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Rise and Fall of the Personal Essay in Media

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Annotated Bibliography Format Checklist

- 1 inch margins
- Double spacing
- Times New Roman (suggested)
- Paragraphs indentation of .5 inch (using Tab)
- All seven references in alphabetical order
- Each annotation is 150-200 words

Rise and Fall of the Personal Essay in Media

Almanza, M., Pfizer, A., & Mousislli, H. (2016). The dread rise. *Journal of Journalism Studies*, 7(89), 134-152. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2597/234-4722.2016.05>

First, list your reference in APA Style. The annotation, or summary of the source, should begin under the reference. Indent the first line of the paragraphs in your annotations.

This source is an article for the con side of the research topic. Almanza, Pfizer, and Mousislli examine blogs and internet sites that allowed amateur writers to publish or self-publish whatever stories they chose. The authors provide examples of stories as tinder for their strong polemic on the personal essay. They also include a graph that details the start of what they term the “Dread Rise,” or the rise in popularity of the personal essay; the graph starts in 2008 and ends in late 2016. The graph will be used as a visualization of the rise and fall of personal essays. Almanza et al. also argue that the more confessional personal essays devalue the entire literary community by allowing writers to publish work based on shock value instead of literary merit. They provide a few excerpts from confessional essays that are truly absurd to thoroughly prove their point. These excerpts will be used to argue the con part of the research paper’s argument.

Gordon, F., & Arden, D. (2014). *The personal era of writing fiction, nonfiction, and everything else*. New York, NY: Indie Presses.

Gordon and Arden discuss how the confessional, or personal, essay has affected nonfiction, fiction, and other genres of writing. They present two fiction and nonfiction examples each and discuss the changes in form and diction. Examples of poetry and feature articles are also provided and examined. Gordon and Arden believe that the rise in personal and confessional essays affected the formal nature of writing in all genres. They note that, societally, formality has changed writing and everything else, but there is a

large difference in the writing of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and feature writing after the resurgence of the personal essay. There was also a rise in the personal and sometimes irrelevant information included in an attempt to get readers to engage with a particular publication exclusively. The readerships for the publications publishing personal essays went up, but all of them saw a huge drop off in November 2016, causing a major shift in the editorial processes of many publishers online or otherwise. Many online publishers closed. The examples of the different kind of writing will be used to show the differences in the writing styles.

You can also include how you will use the source in your paper.

Ma, Y., Turoi, M., Cho, J., & Idowu, A. (2015). A study of media and journalism. *Journal-Journal*, 7(2), 13–25. doi:10.559/wjp.v5.i3.2313

This is another neutral source that simply lists certain aspects of journalism that have changed over time. The authors documented the usage of certain words and types of writing—essays, interviews, cover stories, and others. In their study, Ma, Turoi, Cho, and Idowu noticed a spike in personal and confessional essays in journalism around 2008 and a decline eight years later at the end of 2016. They speak on the reasons for this particular phenomenon and include a number of interviews from journalists at two national news organizations and three newspapers in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. The study managed to present a balanced set of data that shows both the increase in the websites using the personal essay boom for profit and authentic websites that were created to combat the rise of personal essay news. This resource will be used to provide a different perspective on the negative part of the argument.

National Personal Essay Society & Writers of Antarctica. (2013). Let us confess. Retrieved from <http://npes.org/files/public-docs/being-frank-the-importance-of-the-personal-essay.pdf>

The National Personal Essay Society (NPES) and Writers of Antarctica (WOA)

Introduce acronyms as you would in a regular paper by including them in parenthesis after their organizational name.

discuss the internet sites and blogging platforms that ushered in the new age of personal essays. Both organizations provide data on the effects of the personal and confessional essay boom and attribute the rise in writers and journalists to this boom. Twitter is also mentioned as a gate way to many young writers (the authors define young as 18-30) exploring the craft of prose and where it intersects with news; many of them found their writing skill through writing terribly inaccurate, yet stylistically interesting personal essays. The NPES and WOA praise these writers and credit them with the return of fiction and nonfiction that explores the depth of the human condition. They also list a few of the writers that have gained respect through the personal and confessional essay. The organizations note that this respect came partially due to the writers' abilities to transition from purely confessional and sometimes self-serving essays to more literary or journalistic writing. This is a source with a very positive view of the argument.

Personal essay. (2016). In *The Funk & Rollion Old World Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from Funk & Rollion Old World Encyclopedia database.

This article describes the use of personal essays in media. It details the different uses of the personal or narrative essays and their reception since the last 1800s and early 1900s. Personal essays have never been considered reputable accounts. This resource shows that this has changed throughout time as more and more newspapers, online and in print, focus on them. The encyclopedia entry also provides dates for important milestones

in the personal essay's history and notes important writers that cracked the personal, or confessional, essay industry. It also notes that the fall of the personal essay was partly due to shifting societal needs. This source is extremely important to the foundation of the research paper; it provides dates and objective analysis on the personal essay from its rise in popularity to its fall. The source will be the neutral source in that provides background information, dates, and names of important personal essay writers.

Potter, H., Anders, D., Smith, C., Hash, M., Toppingham, P., Jacobson, Z., ... Kim, S. (2013). Disconnections in journalism and the personal narrative. *PLoS ONE*, 5(27).
doi:10.17871/journal.pone.10770

In an annotated bibliography, you do not need to cite paraphrased information. It is not a best practice to include directly quoted information in your annotations.

This resource was a collaboration between 37 authors that cataloged the internet's response to news stories from the major news outlets. The authors compared this information to the responses garnered by the literary sites accepting the occasional new worthy submission. Many of the websites specializing in showcasing creative writing genres received an influx of stories that were personal essays but contained news elements and angles not often taken by the national news outlets. Because of the influx of this kind of prose, the sites started to publish them; from there they gained traction and ballooned the viewership of these sites. Potter et al. mention that at the height of this boom, the actual news content dwindled, and the confessional nature of them became alternative for the sake of readers and hits. This resource will be used to highlight the negative impact the confession essay wave had on news in general.

Wong, P. S. (2016). Love for the confessional nature. *Current Lit*, 12(4), 23-27.

doi:10.3847/co.23.2935

Wong argues that confessing is part of the human condition as much as lying, and it is cathartic to write in such a manner. She cites the restorative effects of journaling as indicator of this and provides statistics that show the correlation between journaling and improved mood. Wong uses this data to stress the importance of the confessional nature of the more recent personal essays, and denounces critics of it. She does side with the critics on one point, however. She agrees that there is a place for the confessional or personal essay. While it is important to confess, Wong mentions that audiences should not become stand-in priests; too much of the confessional essays can sink a career. This is what she says happened when the stock in personal essays fell. People were tired of reading purely personal information and started to switch to more informational reading material.

Remember that the purpose of the assignment is to summarize the source you have gathered for your research paper in your own words, so directly quoted material is not required. You will not need to provide your opinions or personal experience. Present the information relevant to your research paper topic in 150-200 words.