

Braxton

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89-30066 CIP

JUN '90

Braxton, Joanne M. **Black women writing autobiography: a tradition within a tradition.** Temple, 1990 (c1989). 242p. bibl index atp ISBN 0-87722-639-3, \$24.95

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

History, Geography, and Area Studies  
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On one level this multilayered book is a study of the continuum of autobiographical writings by a number of African-American women, including Harriet Jacobs, Charlotte Grimké, Ida B. Wells, Zora Neale Hurston, and Maya Angelou, as well as slave narratives and stories of religious experiences. But underneath there is an exploration of a shared oral tradition within a magic circle, the historic kinship of black sisterhood. And beneath that are glimpses of archetypal imagery and symbolic memory. Readers at every level, however, will be rewarded by accounts of the struggle for survival and transcendence, the quest for self-defining identity, and black women's evolving relationships with conventional female roles. Braxton (College of William and Mary) critically examines the lives of real women as well as the autobiographical form, and weaves an illuminating text that makes both more visible. College, university, and public libraries.—R. Newman, *New York Public Library*

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