

**ASPECTS ÉTHIQUES DE LA LITTÉRATURE AUTOBIOGRAPHIQUE –  
PHILIPPE VILAIN ET ANNIE ERNAUX**

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***Abstract:** This article aims at revising a series of questions the autobiographical literature confronts us with when published during the lifetime both of the author and of real people having become fictional characters. We are thus referring to the context where real people, who shared some life experiences with a writer, are present in the pages the latter wrote. What is the limit? When are we dealing with an intrusion in somebody else's life, with a violation of a right to a private life and to anonymity? To what ethics is an autobiographic literary project subject to, apart from the author's honest wish of delivering the result of their creative effort? This question is being asked more and more frequently, and the cases of situations generating tensions, lawsuits or books withdrawal from the market are already well known. Annie Ernaux and Philippe Vilain lived a love story that each of them chose to transform into literature. Philippe Vilain comments, without major tensions and as a literary critic this relationship and the way his partner turned it into literature, especially since he agreed to the publishing of an article written by Ernaux, in which she refers to the experience they both lived. Showing how the crude transposition of reality can be the equivalent of an aggression towards the other, the writer-critic raises the problem of the ethics that the autobiographical literature must comply with. We were interested by the different relationship Vilain has with his love story, according to the hat he is wearing. On one hand, as a writer, his attitude is full of affection and vulnerability and on the other, as a literary theorist, he is detached of the emotion of the experience. Moreover, he pays full attention to the change of perspective that can happen in time, to the consequences generated by the exposure and by the power relationship between the two partners at the moment of the experience / publishing / falling apart. We are going to refer to the following novels: Vilain's *L'Étreinte* and Ernaux's *L'Occupation*, from the perspective of a problem exposed by the literary critic in his *Défense de Narcisse* – an open-heart surgery in which the objective and subjective reality meet in a tension that Vilain tries to appease, to understand and to expose as an analysis, also conceived as a wake-up call.*

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