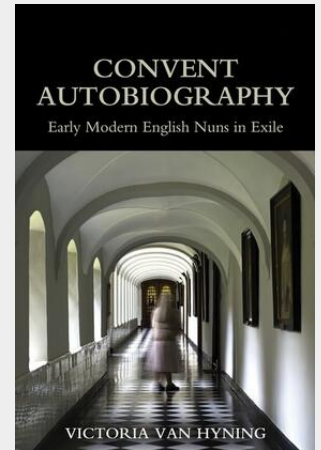


Van Hying

Hying, V: Convent Autobiography

Convent Autobiography reveals how English Catholic women wrote about themselves, their families, and their lives in a period where it was illegal to practice Catholicism in England. These nuns went into a two-fold kind of exile for their beliefs. They moved abroad and they "died to the world", trying to cut ties with family and friends. Yet their convents needed support from outsiders to thrive. The nuns studied here reveal how they navigated this through their letters, printed works, paintings, and prayers. Often times these women wrote anonymously, a common practice for nuns, monks, and devout people of many religious persuasions up until the twentieth century. But anonymity was not just a neutral way of signalling humility or deep religious belief; it could allow people to write about themselves a lot more than they would have while writing under their own name. Exploring how some nuns exploited this to shape their convent's chronicle around their own points of view, Convent Autobiography holds up a mirror to the think about the double-edged role of anonymity throughout history.



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