

Introduction to Cultural Studies
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Lecture - 31
Foucault – What Is An Author - III

So hello and welcome to this NPTEL course entitled Introduction to Cultural Studies where we are looking at Michel Foucault's essay What Is An Author. So we already had 2 lectures in this particular text. We will just continue with this in this lecture and hopefully wind up in the next few lectures to come. So we are looking at the relationship between author and authority and you know how the idea of the author is a pretty important phenomenon and what are the postmodern implications of the term author etc.


These are the questions which have come up already in this particular essay and now in this the section that we are going to start with today, Foucault examines the notion of ownership that has come with the idea of authorship right. So the relationship between ownership and authorship is something that he examines in some details and also the entire legality which is invested into the formation of the identity of the author. So the author is a legal function.

The author has a societal function. The author has a cultural construct. So these are the questions which Foucault examines in this particular section that we will cover today. So it should be on your screen at the moment. So in this section where he starts to analyze the author function. So what are the implications. What are the very complex ramifications and extensions of the author function in the world that we live in today is what that Foucault is examining in this particular section.

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Let us analyze this "author function" as we have just described it. In our culture, how does one characterize a discourse containing the author function? In what way is this discourse different from other discourses? If we limit our remarks to the author of a book or a text, we can isolate four different characteristics.

First of all, discourses are objects of appropriation. The form of ownership from which they spring is of a rather particular type, one that has been codified for many years. We should note that, historically, this type of ownership has always been subsequent to what one might call penal appropriation. Texts, books, and discourses really began to have authors (other than mythical, sacralized and sacralizing figures) to the extent that authors became subject to punishment, that is, to the extent that discourses could be transgressive. In our culture (and doubtless in many others), discourse was not originally a product, a thing, a kind of goods; it was essentially an act - an act placed in the bipolar field of the sacred and the profane, the licit and the illicit, the religious and the blasphemous. Historically, it was a gesture fraught with risks before becoming goods caught up in a circuit of ownership.

Once a system of ownership for texts came into being, once strict rules concerning author's rights, author-publisher relations, rights of reproduction, and related matters were enacted - at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century - the possibility of transgression attached to the act of 

So he goes on to say and I quote him, this should be on your screen. Let us analyze this author function as we have just described it. In our culture, how does one characterize a discourse containing the author function? So you know in looking at the discursivity of the author function is something that we discussed in some details in our last lecture as well, the relationship between authority, author, and discursivity, authorship and discursivity.

The author as a discourse. The identity of the author, the formation of the author is a discourse, discursive function and now he is examining the discursive function of the author in our society. In what way is this discourse different from other discourses. If you limit our remarks to the author of a book or a text we can isolate 4 different characteristics. So he is giving you for different models, 4 different traits of the author discourse that we that is functional in the society we live in today.

So what are the 4 different discursive narratives that are invested into the idea or the identity of the author? First of all, discourses are objects of appropriation. So we have seen already the word appropriation is a very loaded word especially in culture studies. It means taking over. It means assuming something, assuming authority, assuming as a identity etc. but appropriation can often result in misappropriation and more often that not appropriation ends up being a misappropriation either assume something excessively or inadequately.

There is always a gap between the original and the assumed identity, something we have seen already in Homi Bhabha the essay that we read you know some time ago, the other question, where the question of the, the idea of appropriation becomes crucial especially in colonial politics. But over here he is looking at appropriation when he comes to author formation or author identity formation which operates as a discursive function.

So appropriation becomes a key term. Discourses are objects of appropriation. The form of ownership from which they spring is of rather particular type, one that has been codified for many years. We should note that historically, this type of ownership has always been subsequent to what one might call penal appropriation. So penal appropriation or legal appropriation or punitive appropriation is something that you know comes before the idea of appropriation of the author.

So again we are looking at the very interesting collusion between the law and authorship; a law and authority right. So who writes a book? Who is accountable for a book? Who is accountable for the content of a particular book and these become very key questions in modern parlance as Foucault examines it. So texts, books, and discourses really began to have authors other than mythical, sacralized and sacralizing figures to the extent that the authors became subject to punishment that is to the extent that discourses could be transgressive.

So in order to punish a discourse, in order to punish a transgressive act it was essential Foucault examines to identify the author of the particular act, the author of the particular discourse who could be pinpointed and held accountable for the transgression. So the author becomes a containing function one might argue. The author becomes a very convenient marker for a particular discourse.

If a discourse becomes transgressive, we can trace it back to the author and hold the author accountable for that transgression and you know punish him accordingly. So the author becomes a punitive function okay. So there is a, it is an example of penal appropriation right. So legal appropriation becomes a penal code to a certain extent. And again we are back to talking about the idea of codification.

So the author becomes a code corresponding to a particular discourse, right. So the particular discourse becomes transgressive. The content of a discourse becomes transgressive or subversive or problematic to the status quo. We can trace it back to the code which is the author. So author becomes the coded function which is more often than not penal in quality, okay. So in our culture and doubtless in many others discourses are not originally a product or discourse was not originally a product, a thing, a kind of goods. It was essentially an act.

An act placed in the bipolar field of the sacred and the profane, the licit and the illicit, the religious and the blasphemous. Historically, it was a gesture fraught with risks before becoming goods caught up in a circuit of ownership. This is a really important and complex definition of discourse. So what Foucault is doing over here, he is just historicizing discourse. So he is saying that it is absolutely clear, absolutely certain that in our society and doubtless in many more societies, discourse was originally not an act, but a process.

Again, an asymmetric entanglement, a phrase that I have used often and asymmetric entanglement of you know the sacred and the profane, the secular and the religious, the religious and the blasphemous, the legal and the illegal. So discourse was a was an entanglement, was a messy mixture of different things. Before it began an entity, before it began a commodity, before it began a frozen entity which is you know which is you know which one can have ownership on.

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been subsequent to what one might call penal appropriation. Texts, books, and discourses really began to have authors (other than mythical, sacralized and sacralizing figures) to the extent that authors became subject to punishment, that is, to the extent that discourses could be transgressive. In our culture (and doubtless in many others), discourse was not originally a product, a thing, a kind of goods; it was essentially an act - an act placed in the bipolar field of the sacred and the profane, the licit and the illicit, the religious and the blasphemous. Historically, it was a gesture fraught with risks before becoming goods caught up in a circuit of ownership.

Once a system of ownership for texts came into being, once strict rules concerning author's rights, author-publisher relations, rights of reproduction, and related matters were enacted - at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century - the possibility of transgression attached to the act of writing took on, more and more, the form of an imperative peculiar to literature. It is as if the author, beginning with the moment at which he was placed in the system of property that characterizes our society, compensated for the status that he thus acquired by rediscovering the old bipolar field of discourse, systematically practicing transgression and thereby restoring danger to a writing that was now guaranteed the benefits of ownership.

So it became a, a commodity much later became an entity much later but before that it was an activity, an entanglement, a process of becoming and unbecoming, and rebecoming. So this idea of the discourse as a process, this idea of the discourse as a phenomenon of becoming and unbecoming or rebecoming is what Foucault is examining over here and he says historically if you have to historicize discourse, any discourse for that matter, we will find out that every discourse has a process of becoming before it becomes the product which can be owned appropriate and misappropriated (()) (07:12).

But before it becomes a product it is a process of becoming and unbecoming and it is a very messy process oftentimes where a seemingly contradictory fields collide and collude and makes okay. So discourse becomes so is historicized in this particular section by Foucault and you could see how discourse can appear as a process you know or phenomenon an activity, a messy activity a very complex activity before it becomes a commodity right.

So this activity state of discourse, this activity phenomenon, this activity quality of discourse is something that Foucault is highlighting over here. Now once the systemic ownership for text came into being once strict rules concerning author's rides, author-publisher relations the rights of reproduction and related matters were enacted at the end of the eighteen and beginning of nineteenth century, the possibility of transgression attached to the act of writing took on more and more the form of an imperative peculiar to literature, right.

So once the author function was codified through a very hardcore legal system, so for instance we talk about authors having copyrights over certain content, authors again copyright is one we are saying you are accountable for that particular content. Author's having a sense of ownership over a certain content. Again, ownership can be seen as a legal code. So this particular content is written by someone, x, y, z and if that content is offensive or transgressive then x, y, z could be held accountable for it.

So again, we have a process of coding over here, a process of penal coding which is very legal in quality. So you know if you look at the entire industry of authorship, so authorship, authority or the author function becomes an industry towards eighteenth century and interestingly for those of us interested in literature we find this is also the time when the novel comes into being. So the rise in authorship and the rise of the novel are almost simultaneous in terms of historical time and the novel as you know if you read the history of the novel the novel is a very (()) (09:11) phenomenon. It was a very mercantile phenomenon.

It coincided with the rise of the merchant class and the novel is a commodity from the very inception. So the novel as a book, as a commodity, is a post printing press phenomenon and because of the post printing press phenomenon it was completely in collusion with capitalism, in collusion with the market economy and hence it was absolutely essential that the novel, the right of the novel, the author of the novel had to be qualified, had to be discursive function which would be economically underpinned as well.

So the author would now get some money as royalty. If the novel is selling well, the author gets money as a royalty, the author gets copyright of the content, the author gets copyright for the reproduction of the content etc. So it becomes a very hardcore legal economic system. It becomes enmeshed with certain legal economic principles, authorship and literature. So literature becomes increasingly legalized.

So the entire idea of literature changes post the phenomenon of the author. The literature becomes a legal activity to a certain extent. So if you write a book and if it sells well, you get

money because you are entitled by law to get money. Likewise, reversely the book is offensive, if a book offends people then there might be a libel suit against you and you as author would face that libel suit.

So I mean you can think of many examples of literature for instance James Joyce's *Ulysses*. It is a classic case in point which is banned in several countries including The United States of America where it was banned from publishing. It is only much later in the 60s that it was actually circulated for consumption in the USA. And you can think of Thomas Hardy's novels, D. H. Lawrence's novels.

I mean there are several writers, more recently Salman Rushdie, Taslima Nasreen. So many writers who have faced censorship, who have faced banning, who have faced you know public outrage because the authors of certain books the content of which is offensive so the entire legal tracing goes back to them. They can be traced back legally, they can be coded back legally and therein lies the author function as a discursive function in modern times. So it becomes the writing took more and more the form of an imperative peculiar to literature.

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concerning author's rights, author-publisher relations, rights of reproduction, and related matters were enacted - at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century - the possibility of transgression attached to the act of writing took on, more and more, the form of an imperative peculiar to literature. It is as if the author, beginning with the moment at which he was placed in the system of property that characterizes our society, compensated for the status that he thus acquired by rediscovering the old bipolar field of discourse, systematically practicing transgression and thereby restoring danger to a writing that was now guaranteed the benefits of ownership.

The author function does not affect all discourses in a universal and constant way, however. In our civilization, it has not always been the same types of texts that have required attribution to an author. There was a time when the texts we today call "literary" (narratives, stories, epics, tragedies, comedies) were accepted, put into circulation, and valorized without any question about the identity of their author, their anonymity caused no difficulties since their ancientness, whether real or imagined, was regarded as a sufficient guarantee of

So the possibility of transgression attached to the act of writing becomes an imperative peculiar to literature because literature becomes an author function post eighteenth century, post nineteenth century. It is as if the author beginning with the moment at which he was placed in the

system of property that characterizes our society compensated for the status that he thus acquired by rediscovering the old bipolar field of discourse, systematically practicing transgression and thereby restoring danger to a writing that was now guaranteed the benefits of ownership.

So you can see the words which was used by Foucault, property, transgression, benefits of ownership. So you know these are very legal economic terms that we see enmeshed with the idea of authorship, with the idea of author function especially when it comes to literature, okay. So and then he will go on to look at how the author function differs from the field of between the field of sciences and the field of literature.

So the author of a scientific book is different in terms of ownership, in terms of legality, in terms of penal coding compared to the author of a literary book. And you know he will examine, he will map up differences in some detail very soon. So he goes on to say and this should be on your screen again. The author function does not affect all discourses in a universal and constant way, however.

In our civilization, it has not always been the same types of texts that have required attribution to an author. Now he is going to talk about the different genres of work. So for instance if someone is writing a book in chemistry you know the idea of authorship of a book in chemistry is quite different from the idea of authorship from a novel about a particular period right. So again we are looking at different kinds of authorship, different orders of authorship as it were and Foucault is very careful in mapping out the differences over here.

And obviously one of the really important remarkable things about this particular essay is this constant historicization of whatever it is saying. So every idea is historicized. Every entity, every phenomenon is historicized in this particular essay and therein lies the very rich historical quality of this particular essay. So not only is it theoretical, not only is it deliciously poststructuralist.

But also it is very deeply and very systematically historical in a way it is elucidating or examining the ideas that the essay contains. So he is talking about the different times in which text functioned apropos of authorship in different ways. So there was a time and I quote, there

was a time when the text we today call literary narratives, stories, epics, tragedies, comedies were accepted, put into circulation and valorized without any question about the identity of their author, their anonymity caused no difficulties since their ancientness whether real or imagined was regarded as a sufficient guarantee of their status.

So this is obviously a preprinting press phenomenon. He is talking about classical times which is obviously times you know you know Greek and Roman times before the advent of a printing press, before the advent of capitalism, before the advent of you know the (()) (14:30) novel etc. So in that time, during that particular historical period the text which we now call literary for instance epics, stories, tragedies, comedies, they were you know put into circulation, valorized, consumed without any problem.

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ancientness, whether real or imagined, was regarded as a sufficient guarantee of

their status. On the other hand, those texts we now would call scientific - those dealing with cosmology and the heavens, medicine and illnesses, natural sciences and geography - were accepted in the Middle Ages, and accepted as "true," only when marked with the name of their author. "Hippocrates said," "Pliny recounts," were not really formulas of an argument based on authority; they were the markers inserted in discourses that were supposed to be received as statements of demonstrated truth.

Without any question about the author function, without any question about who wrote those books, okay? So that question became, was not really that important at that point of time. Now what was important at that point of time was the idea of ancientness or we could say you know for instance the Iliad is written by Homer thousands of years ago. So the ancientness, the timelessness or rather you might say the a historical quality of the text were sufficient guarantee of the veracity, right.

So the veracity very paradoxically dependent on the timelessness or a historical status, right. So you know there is no historical or cause of relation between the writer of the text and the content of the text at that point of time. Now on the other hand, those texts which we now would call scientific, those dealing with cosmology and the heavens, medicine and illnesses, natural sciences and geography were accepted in the Middle Ages and accepted as true only when marked with the name of the author, right.

So interestingly and say in a minute we will see how this entire discursive marquee is reverse in modern times. But now he is talking about ancient times, medieval times where literary text did not need not have an author, did not need to have an author. So there were ancient texts, there were holy texts, there were religious texts, there were sacred texts. So those degree of sacrality attached to literature, there is a degree of sacredness and holiness and ancientness associated with literature which completely disregarded the author function to a to a great extent.

However, at that time it was a scientific text which required the author function much more immediately. So you know people ask, for instance Foucault would say, Hippocrates said, Pliny recounts or Pliny Hippocrates. So these were names which were markers of veracity, markers of truth in scientific text. So scientific text required authors in the Middle Ages. Scientific texts were only accepted as true or you know with some degree of veracity if they had a author function, an operative author function, failing which they will not be accepted or acknowledged as scientific text at all, okay.

So you know texts of medicine and illnesses, natural sciences, geography, cosmology were accepted in the Middle Ages and accepted as true only when marked with the name of the author. So name of the author was more important for a scientific text rather than for a literary text which do not require any author function at all. The literary text were just you know they just require ancientness, a degree of sacrality associated with ancientness which gave them their ontological status, okay.

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dealing with cosmology and the heavens, medicine and illnesses, natural sciences and geography - were accepted in the Middle Ages, and accepted as "true," only when marked with the name of their author. "Hippocrates said," "Pliny recounts," were not really formulas of an argument based on authority; they were the markers inserted in discourses that were supposed to be received as statements of demonstrated truth.

A switch takes place in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Scientific discourses began to be received for themselves, in the anonymity of an established or always redemonstrable truth; their membership in a systematic ensemble, and not the reference to the individual who produced them, stood as their guarantee. The author function faded away, and the inventor's name served only to christen a theorem, proposition, particular effect, property, body, group of elements, or pathological syndrome. By the same token, literary discourses came to be accepted only when endowed with the author function. We now ask of each poetic or fictional text: From where does it come, who wrote it, when, under what circumstances, or beginning with what design? The meaning ascribed to it and the status or value accorded it depend on the manner in which we answer these questions. And if a text should be discovered in a state of anonymity – whether as a consequence of an accident or the author's explicit wish – the game becomes one of rediscovering the author. Since literary anonymity is not tolerable, we can accept it only in the guise of an enigma. As a result, the author function today plays an important role in our view of literary works. (These

So Hippocrates said, Pliny recounts were not only not really formulas of an argument based on authority, they were the markers inserted in discourses that were supposed to be received as statements of demonstrated truth. So they will only be accepted as demonstrated truth only when they had marker for an author.

So Hippocrates or Pliny they were markers of veracity, markers of you know authority, right and only when the authority was there, only when the marker of authority was there would these text be considered and consumed as you know textbooks of science you know true text books of science, okay. So this was ancient times, this was classical times that Foucault examines and now it is a complete reversal of what happens post print capitalism, post eighteenth century.

And he says quite clearly and it should be on your screen again. A switch takes place in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Scientific discourses began to be received you know for themselves, in the anonymity of an established or always redemonstrable truth. Their membership in a systematic ensemble, and not the reference to the individual who produced them stood as their guarantee.

So you know this is quite a dramatic shift which takes place in seventeen or eighteenth century where the membership of the association of the scientific text in a systematic ensemble that was good enough for their veracity, that was good enough for their truthfulness, the textural

truthfulness. So the author function was unimportant at all. It began to recede in terms of significance okay. So in the it could be anonymous. Author function could be anonymous.

It did not matter so much etc. So you know as Foucault says they began to be received for themselves. So scientific text began to be received or acknowledged for themselves. They could stand on their own ground as long as they were situated in a system of ensemble, right in a systematic ensemble and the reference of the individual became secondary. The reference of the ensemble became more crucial.

So they they are situated in a ensemble of other discourses inside a map, inside a landscape of other discourses, other scientific discourses as long as it situated within that particular map, within that particular field, the individual author function became secondary for scientific texts and this is seventeen and eighteen centuries, okay. So the author function faded away, and the inventor's name served only to christen a theorem, proposition, particular effect, property, body, group of elements or pathological syndrome.

The particular inventor's name was just their you know to christen a theorem. So you could say this particular theorem has a particular name and that name belongs to the inventor, that name belongs to the author of that particular theorem or formula or effected property of pathological syndrome. However, the syndrome could stand on its own. It did not really require any real author function as long as it existed within a particular discursive field, right and that location under discursive field becomes all important for scientific text in seventeen and eighteen centuries okay.

So we can see there is a switch happening because we just saw a few minutes earlier how Foucault examine in ancient times in the Middle Ages, no theorem or no scientific text be accepted as true unless it had an author function, okay but by the time we come to seventeen or eighteen century science becomes a discursive field and all those required of a new text is to be located or is to have some correspondence, is to have some kind of a dialogue with that particular discursive field. As soon you have that dialogue the author function becomes secondary.

It does not matter who invented it, it does not matter who author's it as long as it has some kind of a dialogic relationship with existing or dominant discursive field, okay. But what happens to literature is very important right. Just the reverse happens to literature, right. So we saw in ancient times the literary text it just stand on its own because of ancientness because of its sacrality etc.

But in seventeen and eighteen centuries literature texts could only exist only if they have an author function okay and this is what Foucault says quite clearly. By the same token, literary discourses came to be accepted only when endowed with the author function.

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A switch takes place in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Scientific discourses began to be received for themselves, in the anonymity of an established or always redemonstrable truth; their membership in a systematic ensemble, and not the reference to the individual who produced them, stood as their guarantee. The author function faded away, and the inventor's name served only to christen a theorem, proposition, particular effect, property, body, group of elements, or pathological syndrome. By the same token, literary discourses came to be accepted only when endowed with the author function. We now ask of each poetic or fictional text: From where does it come, who wrote it, when, under what circumstances, or beginning with what design? The meaning ascribed to it and the status or value accorded it depend on the manner in which we answer these questions. And if a text should be discovered in a state of anonymity – whether as a consequence of an accident or the author's explicit wish – the game becomes one of rediscovering the author. Since literary anonymity is not tolerable, we can accept it only in the guise of an enigma. As a result, the author function today plays an important role in our view of literary works. (These are obviously generalizations that would have to be refined insofar as recent critical practice is concerned. Criticism began some time ago to treat works according to their genre and type, following the recurrent elements that are enfigured in them as proper variations around an invariant that is no longer the individual creator.)

We now ask of each poetic or fictional text. From where does it come from, who wrote it, from where does it come, who wrote it, when, under what circumstances or beginning with what design. So you know the origin, the inception, the source becomes all important for literary text. So we ask this usual question, this very conventional questions that who is the author of this particular text, where does it come from, what are the material conditions which produces text etc.

What are the contextual conditions on other hand in other words which produce this particular text etc. So context, authorship, source, origin, inception, material conditions these become very important questions when it comes to literary or fictional texts. The meaning ascribed to it and

the status or value accorded to it accorded it depend on the manner in which we answer these questions.

So you know the meaning of a particular text could only be derived from the contextual conditions that you know that are being questioned; name of the author, the discursive condition, the material condition, you know the historical condition etc. So all these become important, all important rather for the text. So literary text cannot stand on its own anymore. It has to emerge out of a particular author function and the author function becomes the dominant discursive marker for literary text post seventeen and eighteenth century, okay.

And if a text should be discovered in a state of anonymity suppose we have a text which is anonymous. We do not know who wrote the text, whether as a consequence of an accident or the author's explicit wish. The game becomes one of rediscovering the author. So it becomes bit of a discovery game. So if a text emerges which does not want which does not have the name of the author it could be due to an accident, maybe the author passed away or something or it could be a deliberate decision on the part of the author.

If the author does not want to reveal themselves in the text, so if that is the case, if that phenomenon takes place the entire thing, the entire reading the text is completely invested into the discovery of the author. So we need to find out who the author is and that becomes a sole hermeneutic strategy to a certain extent, okay. Since literary anonymity is not tolerable, we can accept it only in the guise of an enigma.

So literary anonymity is like a vacuum. It cannot stay. Nature rebels vacuum. So interpretation evolves anonymity. We can have a sort of a parallel over here that Foucault is proposing. So literary anonymity is not tolerable. We can accept it only if in a guise of an enigma. So an enigma becomes a hermeneutic destination. So enigma becomes a quest to find the author.

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elements, or pathological syndrome. By the same token, literary discourses came to be accepted only when endowed with the author function. We now ask of each poetic or fictional text: From where does it come, who wrote it, when, under what circumstances, or beginning with what design? The meaning ascribed to it and the status or value accorded it depend on the manner in which we answer these questions. And if a text should be discovered in a state of anonymity – whether as a consequence of an accident or the author's explicit wish – the game becomes one of rediscovering the author. Since literary anonymity is not tolerable, we can accept it only in the guise of an enigma. As a result, the author function today plays an important role in our view of literary works. (These are obviously generalizations that would have to be refined insofar as recent critical practice is concerned. Criticism began some time ago to treat works according to their genre and type, following the recurrent elements that are enfigured in them, as proper variations around an invariant that is no longer the individual creator. Even so, if in mathematics reference to the author is barely anything any longer but a manner of naming theorems or sets of propositions, in biology and medicine the indication of the author and the date of his work play a rather different role. It is not simply a manner of indicating the source, but of providing a certain index of "reality" in relation to the techniques and objects of experience made use of in a particular period and in such-and-such a laboratory.)

So you know the absent author becomes an enigmatic presence in the literary text and the entire reading is then geared towards or directed towards finding out the author through the reading of the text. As a result the author function today plays an important role in our view of literary works. Our view of literary works, our perspective, our opinion of literary works is over determined to a great extent by the function of the author or the author function.

These are obviously generalizations that would have to be refined insofar as recent critical practice is concerned. Criticism began some time ago to treat works according to their genre and type, following the recruitment elements that enfigured in them as proper variations around an invariant that is no longer the individual creator.

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Even so, if in mathematics reference to the author is barely anything any longer but a manner of naming theorems or sets of propositions, in biology and medicine the indication of the author and the date of his work play a rather different role. It is not simply a manner of indicating the source, but of providing a certain index of "reality" in relation to the techniques and objects of experience made use of in a particular period and in such-and-such a laboratory.)

The third characteristic of this author function is that it does not develop spontaneously as the attribution of a discourse to an individual. It is, rather, the result of a complex operation that constructs a certain being of reason that we call "author." Critics doubtless try to give this being of reason a realistic status, by discerning, in the individual, a "deep" motive, a "creative" power, or a "design," the milieu in which writing originates. Nevertheless, these aspects of an individual which we designate as making him an author are only a projection, in more or less psychologizing terms, of the operations we force texts to undergo, the connections we make, the traits we establish as pertinent, the continuities we recognize, or the exclusions we practice. All these operations vary according to periods and types of discourse. We do not-construct a "philosophical author" as

So the author function in biology and medicine they have a very different kind of a discursive function compared to the author function in literature, okay. So it becomes a marker of technique, it becomes a marker of you know laboratory, it becomes a marker of experimentation etc. But not the individual marker, not the biographical marker okay.

So the biography, the biographical ontology of the author becomes more important, or one might say you know it becomes more ontologically dense when it comes to literature or literary text compared to texts in sciences, text in medicine etc. So that was the second function. The third characteristic of this author function is that it does not develop spontaneously as the attribution of a discourse to an individual.

It is rather the result of a complex operation, the constructs a certain being of reason that we call author. Okay, now this is becoming a very important definition. We are looking at author as a discursive construct obviously. It is a result of a complex operation that constructs a certain being of reason that we call author. So author becomes a reasonable construct, a construct of reason.

We just saw a little while ago how Foucault had examined quite closely the collision between the idea of the author and the penal code, the legal codes; the author as a legal function, the author as a legal marker of a particular text. So it becomes a construct of reason to a great extent. Critics

doubtless try to give this being of reason a realistic status by discerning in the individual a deep motive, a creative power, or a design the milieu in which writing originates.

So you know conventional criticism talks about deep motive, the motivation of the author, the creative power, the imagination of the author or the design of the text etc. or the milieu, the design of the milieu, the condition in which the writing originates. So these are the dominant markers when it comes to reading a text, okay the motivation of the author, the creative power of the author, the imagination of the author which is examined or the design, the discursive apparatus of the cultural conditions of the milieu. So the surroundings, the context which produce the text.

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recognize, or the exclusions we practice. All these operations vary according to periods and types of discourse. We do not-construct a "philosophical author" as

we do a "poet," just as in the eighteenth century one did not construct a novelist as we do today. Still, we can find through the ages certain constants in the rules of author construction.

It seems, for example that the manner in which literary criticism once defined the author – or, rather, constructed the figure of the author beginning with existing texts and discourses – is directly derived from the manner in which Christian tradition authenticated (or rejected) the texts at its disposal. In order to "rediscover" an author in a work, modern criticism uses methods similar

Nevertheless, these aspects of an individual in which we designate as making him an author only a projection, in more or less psychologizing terms of the operations we force texts to undergo, the connections we make, the rituals we, the traits we establish as pertinent, the continuities we recognize or the exclusions we practice.

So these become markers, these become psychologizing terms in which the author function is projected. So the author function is projected using these particular terms, imagination, motivation, you know contextual conditions etc. These become the markers of projection of the

author, the author function, okay. all these operations vary according to periods and types of discourse.

We do not construct a, we do not construct a philosophical author as we do a poet. Just as in the eighteenth century we do not construct a novelist as we do today. Still we can find through the ages certain constants in the rules of author construction. So he talks about different kinds of author constructions dependent on different historical period. So he says the way a philosophical author for instance the way we construct the author function on Nietzsche would be quite different from the way we construct the author function of James Joyce.

Or the way we construct the author function of Daniel Defoe in eighteenth century will be very different from the way we construct the author function of Daniel Defoe in twenty first century. So it depends on the milieu, it depends on the genre, it depends on the discursive field through which you know the author function is constructed, okay. However, Foucault argues we can still find through certain ages, certain constants, there are certain constants in the rules of author construction.

So you know nevertheless there are certain constants that we can sort of dig up that we can excavate, that we can mark as commonalities of author function across periods, across different genres, okay. So we will stop this lecture at this point today and we will continue with this very interesting essay which you will agree in the next lectures to come. Thank you for your attention.