



Call for papers

Authored Cultures / Authoring Cultures Negotiating Control over Media Texts

Toruń, 7-8 December 2018Department of English, Nicolaus Copernicus University

The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author. (Roland Barthes, 1967)

Can the reader survive the death of the author? (Cornel Sandvoss, 2007)

Half a century ago Roland Barthes proclaimed the death of the author and welcomed the birth of the reader. His influential essay was instrumental in redefining the place of the author and the reader in the process of interpretation and negotiation of meanings, questioning the traditional discourses of authorship and decentralizing authorial practices. For most critics, the "death" of the Author freed scholarship from the "tyranny" of biography, unity of meaning and authorial control, and prepared the ground for the emergence of alternative authors, decentred, multiple and marginalized, just as it created the space for the appearance of new kinds of active readers. For others, this "death" meant the denial of agency to groups that were only just beginning to have their claim to authorship recognized, uncannily silencing the subversive potential of non-hegemonic authors. More recently, the changes connected with the expansion of participatory cultures further redefined the status and role of authors and readers, upgrading the latter from the position of textual poachers (Michel de Certeau) to that of prosumers and content producers (Henry Jenkins). In the context of fandom, the relation between authority of the author and fans' activity is particularly problematic – as Cornel Sandvoss suggests, "the fate of the author and reader are rather more intertwined than Barthes suggests", and the act of fans' reading is transformed into "audience activity." Finally, the development of new media has significantly influenced the roles of readers and authors, as exemplified by Alan Kirby's presentation of digimodernist authorship as multiple and hierarchical, one that could be described in terms of "layers of authorship", both "ubiquitous" and "nowhere," a site of "restless creativity and energy," of appropriating and re-appropriating media texts.



During this conference, we would like to look into various conceptualizations of authorship to examine the theoretical and practical transformations of the roles of authors and readers. We wish to inquire into how the notion of authorship differs geographically and historically, across various media texts and in various practices of translation and adaptation. Authorship has been customarily linked with questions of (moral) responsibility for the meanings embedded in a text and with issues of (financial and intellectual) ownership; accordingly, we wish to address the problems of accountability and the changing modes of production, dissemination and ownership of texts. While in numerous accounts some kind of transformed authorship has been presented as a key element of contemporary culture — whether participatory or network — with readers / viewers / users being granted more interpretive freedom and textual power, we would like to complement this narrative of empowerment with explorations of the effects of globalisation and transnational hegemony that may jeopardise the emancipatory potential of these practices of authoring and re-appropriating texts.

We invite papers approaching the problem of authorship from a variety of perspectives — both theoretical and practical — and in multiple disciplines, ranging from literary theory and criticism to cultural and media studies, game studies, fandom studies, fan fiction studies, feminist theory and criticism, disability studies, film and adaptation studies, theatre and performance studies, and translation studies.

Suggested themes include but are not limited to:

- Authorship: contested, (re)negotiated, (re)confirmed, (de)constructed
- Author(ity), power and control
- Gendering, decolonising and queering authorship: situating marginalised authors
- Questioning normativity: authorship and disability
- Subversive strategies and techniques for contesting and re-writing media texts
- Performing, narrating, and personalizing culture
- Authorship and transmedia storytelling
- Dissemination of texts and meanings; ownership and responsibility
- New models of authorship and readership for new media (digimodernist, participatory or network authorship)
- Remix culture, digital practices in art, poetry, fiction, theatre, music and media; ergodic literature
- Bloggers, vloggers, youtubers: authors on/of social media
- Authorship in game texts: developers, sponsors, scriptwriters
- Indie games, fan games, mods and other game paratexts
- Authors, prosumers or/and content creators
- Construction of community (of readers, viewers, users)
- Translation and authorship
- Authorship and ghostwriting
- Intertextuality, adaptation, appropriation
- Devising and collective creation
- Death of the reader



Abstracts of 150-200 words, containing the title of the presentation and the author's name and affiliation, accompanied by a short biographical note, should be sent to the following address: authoredculturesconf@gmail.com.

For more information, see the conference website: https://authoredcultures.wordpress.com/.

Abstracts submission deadline: 15 July 2018

Notification of acceptance: 22 July 2018

Conference fee: 450 PLN (110 EUR)

Reduced fee (PhD students): 300 PLN (75 EUR)

The fee covers coffee breaks, conference dinner, conference materials and the cost of publication. It does not cover costs of travel or accommodation.

Confirmed keynote speakers:

Prof. Mia Consalvo, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada **Dr Anna Backman Rogers**, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Organizing committee:

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