

THE LITERARY RECIT LE RÉCIT LITTÉRAIRE

WHAT IS IT?



JOHN CALABRÒ



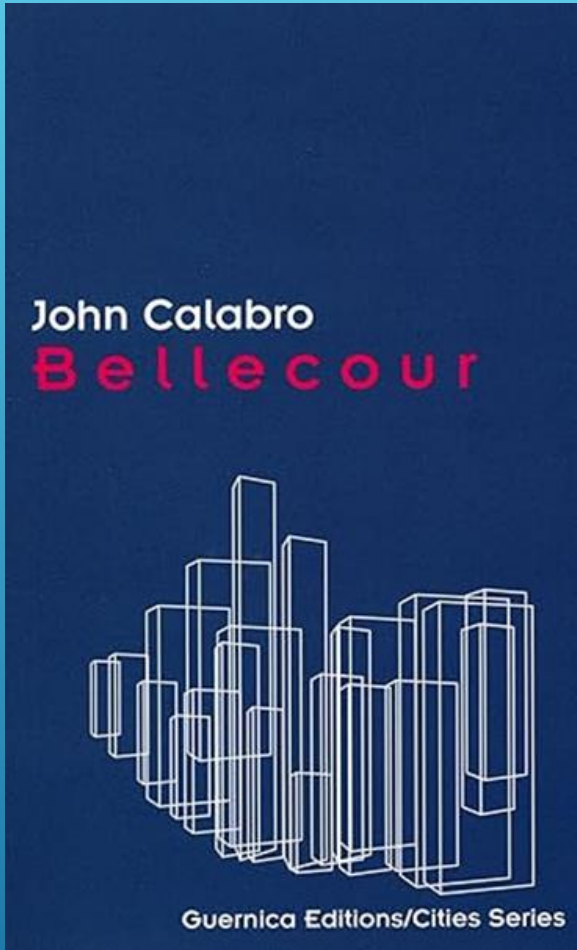
Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

THE RECIT

IT STARTED WITH THIS SLIM BOOK...

.... AND A CONVERSATION
WITH THE PUBLISHER OF
BELLECOUR...



SEARCHING FOR A GENRE BETWEEN THE SHORT STORY AND THE NOVEL **THAT IS NOT A NOVELLA**

A RECIT IS...

“Récit, a brief novel, usually with a simple narrative line. ... [they] are studiously simple... in which the first-person narrator reveals the inherent moral ambiguities of life by means of seemingly innocuous reminiscences.”

Encyclopedia Britannica

Andrée Mercier, of Laval University says,
‘The recit designates narrative texts that are impossible to classify under the traditional genres of the short story or the novel.’

Critic Geoffrey Hartman describes the récit as, "a confessional narrative, a kind of dramatic monologue in prose ... "

A FEW RECITS WRITERS: past and present

MARIE-CLAIRE BLAIS

GRAZIA DELEDDA

GEORGE BATAILLE

MAURICE BLANCHOT

ANNIE ERNAUX

NATHALIE PETROWSKI

ANDRÉ GIDE

CATHERINE PERRIN

GÉRARD BESSETTE

HUBERT AQUIN

NATALIA GINSBURG

ALBERT CAMUS

ERRI DE LUCA

SIMONETTA GREGGIO

AMÉLIE NOTHOMB

ABDELKADER DJEMAI

PETER HANDKE

SIMONA VINCI

ANTONIO TABUCCHI

ELIO VITTORINI

CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

BRUNO SCHULZ

ALLAN ROBBE-GRILLET

LUCE D'ERAMO

ONLY SCRATCHING THE SURFACE...

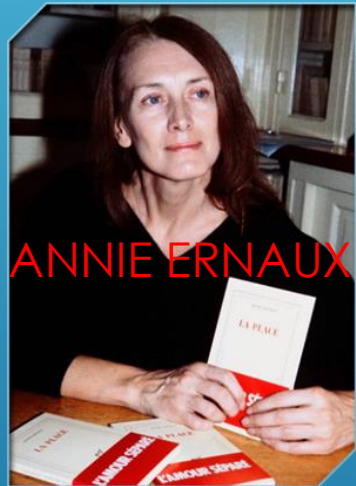
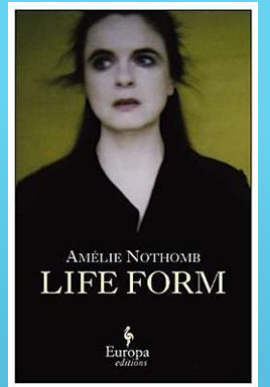
ANDREA BAJANI

THE PERSONAL RECIT

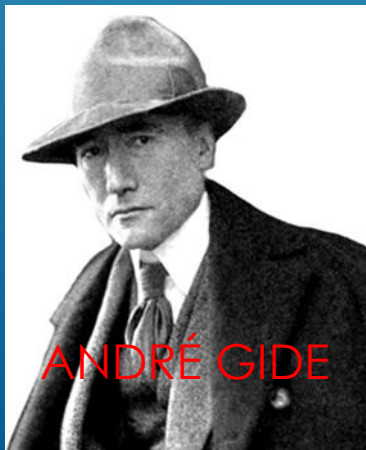
The **personal recit** can take the form of the journal, of a diary or of letter writing, much like the epistolary novel. It may also combine all three.



LETTERS: *LIFE FORM*. It is a mixture of the real (autobiography) and fiction (quite obvious from the story) and yet it allows Nothomb as the author, narrator, protagonist to comment about authors and their fans, politics, and indirectly about her own struggles with bulimia and anorexia. **Grand Prix du Roman, the René-Fallet prize, the Alain-Fournier prize, and the Grand Prix Giono.**



JOURNAL: *THINGS SEEN*. They are observational snapshots of daily life which the author links to a passing thought, a news item, or an episode in her life. Critics have said, '**They ask everything of the reader and nothing. They are deceptively simple books, and profoundly disarming.**' **2022 Nobel Prize in Literature and the Premio Strega.**



LETTERS AND DIARY: *STRAIGHT IS THE GATE*. Here you find the **confessional tone of the first person narrative**, through correspondence, mostly between him and Alissa, the woman he loves, as well as through her diary entries. That format allows Gide to play with fiction and autobiography. **1947 Nobel Prize in Literature.**

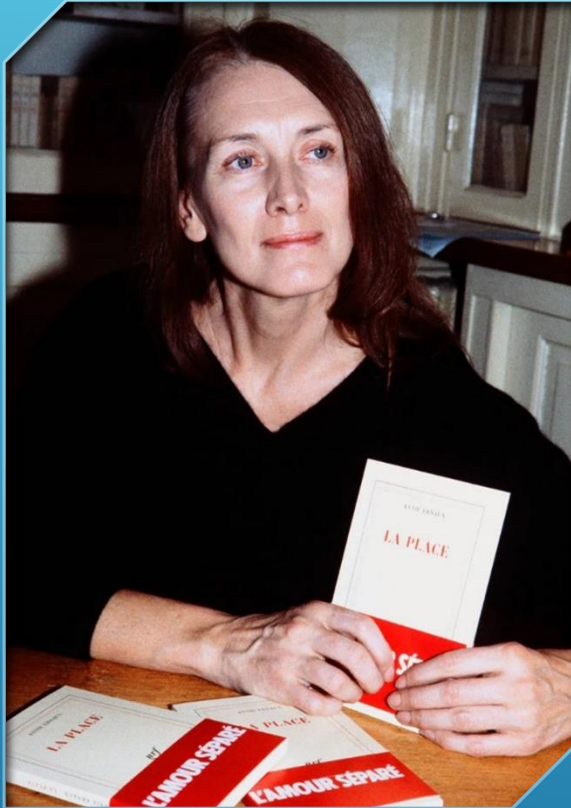


THE TRADITIONAL RECIT

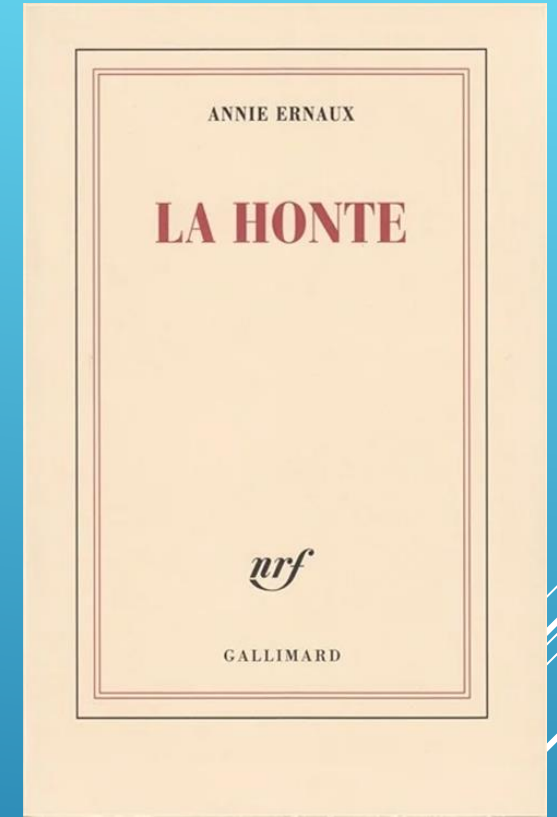
Anaïs Nin said, *‘We write to taste life twice,
in the moment and in retrospect.’*

Here we have the author/narrator/protagonist revisiting events or relationships from the past, interpreting and reinterpreting them. Sometimes called **Autosociobiographie**, they blend a sociological commentary with fiction and autobiography.

ANNIE ERNAUX FRENCH 1940 -



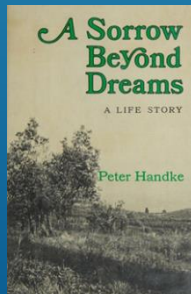
She says, “*But what is the point of writing if not to unearth things... something that emerges from the creases when a story is unfolded, and can help us understand events that occur and the things we do.*”



PETER HANDKE

AUSTRIAN

1942-



NATHALIE PETROWSKI

FRENCH CANADIAN

1954-



THE NEW RECIT

The style of the narration, the non-linear time movement, the lack of narrative arc, sparse dialogue, the repetition of words, scenes, movements, all declare the arrival of the new novel, of **the new recit**, of a new way of arranging narration.

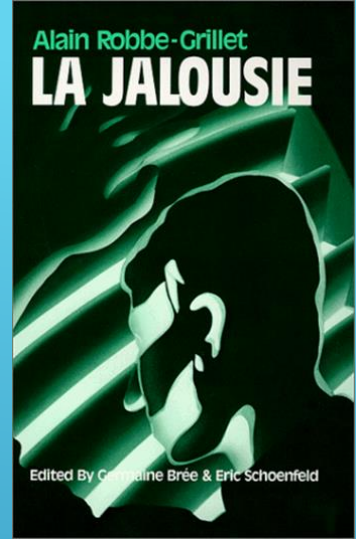
ALLAN ROBBE-GRILLET



1922 - 2008

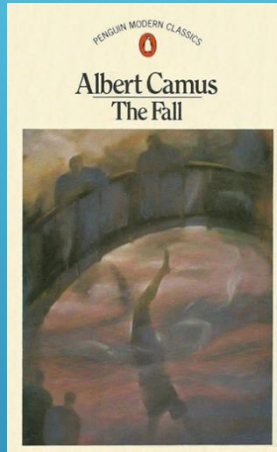
FRENCH

*'The reader must slowly piece together the story and the emotional experience of jealousy, **a method that resembles the experience of psychoanalysis in which the deeper unconscious meanings are contained in the flow and disruptions of free associations.** Timelines and plots are fractured.'*



WITH ALAIN RESNAIS, WON THE "GOLDEN LION" IN VENICE, IN 1961 FOR **LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD**

ALBERT CAMUS



1913 - 1960

FRENCH WRITER BORN IN ALGERIA

1957 NOBEL PRIZE WINNER IN LITERATURE

‘Il est bien difficile de démêler le vrai du faux dans ce que je raconte.’ The Fall

SIMONA VINCI

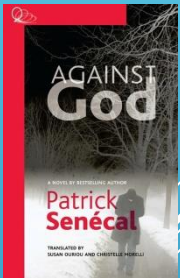
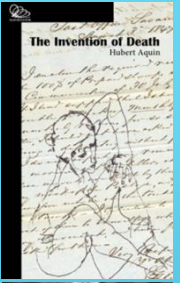


1970 -

ITALIAN

THE ELSA MORANTE PRIZE AND THE PREMIO CAMPIELLO

‘Questo scritto ti dispiacera da subito. Dall’inizio provocherà in te irritazione. Ti disturberà.’ Stanza 411



UNIFYING ELEMENTS

LENGTH

A common length, 20,000 to 50,000 words (60 to 140 pages) with most at **100 pages**.

CHARACTERS

The strongest character is the narrator - protagonist. Characters don't grow or mature, they are discovered.

STYLE AND NARRATION

In a recit, the author/ narrator/ protagonist is frequently the same person. The recit are often metatextual and share self-referential elements, '**Showing the conscious activity of the novelist at work**'.

SETTING AND TIME FRAME

Limited setting, revisiting a past location or event. Mixing the past with the contemporary. **Nonlinear**.

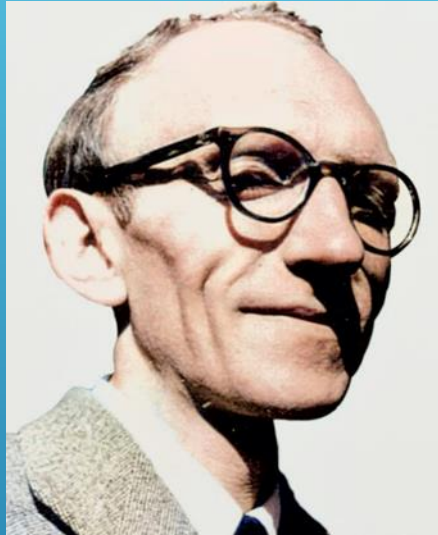
THEMES

It ponders **the human condition**, in its stark, honest and brutal reality. It has one focus, one idea.

PLOT

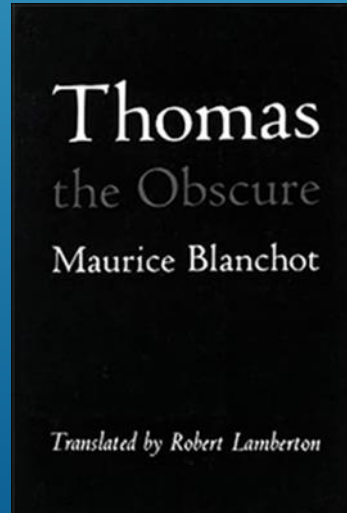
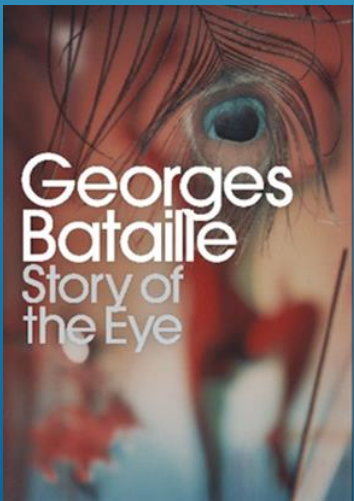
The narratives have no plot, no arc. The recit meanders from scene to scene, recounts, explores. It tells what happened while reflecting on what happened.

CRITICS OF THE RECIT AND THEIR RECIT



‘What does it add to our human condition except that these two authors need some deep psychoanalysis.’ Jean Paul Sartre
...HE WASN'T WRONG...

CRITICS CLOSER TO HOME



PROFESSOR ANDRÉE MERCIER
LAVAL UNIVERSITY
*An essay: 'Poétique du récit
contemporain: négation du genre ou
émergence d'un sous-genre'*

WRITE YOUR OWN RECIT AND JOIN...

GRAZIA DELEDDA

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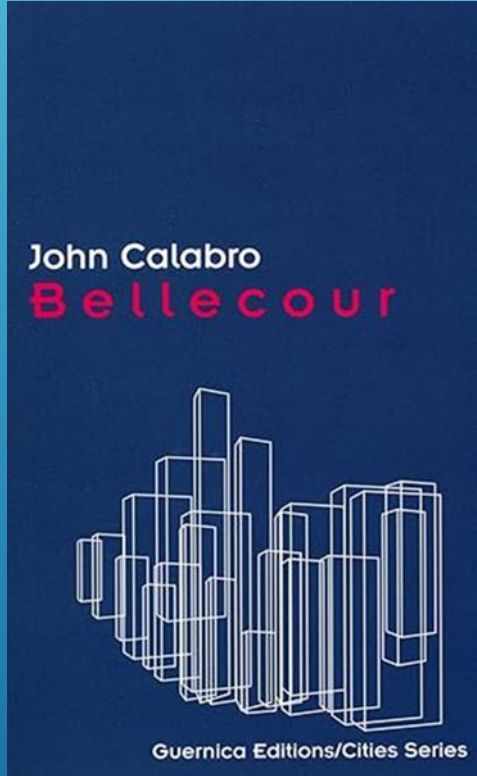
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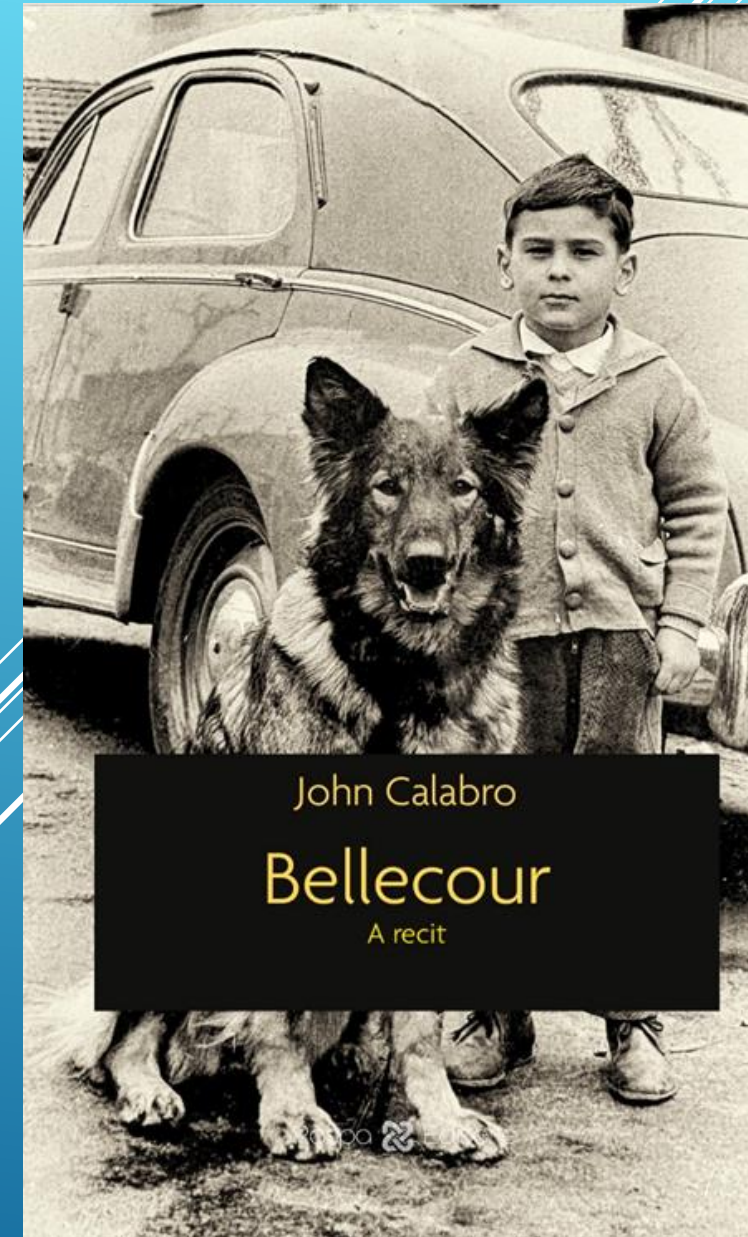
MARIE-CLAIRE BLAIS

ANDREA BAJANI

BELLECOUR, A RECIT



...This is the how and why, twenty years after its first printing, the word *recit* regained its rightful place on the cover of *Bellecour*...



THE RECIT ~ LE RÉCIT

THE FICTION THAT OCCUPIES THE SPACE BETWEEN
THE SHORT STORY AND THE NOVEL...
A FICTION THAT IS NOT A NOVELLA,
BUT **A RECIT.**



JOHN CALABRÒ

