CLITG001: MODERN LITERARY THEORY

FOUR-WEEK SEMINAR

AUTHORSHIP: HISTORY, THEORY, POLITICS

Course tutor: Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen

Seminar description:
We cannot ask the question 'what is literature' without at the same time asking 'what is an author'? Conversely we cannot theorise the literary text without relating it to questions of authorship. This seminar will introduce to the debate over and theories about authorship from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. A crucial fault-line in recent discussions about the digitization of literary works of art is the question of ownership - the seemingly natural right of the author to his or her intellectual property. But the author as the singular proprietor of the literary work is a fairly recent construction, and it has been challenged from different perspectives in the twentieth century, e.g. by the theories of structuralism, poststructuralism, reader-response theory, new historicism gender studies, law and literature and textual studies. This seminar will investigate the figure of the author as it has been constructed and re-evaluated by changing theoretical and philosophical paradigms of aesthetics, politics and the literary work of art.

Key Words: authorship, copyright, intentionality, hermeneutics, linguistics, poststructuralism, formalism, paratext, electronic literature, textuality, hypertext, materiality, print culture, death-of-the-author, intermediality, digital culture, remediation, photography, writing, reading, globalisation

Suggested Reading List:

Seminar Reader:
Sean Burke, ed., *Authorship from Plato to the Postmodern. A Reader*, Edinburgh UP, 1995

Week 1: The Origin(s) of Authorship (Theory)
Andrew Bennett, *The Author*, Routledge, 2004
David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, eds., *The Book History Reader*, Routledge, 2002.
Friedrich A. Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, transl. by Michael Metteer, Stanford UP, 1990
Walter J Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, Routledge, 1982
Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: Invention of Copyright*, Harvard UP, 1995
Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market*, Columbia UP 1994

Week 2: The Modern Author: Linguistics, Intentionality, Interpretation
Emile Benveniste, "Subjectivity in Language" in *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. by Mary Elizabeth Meeks, U of Miami P, 1971, pp. 223-230.
Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve "What Is a Classic?" in *Literary and Philosophical Essays*. The Harvard Classics Vol 32, P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14.
Edward Young, from "Conjectures on Original Composition", in Sean Burke, ed., *Authorship from Plato to the Postmodern. A Reader*, Edinburgh UP, 1995, pp. 37-42.
René Wellek and Austin Warren, "The Mode of Existence of a Literary Work of Art", in *Theories of Literature*, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956, pp. 20-28.
W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, from "The Intentional Fallacy", in Sean Burke, ed., *Authorship from Plato to the Postmodern. A Reader*, Edinburgh UP, 1995, pp. 90-100.

Week 3: The Postmodern Author: Inter-Textuality, Ideology and the Birth of the Reader
Carla Benedetti , *The Empty Cage: Inquiry into the Mysterious Disappearance of the Author*, transl. by William J. Hartley, Cornell UP, 2005

Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, Edinburgh UP, 2008 (1992)
Stanley Fish, *Is there a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Harvard UP, 1980
Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition*, Princeton UP, 1991
Alexander Nehamas, "Writer, Text, Work, Author" in Anthony Cascardi, ed. *Literature and the Question of Philosophy*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1987, pp. 265-291.
Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*. Northwestern UP, 1991
Susan Stewart, *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation*. Oxford UP, 1991

Week 4: Authorship in an Era of Hyper-Textuality and Globalisation

Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing*, Erlbaum, 2001
Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, The MIT P, 2001
Robert Darnton, *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future*, Public Affairs, 2009
N. Katherine Hayles, *Writing Machines,* MIT Press, 2002
N. Katherine Hayles, *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary*, U of Notre Dame P, 2008
George P. Landow, *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization*, Johns Hopkins UP, 2006.
Jerome J. McGann, *Radiant Textuality: Literature after the World Wide Web*. Palgrave, 2001
Eva Hemmungs Wirtén, *No Trespassing: Authorship, Intellectual Property Rights, and the Boundaries of Globalization*, U of Toronto P, 2004