

## Preface

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Is it daring to think only in black and white colors? Can border drawing go on in a globalized world where borders are said to have disappeared? Is this ethnocentric? Is it Orientalist? Is it merely human? The following pages pose a challenge upon the reader. They require him to explore the deep roots of thinking – daily practices, long-standing judgements, the foundation of belief. This is particularly difficult for the postcolonial critic. He/she will face words such as truth, authenticity, and binary thinking. For him/her, these words do not actually exist because they are mere constructs – concepts the human mind has brought into existence and which the scholar can erase. For the world of readers outside the academy, however, these words cannot easily be dispelled because they *do* carry *meaning*. They are crucial parts of life and of identity.

Only the one who is willing to leave behind the ideology of postcolonialism and constructivism to a certain extent, in order to make room for contact with the real world of cultural discourse and materialist practice, will be able to allow for this insight. Only the literary scholar who is willing to look at literature from a new perspective will be able to see new possibilities of literary impact. Above all, life is lived in the real world and books about life reflect this. How they do this is not only a matter of artistic creation and critical investigation – it is a matter of strategy, logical insight, and political interest.

After all, life writing is a matter of power, just like life itself, especially for those without agency, is a constant struggle for power. How significantly life writing impacts life in the real world above all becomes a matter of comparison. Comparison helps highlight black and white, but it can also reveal the brightness of the black and the blackness of the white. Comparison therefore is not a matter of hierarchies, it is a matter of information and knowledge. Knowledge is transmitted in books and where else could it have a greater impact than in the books of life called autobiographies?

