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Documents of Life was originally published in 1983 and became a classic text, providing both a persuasive argument for a particular approach and a manifesto for social research. As a critique of anti-humanist methodology in the social sciences, it championed the use of life stories and other personal documents in research which are now widely used today. This book is a substantially revised and expanded version which takes on recent developments.

Providing numerous illustrations from a range of life documents, the book traces the history of the method, examines ways of 'doing life story' research, and discusses the many political and ethical issues raised by such research. The whole book has been substantially re-written and updated, and there are four wholly new chapters. These look at the wider emergence of an auto//biographical society; writing and narrative; memory and truth; and humanism.

Whilst the original book argued for more life stories in social research, this book senses a major celebration and proliferation of the method over the past twenty years. At the same time. in the wake of postmodernism, feminist and queer writings, the writing of a life can never again be a simple exercise in 'telling it like it is'. Plummer's new book confronts these new concerns head on, whilst restating his strong commitment to the methodologies of humanism.

Passionate and unashamedly partisan, this is no ordinary 'methods text'. Even more than its predecessor, it sees the research process as social, moral, and political at every stage.

Like the earlier book, Documents of Life 2 is written in an easy and engaging style which should make it equally accessible to first year undergraduates and much more advanced graduate scholars across a range of social science disciplines.