

# “The Author: Who or What Is Writing Literature?”

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Contemporary literary theory examines the author's role in the creation of a literary text, as well as of (literary) culture. Representations of the author's role answer these two questions in many different ways, depending on the historical culture in which the questions appear. This situation, which still qualifies as the *contemporary* situation in literary theory, of course differs from the so-called *modern* views on literature, that is, views developed since the Renaissance period.

*Contemporary* literary theory began to re-examine the author's role in creating literature at the very moment when the role of language in creating subjectivity came under scrutiny, whereas the *modern* period had endowed the term “(literary) Author” with an “undoubtedly” clear meaning: considering the human being as a creative subject with an inherent ability to invent or reveal completely new objects, the modern tradition “invented” the word “Author” in the sense of a recognisable individual who writes (or creates in the sense of invention) a literary text. This individual text / work of art was likewise conceived as a unique combination of form and content, revealing its recognisable meanings and sense as created by the author's will, intention, and ability. In the contemporary period, the modern concept of the author has undergone some basic changes since the 1960s – changes caused by the so-called historical turn, cultural turn, and – probably the most relevant to the question of literary creation – linguistic turn. Often interdisciplinary, these have operated in the humanities, including some newly founded disciplines and theories, such as epistemology, cultural studies, cultural anthropology, women's studies, gender and queer studies, post-colonial studies, and (renewed) cultural history.

The answer to the question of “who or what is writing literature” has therefore split to pursue two possible directions.

First, the initial presupposition of reality being created by language (by a convention rather than an individual invention) has crystallised into the idea of Language writing / speaking a literary text, as well as orchestrating its reception. The author as the creative subject of a literary work of art is therefore being replaced with the concept of the intertextuality, the inherent plurality of the dialogical relationship.

And secondly, pointing out the idea of intertextuality, the presuppositions of “the death of the author” and of the “resurrection” of a text and

its reader have called into question the author's authority in the literary and cultural tradition (represented as a literary or cultural canon) and in the (cultural) politics. The author's political authority has been particularly obvious in literatures subjected to the pressure of national ideologies or political totalitarianism. Both ideological pressures have been a characteristic experience of the literatures of Europe, of the former Soviet Union, etc. The author has been conceived as a constitutive performer of cultural traditions, and thus of the means by which different political groups have been able to legitimise their power. Even if "dead", the author as a creative subject could be replaced with a cultural-political interpreter of the text. The interpreter, replacing the author of a literary text, can unite both roles: the role of an authority and of the inventive author.

In addition, the interpreter's practice may be an emancipating gesture for various social groups becoming aware of their suppression. On the other hand, such a gesture can also provide the emancipation of literature as an autonomous discourse. The "resurrection" of the author's role, even when referring to the interpreter, can also be a way of providing the autonomy, "literariness", of literary discourse.

Thematics and scopes structured by this questions are as following:

1) The Author as an individual creator and the Author in the relationship with his / her culture: the role of the Author in historical inventions of traditions, the Author as a discursive construction in constructing of the socio-political identities, the Author in producing mechanisms of the cultures. This questions have been adressed by Andrej Blatnik and Jüri Talvet.

2) The Author as a personal experience, the Author as a subject of literariness and of a literary work, the concepts of the Author in the 20th century: virtual author in the new multimedia and its intertextuality. This questions have been adressed by Mojca Kumerdej, Boris A. Novak and Florian Hartling.

3) Ancient Greek and the question "who or what is creating literary text (or: literary work of art)", Renaissance and the invention of the Author in the modern Western literary theory, authorial performativity and autobiography in the 20th century. This questions have been adressed by Jera Marušič, Marijan Dović and Gašper Troha.

4) The Author between Self and the Otherness, the Author between autobiography and heterobiography, the authorial integrity and authority from lyrical poetry over novels to the post-colonial studies. This questions have been adressed by Lucia Boldrini, Jonathan L. Hart, Varja Balžalorsky and Julia A. Sozina. Traces of this changing conceptualisation of the Author might be read in the field of concerning the literary influence. This field has been described by Lučka Urbanija.