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Elizabeth Smart's Novel-Journal

Dee Horne

Abstract

Elizabeth Smart's journals constitute the bulk of her writing; they are crucial to the development of her artistic form and play an integral role in her writing process. Smart's journals have distinctive characteristics -- truthfulness, credibility, compression, and intimacy -- and Smart uses them to create a new literary form: the novel-journal. Her journals evolve from external to internal observations, moving towards a developed form in which Smart portrays her life as crafted art. Smart makes minimal changes between the seven corresponding sections of her journal drafts and the published text of *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*: the changes result in a more emotive, unified, clear, and focused text. Shirley Neuman's statement that "the writing is the life" is an apt description of Smart's life and writing -- just as Smart lives segments of her life as art, so she also sees writing as life.

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