

Article

The Biographical Source as a Factor in Shaping National Artistic Traditions in Education and Culture

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Abstract

The article explores the role of the biographical source as a factor in the formation of national and artistic traditions in education and culture. The author analyzes the ways in which autobiographical texts, letters, memoirs, and diaries of cultural figures, artists, and educators transmit values, model educational systems, and preserve collective memory. Considerable attention is paid to conceptual approaches to the interpretation of biographical writing as a form of cultural heritage and a mechanism for decolonial rethinking of traditions in global and local contexts. The research methodology included narrative analysis, comparative historical approach, structural and semantic analysis of sources, and the case method. The object of analysis was the autobiographical documents of six European and world cultural figures, on the basis of which the role of personal texts in the formation of artistic, educational, and philosophical paradigms was systematized. The theoretical framework is based on interdisciplinary works in cultural studies, pedagogy, and identity history. The results of the study show that the biographical source is a tool for recording experience and an effective means of forming a tradition as a system of intergenerational transmission of knowledge, aesthetic norms and pedagogical models. It is noted that the narrative structure of such sources forms a cultural identity and ensures the integration of personal experience into the national discourse. The article proposes an analytical model for interpreting a biographical text as a dynamic component of the educational and cultural heritage.

Keywords: art education, autobiography, biographical source, cultural memory, national tradition, pedagogical narrative.

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Introduction

Biographical sources in the field of culture and education play a key role in shaping the semantic structures through which society comprehends its past, constructs collective memory, and develops educational and artistic practices. The personal experience narrative captures individual history and social trends, such as aesthetic norms, pedagogical methods, and ideological guidelines. Through biographical writing, the artistic tradition is transmitted, the educational model is conceptualized, and identity is formed. According to Brooks et al. (2024), educational biographical narratives have a documentary function and an ethical one: they serve as a model of behavior, a criterion for moral evaluation, and a means of cultural continuity.

Despite its apparent stability, the notion of national tradition is a flexible construct that is constantly updated in different historical and cultural contexts. Within each tradition, transmission mechanisms are based on practices and memory structures, one of which is the biography of a cultural figure, artist, or teacher. Through the personal experience of a particular person, the tradition acquires an individual dimension while maintaining its overall ideological and aesthetic integrity. This is particularly evident in cases where narrative becomes the result and driver of culture, particularly in systems where established forms of moral, religious, or artistic transmission play an important role. Sitorabonu's (2023) research shows that ethno-pedagogical models are shaped by external experience or government policy, but above all, by biographical imitation, by the models that students observe in the personalities of their teachers, artists, and mentors. Tradition functions as a network of intersubjective connections that is recorded in personal texts and becomes part of the national canon.

In today's context of globalization, digitalization, and decolonial challenges, it is especially important to understand how a biographical source represents and reforms tradition. Education is increasingly focused on flexible narrative strategies that allow us to fit an individual trajectory into the context of a global cultural movement. In this sense, biographical documents mediate between the local and the universal, the traditional and the innovative. In particular, Pacheco's (2021) study associates the concept of a "new normal" in education with the need to adapt traditional models to new realities through personal experience, critical rethinking of narratives, and openness to intercultural dialogue. The current specific interest in culture is primarily an interest in its anthropological component with a special emphasis on the subject's self-identity. Studying such a specific literary genre as

autobiographical documents is relevant in this context. It is assumed that this specific cultural phenomenon can shed light on human existence in a transforming culture.

Moreover, behind every printed national biography is a board of editors tasked with locating established experts to compose the biographies. These authors' personal and institutional networks and their scientific and ideological upbringing substantially impact the biographical constructs and narratives they have created and, consequently, the material contained in the bios (Bernad & Kaiser, 2018). As a result, such biography books require a source-critical approach as well as the use of cultural factors.

Research objectives. The study aims to identify the role of the biographical source as a structural element in the formation of national and artistic traditions in the field of education and culture. The main objectives of the study are to analyze autobiographical, memoir, and epistolary texts of cultural figures as carriers of pedagogical and aesthetic models; to study the mechanisms through which personal narratives become a tool for transmitting values in national and intercultural contexts; to study examples of the influence of biographical writing on the formation of educational paradigms in different countries and eras. Additionally, the task is to comprehend the relationship between biography, cultural memory, and the institutionalization of traditions in the globalized world. The study's contribution is to conceptualize the biographical source as an object of humanitarian analysis and an active factor in the construction of educational and cultural heritage. An interpretive biographical text analysis model is proposed, combining narrative, cultural, and pedagogical approaches.

Literature review

Contemporary scholarly literature on biographical sources in the process of forming national and artistic traditions demonstrates the growing interest of researchers in an interdisciplinary approach that combines historical, cultural, pedagogical, and literary perspectives. Understanding an autobiography, diary, or memoir as an individual text and as an instrument of collective identity that captures the key mechanisms of cultural inheritance is becoming crucial. Recent studies have focused on the pedagogical function of biographical writing, its ability to structure educational contexts, preserve the values of the era, and reproduce traditional artistic ideas in new forms.

A significant contribution to the study of cultural identity through biographical texts was made by Cibils and Marlatt (2019), who investigated poetic experience in teacher education as a means of sociocultural construction. Salido López (2024) works

in a similar vein, analyzing travel memoirs as a form of preserving aesthetic heritage within the framework of competency-based education. Wilczyńska (2019) refers to autonarrative as a method of recovering “hidden” art, particularly Australian Aboriginal art, through the biographical reflection of artists. Joyeux-Prunel (2019) deconstructs the global canonical notions of art history, emphasizing biographical strategies in shaping a global artistic narrative.

Autobiography is also a source of experience and self-identification in the field of education. Mariner (2019), in her study of biographical documents on adoption, demonstrates how narrative identity is transmitted through administrative texts. Maldonado-Ruiz and Gómez (2022) analyze pedagogical documentation as a form of reflective knowledge in teacher training. Brooks et al. (2024) emphasize the role of biographical narratives in moral education, while Birindelli (2023) explores the experiences of international students through autobiographical stories as a basis for identity formation in the educational environment.

The methodological aspects of using the biographical approach are revealed by Moran et al. (2022), who consider the ethical issues of using the BNIM (Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method) in working with vulnerable groups. Pacheco et al. (2023) follow a similar line, analyzing the educational transformations of immigrants in Chile through a biographical narrative. Freitas et al. (2020) apply a biographical perspective to understanding art education in Portugal. Dotta et al. (2020) examine the experience of “atypical students” through the lens of life story, presenting the biographical text as an educational resource for mature students.

Biography as a form of literary and cultural reflection on tradition is a central theme in Sáez Delfín's (2024) work, which analyzes Palestinian autobiographical texts. The study by da Costa et al. (2024) reveals that adolescents' psychological and biographical trajectories function similarly. Dominy (2022) emphasizes the use of family narratives in biographical studies, while Reis (2020) proposes the concept of heterobiography as a learning process that is realized through analytical work with other people's lives.

A separate area of the review is related to the topic of tradition in pedagogy and culture. Sage (2023) raises the issue of rethinking tradition in educational discourse, emphasizing its role in shaping the modern learning environment. Sitorabonu (2023) focuses on ethno-pedagogical traditions as the basis of education, pointing out the importance of biographical transmission of experience in local cultures. Cheng (2017) compares the traditions of humanitarian and Confucian education, demonstrating that the teacher's toolkit's biographical component often dominates formal approaches. Marty et al. (2018), through a cross-cultural analysis of European educational

programs, reveal how historical and cultural narratives are integrated into contemporary science teaching.

Other studies (especially Giannin & Bowen, 2019) show how the biographical method can be applied to examples of scientific history research that is part of the global cultural heritage using the instruments of digital humanities. First and foremost, the evolution of the biographic approach must be linked to the growth of the contemporary information society. As a result of informatization trends, information society technologies have permeated various human activities. Additionally, information and communication technology directly impact the advancement of humanitarian knowledge, the sciences related to its creation, and the scientific directions. First and foremost, there was a cross-disciplinary scientific trend known as “Digital Humanities” due to information technology. Within this context, several methods and approaches to doing scientific research in the humanities that make use of information and communication technology begin to emerge (Hyvonen et al., 2019). Furthermore, the modern person creates many texts that may be found in a variety of information systems (such as social networks and personal websites) (Breckner & Mayer, 2022). Furthermore, the various software tools for implementing context search and text analysis give a strong analytical foundation for the biographic method. Today, numerous websites provide biographies of various scientists, artists, educators, businessmen, and politicians.

To summarize the literature review results, it is worth emphasizing that biographical sources in contemporary research serve as a historical and documentary basis and a full-fledged analytical tool that allows us to understand education, art, and culture as interdependent systems. In the texts of researchers, there is a tendency to synthesize personal experience and collective memory manifested in pedagogical concepts and artistic practices. The biographical narrative appears as a form of memory and an active mechanism of cultural transmission and modeling of traditions in a globalized world. The current study establishes a new problem domain for theory, cultural history, and cultural studies. In many other humanities, due to institutional design, biography research tends to be divided into other fields, such as cultural and historical personology and biographies. This motivates us to recognize the importance of a certain methodological base, the conceptual, analytical foundation of biographical texts in cultural and historical discourse.

Methodology

The research procedure included several consecutive analytical stages, each with a separate goal and methodological basis. The first stage involved generalizing

theoretical approaches to interpreting a biographical source as a phenomenon of humanitarian knowledge, particularly in terms of cultural memory, educational transmission, and national identity. Next, the specifics of the functioning of biographical narratives in the work of artists and teachers were studied, making it possible to identify their role as factors in forming artistic and educational traditions. In the third stage, specific examples focused on six personalities of world culture were systematized using a structural table that covers the type of source, its artistic contribution, traditional context, and pedagogical influence. The final analytical block aimed to compare biographical evidence with the concepts of narrative pedagogy, decolonization education, and cultural transfer, which allowed us to formulate generalized conclusions about their significance for modern humanities.

The research sample was formed from authoritative scientific publications on biography, national traditions, cultural education, epistolary sources, and pedagogical concepts. The sources were selected from Google Scholar, JSTOR, Wiley, and ScienceDirect and were based on the thematic relevance, interdisciplinarity, and representativeness of global academic approaches. In total, more than 30 peer-reviewed publications covering European, Asian, and postcolonial contexts published in leading academic journals in the humanities, history of education, and cultural studies were analyzed by the researchers. Considerable attention is paid to the selection of texts that include biographical sources in the structure of the analysis - diaries, letters, memoirs, autobiographical essays - as well as studies that treat the formation of traditions as a complex narrative and pedagogical process. That is why ensuring the depth of intercultural analysis and verification of research hypotheses within the comparative cultural field is possible.

The research methods were chosen considering the problem's interdisciplinary nature. The basis was the method of narrative analysis used to interpret autobiographical texts in the context of the formation of a cultural and educational tradition. The comparative-historical method was also used to study the differences in the functioning of the biographical source in the European, Asian, and postcolonial educational paradigms. In order to verify the selected examples and identify the key thematic vectors, a structural-semantic approach was applied, which allowed for summarizing the data in the form of an analytical table. The case study method became the basis for studying individual figures (Goethe, Rousseau, Montessori, Wolfe, etc.), which allowed us to reconstruct their biography and the influence of texts on forming artistic or pedagogical models.

The chosen methodology allowed for a study at the intersection of history, literary studies, pedagogy, and cultural anthropology. The combination of qualitative

methods, multilevel literature sampling, and thematically verified examples created the basis for a comprehensive understanding of the biographical source as a factor in the formation of traditions. The methodological logic of the study contributed to a deeper understanding of the non-obvious connections between individual narrative and collective identity, artistic manifestation, and educational broadcast. It ensured the research model's integrity and the results' representativeness in the broader humanitarian context.

Findings

In recent decades, the biographical source has been viewed as a tool for reconstructing an individual's life path and a structural component of the national cultural narrative. Its role is especially relevant in the process of forming artistic and pedagogical traditions, where personal texts of artists, educators, and thinkers become sources of cultural memory and means of transmitting values. The concept of “sites of memory” formulated by Pierre Nora is of key importance: a biographical document, by its very nature, serves as a function of individual and collective preservation of cultural meanings (Yanhong, 2020). Sources such as diaries, letters, or memoirs allow us to reconstruct the mechanisms of national identity formation, which is integrated into the artistic and educational space.

Researchers pay special attention to narrative to form knowledge in the pedagogical process. That is why educational studies of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries actively use theories of narrative thinking developed by Goodson (2012), who emphasizes that biographical narratives capture experience and model educational contexts. The biographical component in art and culture is not just a background for analyzing creativity but becomes a means of conceptualizing the tradition itself, as reflected in the study by Ciobanu-Gout (2020), where the author focuses on the relationship between personal trajectory and professional identity. The biographical text is a record and projection of sociocultural dynamics, which is especially relevant for the study of cultural heritage.

In the field of educational decolonization, biographical writing is central as a form of resistance and identity reconstruction. Freire's contribution is extremely important, in particular his concept of critical pedagogy, which is based on the experience of personal reflection transformed into pedagogical practice (Da Silva, 2021). A biographical narrative in a pedagogical context allows us to reveal the intellectual experience and structural conditions for forming cultural autonomy. This is confirmed in modern research, where the biographical method is used to form critical thinking through the study of literary heritage, for example, in the context of

studying culture through English-language literature (Latifatul Isro'iyah & Herminingsih, 2023).

In view of the above, it is advisable to systematize the key examples of the impact of biographical sources on cultural and educational traditions. Table 1 demonstrates how autobiographical and epistolary documents have become sources of reflection and foundations for educational philosophies, artistic innovations, and national traditions. The table presents six figures whose personal textual heritage contributed to the formation of new approaches in the fields of culture, art, and education.

Table 1. The biographical source as a factor in the formation of national and artistic traditions

The name of the figure	Source	Artistic contribution	Traditional context	Educational impact
Goethe, Johann W.	Letters, diaries	Literature, philosophy	German classicism	The humanistic ideal of Bildung
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques	"Confessions", letters	Philosophy, essays	French Enlightenment	Natural education, "Emil"
Tagore, Rabindranath	Memoirs, letters	Poetry, music	Indian humanism	Own model of the university
Montessori, Maria	Treatises, letters	Educational reforms	Italian modernism	Method of free development
Woolf, Virginia	Letters, essays	Modernism, feminist criticism	English intellectual tradition	Criticism of educational inequality
Kandinsky, Wassily	Autobiography	Abstract art	Eastern European-German synthesis	Pedagogy in the Bauhaus

The analysis of Table 1 shows that the biographical source is not a secondary element of the artistic process but acts as a structural basis for forming pedagogical and cultural paradigms. The concept of Bildung, associated with Goethe's work, has shaped a whole trend in German humanities education. Likewise, Maria Montessori's pedagogical system, shaped by her reflective texts, has become a universal model of child development based on freedom and individual pace. Biographical documents serve as a source and methodology for transmitting the tradition.

Virginia Woolf, in her letters and essays, forms the canon of feminist criticism of education, combining personal experience with an analysis of institutional inequality. Kandinsky's work, on the contrary, demonstrates the interconnection between aesthetics and pedagogy: his autobiographical understanding of color as a spiritual phenomenon was institutionalized in his teaching at the Bauhaus. This

approach to analyzing cultural processes through a personal narrative allows us to see how artistic and educational knowledge is formed not theoretically but through the practice and experience of the artist.

Biographical writing is a tool for recording memory and a means of cultural imitation and transformation. Combined with artistic practices, it ensures the sustainable reproduction of tradition through experience based on self-reflection and a critical understanding of cultural heritage. Biographical sources, being authentic carriers of identity, become mediators between the past and the future in the processes of learning, creativity, and the formation of the national cultural code.

The biographical source, as a form of personal representation of experience, is a factor in forming individual identity and collective cultural memory. Letters, memoirs, diaries, and autobiographical prose record private and socially significant things: creative methods, pedagogical concepts, aesthetic guidelines, and attitudes toward the national environment. That is why such sources allow us to recreate the dynamics of tradition formation in specific cultural spaces. Texts created by artists or educators themselves record the logic of the transition from individual experience to systemic influence on the educational or artistic paradigm.

Biographical sources have the ability to accumulate and transmit the values of the era in which they emerged, reflecting the configuration of cultural identity. National and artistic traditions often do not appear as predefined constructions but as the result of a long process of comprehension, rethinking, and recording of personal nature in texts. A special role belongs to figures who formed their own schools or movements and visualized the cultural logic of their time. Through biographical documents, one can trace how the personality of an artist or educator turns into a carrier of tradition, as in the case of Goethe's literature or Montessori's educational reforms.

The study of biographical material also allows us to reconstruct the dynamics of the formation of art schools in relation to the national context. As comprehended in his autobiography, Kandinsky's work demonstrates the evolution of abstract thinking and changes in the philosophical and aesthetic foundations of European visual culture. Similarly, Rabindranath Tagore's educational memoirs reveal the specifics of Indian modernism and its connection to the spiritual and ethnic foundations of the nation. The biographical source becomes a universal key to understanding how cultural codes are formed and consolidated in the transnational dimension and helps to understand the historical periods of the formation of national artistic traditions (see Figure 1).

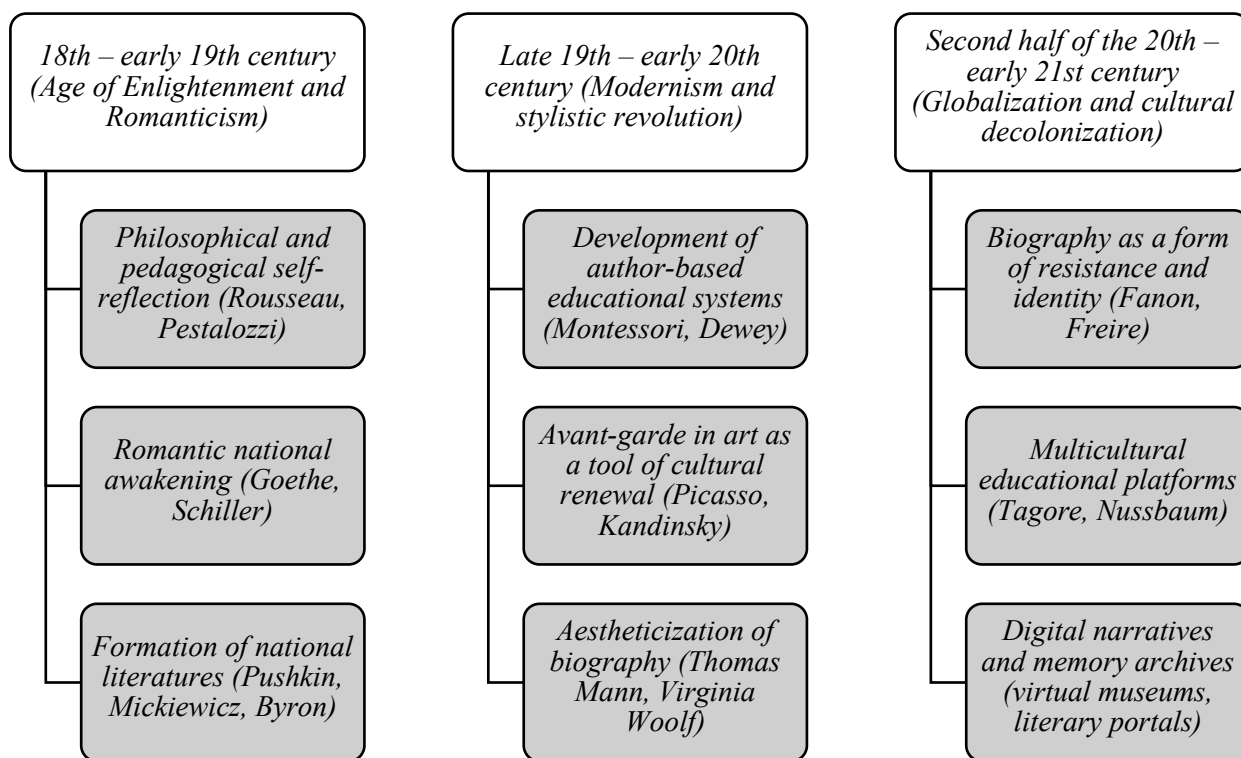


Figure 1. Historical Periods of Formation of National and Artistic Traditions

A special layer of research on the formation of national traditions in education is associated with the study of ethnopedagogy and educational models based on the cultural codes of the community. Sitorabonu (2023), in her study of the role of ethno-pedagogical traditions, emphasizes that deeply rooted cultural values-including family histories, legends, and mentoring practices, form a stable educational environment in which ethnic identity is formed. The Confucian model of education as a carrier of discipline, moral self-improvement, and a hierarchy of responsibilities is also viewed in a similar vein (Cheng, 2017; Ho, 2018). Comparative studies of educational systems in China, Japan, and Korea show that the basis of many pedagogical doctrines of the Eastern world is not based on universalist principles but on a traditional biographical component, in which the teacher is not only a transmitter of knowledge, but the embodiment of the values of generations (Hessler, 2024). Similarly, in the Islamic educational tradition, as emphasized by Inayatillah (2023), an important role is played by the figure of a mentor whose biography is a source of moral authority and a role model.

The formation of traditions is not a static process of preservation but a dynamic reinterpretation of heritage, in which biographical writing plays the role of an intermediary between the past and the present. A personal narrative brought into the public sphere records experience and institutionalizes it in the form of an artistic

school, a pedagogical method, and a cultural paradigm. Thanks to the personal texts of artists, national artistic practices receive ethical, aesthetic, and educational justification, adapting to the demands of their time.

There is a noticeable tendency to comprehend the role of culture and tradition in shaping curricula. Marty et al. (2018), in a cross-cultural analysis of science education in Switzerland, Sweden, and France, show that universal goals, historical narratives, and values specific to a particular society shape educational models. A similar observation can be seen in Macfarlane and Yeung (2024), who analyze how tradition in higher education appears not as a stable archive of knowledge but as a constantly reconstructed structure that depends on the experience of generations of teachers, reformers, and researchers. The authors point out that in the period from 1976 to 2021, the academic field began to actively reinterpret tradition as part of a professional biography that shapes a school of thought, discipline, or institutional style.

It is important to emphasize that the biographical source functions as a point of intersection between the creator's individual world and the community's collective memory. It conveys facts and contexts of the formation of ideologies, artistic programs, and educational doctrines. In the memoirs of artists, one can trace how views on national culture are formed in the context of colonialism, modernization, or social pressure. This ability to reproduce historical depth makes biographical texts extremely important in the study of traditions.

Given the current cultural and educational landscape, an interdisciplinary approach to biography is particularly important. The biographical source should be used in the field of history or literary studies, as well as in the philosophy of education, sociocultural anthropology, and museum practice. Understanding traditions through the biographical “optics” allows us to reveal the indisputable connection between subjective reflection and the objective structure of culture.

Discussions

The study's results confirm the biographical source's leading role in the mechanisms of formation of artistic and educational traditions, which is consistent with modern theoretical approaches to understanding tradition as a dynamic construct. Macfarlane and Yeung (2024) argue that tradition in higher education is not a static archive but a constantly reproduced practice closely linked to the biographies of teachers, researchers, and leaders of educational communities. A similar logic is supported by Pierre Nora's concept of “places of memory” as conceptualized by

Yanhong (2020), according to which biographical texts become intersections of individual experience and collective history.

Our findings also demonstrate that biographical writing plays a key role in reproducing traditional educational models in countries with deep religious or philosophical heritage. The statement is confirmed by the study of Inayatillah (2023), which reveals the transmission mechanism of Islamic educational traditions through the figures of mentors whose biographies are a source of moral authority. At the same time, Hessler (2024) analyzes the Chinese education system, showing the influence of the Confucian “face” as a value embodied in the teacher's biography. Such findings resonate with our thesis that educational paradigms, especially within national cultures, are not based on abstract concepts but on examples of specific biographies, as in the case of Goethe, Rousseau, or Montessori.

Special attention should be paid to studying the cultural adaptation of traditions in response to global transformations. Pacheco's (2021) study emphasizes the “new normal” in education, which leads to a rethinking of traditions through personal experience and biographical flexibility. Similarly, Ho (2018) explores pedagogical reforms within the Confucian tradition, showing how the personalities of reformers with their autobiographical strategies changed the traditional notion of learning. Our study confirms these positions: biographical narratives provide a flexible renewal of traditions, leaving the cultural framework unchanged but adapting it to new challenges.

An important area that finds confirmation in our analysis is the conceptualization of tradition as a system of intercultural knowledge that is structured through collective biographies. Hoaihongthong and Kwiecien (2022) demonstrate how the common culture of the Mekong region is formed by the unification of local traditions transmitted through ethnographic and biographical texts. A similar study by Sholehuddin et al. (2021) examines the transmission of religious culture through cultural practices and biographies in Muslim communities in Indonesia. In fact, our study shows that collective images of culture are transmitted through the individual experiences of artists or educators, which are fixed in institutional memory.

At the same time, the results allow us to identify new vectors of interdisciplinary understanding of the tradition, in particular through non-standard sources of biographical knowledge. The studies of Morgan and Trubek (2020) and Maspul and Almalki (2023) point out the insufficient consideration of food traditions in agroecology despite their deep cultural roots. Similarly, Landau and Provenza (2020) draw attention to the role of cultural interaction practices with animals in shaping traditions, calling for a broader understanding of biography as a type of

behavioral inheritance. Nuban Timo (2021) demonstrates how church traditions are reflected in forms of inclusion/exclusion through religious rituals related to cultural memory. These examples demonstrate the expansion of the boundaries of biographical analysis from text to practice, from individual to community.

Thus, the results of our study confirm the importance of the biographical source in the formation of artistic and national traditions and deepen the understanding of this phenomenon through an intercultural, narrative, and decolonial prism. Biography appears as a universal structure of cultural transmission—from the face of a teacher to the narrative of a nation, from a private letter to the canon of art. Further research can focus on empirical analyses of local biographical archives, which will allow us to detail the transmission mechanisms of traditions in specific sociocultural contexts.

Conclusions

The study found that the biographical source not only performs a representative or descriptive function but is also an active factor in the formation of national and artistic traditions in the field of education and culture. Personal documents such as diaries, letters, memoirs, and autobiographies have proven to be capable of recording the experience of specific historical figures, shaping educational paradigms, modeling aesthetic values, and rooting national identity. The biographical narratives of cultural and educational figures act as channels for the transmission of ideas that eventually acquire the status of canonical ones, determining the direction of the intellectual development of the community. The examples of Goethe, Rousseau, Montessori, Tagore, Wolfe, and Kandinsky demonstrate how personal texts become the basis for educational concepts, new artistic trends, and philosophical doctrines. A biographical source is a way of preserving cultural memory and a tool for creating cultural policy and pedagogical reflection.

From the standpoint of modern scientific vision, the biographical approach allows us to integrate educational, artistic, and cultural discourses into a single methodological framework that can reveal the deep mechanisms of tradition transmission. Biographical writing mediates individual experience and collective history, private experience, and public ideology. In the context of globalization and the decolonial revision of traditions, the role of biography as a source is growing, as it allows us to maintain localism in the global cultural field. Further understanding of the biographical source opens up prospects for transforming humanities education, updating teaching content, and preserving national and cultural heritage through personal experience.

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Conflicts of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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