FR 386

Autobiographical Writing

As a literary genre, autobiography was introduced in French literature by Montaigne and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, both writing detailed accounts of their lives. Since the century of Rousseau, many have been written, and most preeminent writers have sacrificed to the tradition.

We’ll study different forms of autobiographies, drawing parallels between the French and the Anglophone traditions, reading lives accounts and novels that claim to be autobiographical. Through those works, well define the main characteristics of the genre, and what tools are in the writer’s box.

Besides some photocopied excerpts, we'll study in class: Manon Lescault by the Abbe Prevost, La Douleur by Marguerite Duras, W ou le souvenir d'enfance by Georges Perec, Journal de deuil by Roland Barthes, Sur ma mre by Tahar ben Jelloun and Un ange cornu avec des ailes de tle by Michel Tremblay.

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