

## What is an Author?: Outline

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### I. Moment of individualization in history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, sciences

- A. Relationship of text and author
- B. Beckett: 'what does it matter who is speaking?'
  - 1. Immanent rule of contemporary writing
  - 2. Free from dimension of expression
  - 3. Writing's relation to death: become a voluntary effacement of author
- C. False notions of replacement that actually preserve privilege of author
  - 1. The work
  - 2. Writing

### II. Locate the space left empty by author's disappearance

- A. Author's name; 'paradoxical singularity'
  - 1. Proper name problems
  - 2. Author's name plays classificatory role (grouping of texts)
  - 3. Marks 'appearance of a certain discursive set'
- B. The 'author function'
  - 1. Discourses as objects of appropriation
  - 2. Historical differences
  - 3. Not spontaneous development, but result of complex operation
  - 4. Some constants in author function: Christian tradition: St. Jerome
    - a. Value
    - b. Coherence
    - c. Stylistic unity
    - d. Historical figure
  - 5. Internal references to several selves

### III. Transdiscursive authors

- A. Authors of theories, traditions, disciplines
- B. 19th C: 'founders of discursivity': Marx, Freud
  - 1. Made possible differences (unlike analogies w/in genre)
  - 2. Initiates heterogenous subsequent transformation (unlike reactivation in science)
  - 3. Return to origin that modifies discursive field

### IV. Conclusion: why is this important?

- A. Theoretical reasons
  - 1. Approach to a typology of discourse
  - 2. Introduction to historical analysis of discourse
  - 3. Re-examine privileges of subject
- B. 'Ideological' status of author
  - 1. Author [as 'principle of thrift'] = figure of our fear of proliferation of meaning
  - 2. Disappearance of author function; discourses in the 'anonymity of a murmur'