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### **Digital Literacy Evolution: The Rise of Contemporary Creative Nonfiction in Social Media**

In today's digitally driven world, the way we communicate continues to evolve rapidly. From carved tablets to scrolls, handwritten manuscripts to printed books and now social media posts, each technological advancement has transformed how people share ideas and aspects of their lives. While traditional literary nonfiction found its home in memoirs and personal essays, platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook have created new spaces where millions of people engage in daily acts of a contemporary form of creative nonfiction through their carefully curated posts, stories, and videos. This evolution raises important questions about authenticity, narrative craft, and the nature of creative nonfiction itself in the digital age.

Creative nonfiction combines factual accounts with different techniques to make a story more entertaining and compelling. With the limited attention span most viewers have, creative nonfiction has taken a turn to emphasize aspects of entertainment for social media, as a post must stand out against millions of others. The "A Day In My Life" (DIML) phenomenon exemplifies this transformation, where creators transform their daily routines into crafted narratives complete with story arcs, character development, and thematic elements. While these videos present real events, creators typically choose to film on particularly eventful or productive days, creating highlight reels of their lives rather than capturing truly mundane moments. A regular lazy Sunday of answering emails and watching Netflix rarely makes the cut; instead, viewers see

aesthetically pleasing montages of coffee shop work sessions, workout routines, and social outings, all carefully edited to maintain narrative momentum. These videos, often running between five and fifteen minutes, demonstrate how digital platforms have reshaped traditional narrative structures to accommodate modern attention spans while maintaining creative nonfiction's core elements of truth-telling and artistic expression – even if that truth is selectively chosen.

Within *The Standard Definition of Creativity*, by Mark A. Runco and Garrett J. Jaeger, creativity is defined through multifocal lenses requiring both effectiveness and originality. While Runco and Jaeger's piece focuses on creativity in a general form, it highlights that originality alone is not sufficient alone for captivating literacy, but must also be effective, resulting in entertaining creativity in communication, whether writing or storytelling. Runco and Jaeger's definition of creativity perfectly captures the essence of modern social media storytelling as this concept can be seen in social media and contemporary creative nonfiction. Digital creators must do more than simply document "authentic" experiences, just as their research emphasizes that "originality is vital for creativity but is not sufficient," but they also need to transform such experiences into content that stands out from the millions of other posts, essentially requiring them to create pieces that resonate with their audience. This balance is particularly relevant in how social media users craft their personal narratives, selecting which moments to share and how to present them in ways that are both unique and meaningful, creating this contemporary form of creative nonfiction within their posts. The challenge of modern creative nonfiction isn't just in telling the truth, but in telling it in a way that cuts through the digital noise while maintaining enough authenticity to connect with viewers - much like how Runco and Jaeger argue that truly creative work must be both original and effective to have value.

Continuing on the effective aspect that social media creators must possess, they also must be sufficient in their digital literacy of social media outlets to effectively capitalize on the success of their posts, success being defined by the amount of interaction readers, or viewers, have with the content. As seen in *Reimagining Computer Literacy*, by Stuart Selber, the evolution of creative nonfiction in social media requiring creators to develop multiple forms of digital literacy is highlighted. Beyond just mastering technical skills, also known as functional literacy, successful creators must critically understand platform dynamics and authenticity issues, or critical literacy, while effectively designing content that resonates with their audience, such being rhetorical literacy. This complex interplay of technical skill, critical awareness, and rhetorical strategy reflects how the digital age has fundamentally transformed what it means to be an effective storyteller.

Looking at *Defining Creative Nonfiction*, the evolution of creative nonfiction in social media and the contemporary take on it closely mirrors the genre's resistance to strict categorization. Just as creative nonfiction exists in what the textbook describes as "that thin line between fact and fiction," today's social media creators navigate a similar boundary between authenticity and artistic expression. The textbook emphasizes that creative nonfiction's defining characteristic is "a strong authorial voice and style" - a trait that perfectly describes successful social media content creators who must develop distinctive personal brands while maintaining truthful narratives. This parallel becomes particularly evident in the "Day In My Life" (DIML) phenomenon, where creators, like traditional creative nonfiction writers, must balance what the textbook calls "fact-based writing with literary qualities." These digital storytellers face the same challenge described in the chapter: they must tell true stories in "an artful, honest manner" while acknowledging that "a written work is not reality itself." The transformation of mundane daily

activities into compelling narratives on platforms like Instagram and TikTok exemplifies how creative nonfiction has adapted to new media while maintaining its core tension between truthful representation and artistic expression.

With social media outlets becoming so prevalent, people's profiles have transitioned to be an extension of themselves and their self expression. That being said, creators have taken a step further to curate their profiles, despite the relation to authenticity, or lack thereof, formulating what aspects of themselves and their lives to put forward. Concepts such as aesthetics and post planning have arisen, allowing for creators to modify their life presentations through this contemporary form of creative nonfiction. Like the "A Day In My Life" phenomenon, creators would never post a casual picture of them doing mundane acts, that is unless it is specifically intentional to appear authentic. Everything down to the follower count is carefully curated to best suit the success of the pieces, or posts. While leaning towards inauthenticity, omitting the truth or using contemporary creative nonfiction to edit how one's life is perceived online is hardly enough means alone to argue illegitimacy of one's online persona.

As digital literacy evolves with new social media being introduced, we will continue to see this contemporary form of creative nonfiction. From A Day In My Life videos and the required intertwining of both originality and effectiveness in creativity to proficient digital literacy skills of creators and creative nonfiction's resistance to strict categorization, as well as curated online profiles, creative nonfiction can be seen as prevalent in a contemporary form within the evolving digital landscape. Although all of these usages prove that a contemporary form of creative nonfiction is indeed being utilized rather than fictional lives entirely and one usage is not enough to prove fabrication alone, one must question if it warrants the title of inauthenticity is valid with such freedoms taken for the genre. The question remains: is this overuse of liberties

accumulating too much to qualify into this contemporary creative nonfiction genre or do posts exhibiting such patterns fall into a different genre altogether?

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