



Babeş-Bolyai University
Faculty of Letters
Comparative Literature Department
Doctoral School of Linguistic and Literary Studies

**THE ECOLOGY OF "AUTHORIAL ASCENSION":
THEORIES AND PRACTICES OF AUTHORSHIP IN
THE AGE OF DIGITAL GLOBALIZATION**

(1980 – 2020)

Summary

Doctoral student:

Alexandru-Ioan Ciorogar

Scientific advisor:

Prof. Univ. Dr. Corin Braga

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KEYWORDS:

author, authorship, authorial theories, authorship studies, the birth of the author, the sacralization of the author, the death of the author, the return of the author, the ascension of authorship, authorial ecologies, authorial ecosystem, posture, iconography, literary celebrity, plural actor, the author's intentions, the author function, the implied author, collective author, world author, international author, transnational author, world literature, author's career, authorial responsibility, the translator as author, copyrights, the posthuman author, digital authorship, the stylistics of existence, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Seán Burke, Ingo Berensmeyer, the era of digital globalization, biography, contemporary literary historiography, the history of concepts, Bruno Latour, Reinhart Koselleck, actor-network theory, the ecology of knowledge, metamodernism, somaesthetics.

SUMMARY:

The present doctoral thesis has suffered from a series of significant transformations. The initial project was dedicated to mapping out the main research directions in contemporary literary studies. While I have indeed abandoned this project, my theoretical ambitions remained in place. My thesis is dedicated to the inquiry of authorship and the ways in which literary studies has transformed this concept, both theoretically and practically. I am especially interested in the period between 1980 and 2020.

The modern field of authorship studies began with Roland Barthes' „Death of The Author” and Michel Foucault's „What is an Author?”. However, what is currently lacking is an examination of contemporary forms of creative subjects. This is why we have to investigate different disciplines and fields of research, while also taking into consideration the context of digital globalization. Recent studies in the field actually stop at Barthes and Foucault, as if research hasn't evolved at all. Philosophically speaking, there is no new conceptual framework for discussing creative practices beyond the famous return of the author. Our investigation will look at both sociological types of research, as well as aesthetic problems.

My research project will dwell, as I said, on issues of authorship in order to reveal the pattern behind theory's evolution. How did this notion develop/evolve since the 1960's? I will try answering this question by looking at a large palette of contemporary critical reflections that touch upon this problem. Consequently, I will try answering the following question: what happened after the author's famous return? It is thus crucial to my research to acknowledge the enormous impact of recent technical and material conditions brought about by the digital revolution. Facing a new paradigm or an epistemological revolution, scholars have sought different solutions to recent problems: for instance, Antoine Compagnon suggested we should employ a commonsensical re-investigation of all the basic concepts of literary theory. In this line of thought, my project will examine the ways in which the new millennium reassessed the notion of the author (or authorship) by taking a quick glance at the already classicized works about the author (Barthes, Foucault), while also discussing a series of recent reflections concerning: (1) the new (digital) technical and material conditions of authorship; (2) texts which philosophically redefine the status and the nature of authorship; (3) while also looking at sociological descriptions; (4), and, finally surveying a small range of author-related contemporary writing/reading practices.

Furthermore, from Cultural Memory Studies, to Geopolitical strands, from Post-colonialism to Distant Reading, from Community Studies to World Literature, from Cosmopolitanism to the World Republic of Letters, recent scholarship has actually failed in understanding the prospect of being an individual writer in the Web of a Networked collectivity. Diachronically, the vast majority of theoretical and/or critical approaches available today have spawned from the intellectual pool of the 90's: the so-called Digital Humanities, Neo-Darwinist aesthetics and many others. This is to say that there are at least two major directions in contemporary cultural debates: the (trans)disciplinary directions which still legitimize themselves from the fundamental ideas of postmodernism and,

adversely, those which could be defined in opposition to postmodernity's basic ideological constructions. Strangely enough, they strive in answering the same set of questions: What is the Subject? Do the author's intentions really matter? How can we live together as a community? How does one lead a good life?

All my comments will be carefully embedded in a larger anthropological framework: Post-Humanism and New Materialism, to name just a hefty few. Accompanied by the neoliberal crisis of the Humanities, these changes call for a complete (re)evaluation of the basic concepts of the literary practice. While we can never offer a clear, stable or fixed definition for authorship, we must (now more than ever) determine its constitutive ambiguities.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN PARTS OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS:

It should be added, finally, that, as the table of contents indicates, the first part of the thesis contains no less than four chapters in which the discussion begins with an analysis of the controversial status of individual subjects, followed by attempts to define and limit the concept of authorship. The first part concludes with an overview of the employed methodology and a brief description of the historical context in question. The next part also contains four chapters, two of them being devoted to the exposition of the central moments in the history of modern authorship theories ("the death and the return of the author"). The other two, however, discuss (a) the history and relevance of the authorial function and how it could be integrated into larger existential stylistics, and (b) the significance of the new authoritative regime ("the author's exaltation"). Thought of as an illustrative collection, the last and most comprehensive part of the thesis discusses a series of central theories and hypotheses of contemporary authorship: the digital author, the posthuman author, the world author, the transnational author, the international author, the author as translator, the collective author, the implied author, the metamodern author, the intentional author, and authorial posturality.