

“W” Island as a Sport Fable and/or the Childhood Recollection

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Abstract

Georges Perec was a French Jewish writer (1936-1982). His father was killed in battle at the beginning of World War II. His mother was arrested, and probably died while being deported to a concentration camp. As a little child, Perec found refuge in Vichy France. In 1975, he published *W or the Childhood Recollection!* to retrace his childhood. Structurally, this unusual autobiography contains a double axis of stories, telling his broken impressions of child's life as well as an adventure fiction about a legendary W island where sport is responsible for making all of the rules. We will first consider the status of this work to see how it transgresses the limits of defined “genres,” such as autobiography, deportation literature and *mémoires*. Then we will explain how the sport allegory functions as an inextricable element of the history that our young hero lived without understanding. Through a diversity of discourses around sport, the fable of W refers to several historical events and their related ideologies. The author relied on sociological theory debates flourishing in the 1960's to reconstruct his personal story, which it is impossible to dissociate from the history.

Key Words: recollection, autobiography, Second World War, concentration camp, sport