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Murray 2 – Short Write

The Autobiography of Writing

Murray’s first example of autobiography is fairly straightforward, and derives directly from the definition of autobiography: a reflexive account of one’s life. He provides an example in the form of a poem titled “At 64, Talking Without Words.” In this poem Murray describes events in his life such as his childhood memories and the would-be age of his lost daughter. In this writing the author freely expresses memories for what they are and less for what they mean or the impact upon the author that they hold. I believe that the second method in which Murray views autobiographical writing is in the voice and personality of the author. In this form of writing, the experiences of a writer are not left of paper in a tangible form, but reside beneath the work and are available as context and influence the finished piece. Murray cites the first fifteen to twenty years of life as the basis for this experience, and leave the remaining lifespan to provide observation. Though I have not crossed the given line, I feel that this statement holds true and that the foundation of my beliefs and views have been firmly rooted in my given experiences and upbringing. By this concept of autobiography, the life of any person can be found in his or her writings, either fictional or nonfiction. In consequence to fictional writings, Murray describes that though they are not true they are still very much an autobiography. In composing a story that contains the life of a fictional character, the author utilizes experience and observations of those around him or her to assemble the person and surroundings. As writers, we take what we know and infuse it into all that we write because it makes the story more powerful to both ourselves and our audience. Murray provides a fictional poem that depicts a small boy skating over a pond, fascinated by the eye of a frozen fish. Though Murray confesses no recollection of witnessing the eye of a frozen fish while skating, he does know from what real experiences the poem drew its inspiration. Lastly, Murray presents a paradoxical view of any and all writing; that the audience of any piece is actually composing their own autobiographies. A reader will connect with a story and associate it with his or her own memories, experiences, and observations, thus making the work partly the creation of the reader. This idea of autobiographical reading means that the act of writing and the act of reading hold similar value in that they provide a very personal identity and connection regardless of their intended purpose.