

# The Conscious Practitioner

Week 3 - The Politics of Authorship

# Authorship

- Authorship: The **state** or **fact** of being **a** writer of a book, article, document, or **a** creator of a work of art.
- Question:
  - Can a piece of writing or a work of art be author-less? If so, give some examples.
  - Is author equal to creator?

# Auteur theory

From the Jean-Luc Godard to Hideo Kojima

- Auteur: “A film creator who influence their films so mach that they rank as their author”
- An auteur is an artist with a **distinctive** approach.
- Auteur theory, initialised in film (the French New Wave) then applied to other form of art, emphasis the influence of an author/creator to the work.
- Discuss: which artist/filmmaker/director you think is an auteur of their work?

# Critics on the auteur

Cecilia Sayad and Helen Stoddart

- The auteur theory
  - Seeks a real person behind the film
  - Celebrates directors without a critical perspective
  - Create a devotion similar to super fandom
- “The author’s voice inevitably haunts the work as something either considered or ignored”
- It creates a (false image of) **heroic** artist — director cut
- Hierarchy of the creators and the directors

# Authorship in the industry

- Think about film posters, video game trailers, or other kind of advertisements for an cultural product. Who's name can you find on them?
- Is all the names appeared in the same way?
- What is the function of those names?



# Author function

- Michel Foucault : “The author function”
  - Pointing by name to a person creates a designation
  - The designation enables categorising
  - The categorising produce status in our culture
  - The categorising infer meaning of the work, revealing or characterising it
- Discuss: what can the author function used for? (Hint: think about how books are display in bookstore and how movies are advertised)

# The author is dead and revived

- Roland Barthes, 1967, "The Death of the Author": Analysis and critiques of a text should come from individual readers' interpretation rather than relying on the intention and biography of an author. "The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author."
- Also Roland Barthes, 1973, "The Pleasure of the Text": "As institution, the author is dead ... but in the text... I desire the author"; "readerly" text: provides pleasure, does not challenge the reader's position as a object, and "writerly" text: provides jouissance (great joy, orgasm), allows reader to break out from the object position, to be in a more active role
- Discuss: Do you think an author is important in film, book, or other kind of media? Can you analyse a work without knowing who's the author?

# The author is dead and revived

- Another reason an author might be needed is authorship is important for marginalised audiences, which related to identity politics (Andy Medhurst, 1991, “The special thrill: Brief Encounter, Homosexuality, and Authorship”)
- E.g Cholé Zhao won the golden man with her Nomad’s Land
- For works made by people from minority groups, knowing the author will help us better understand and analyse the works (characters, stories, etc.)
- Do you agree with this argument?



# Writings on authors

- This week you were tasked to collect a piece of media discussing an artist and their work. Now please from group of 3-4 and complete the following exercises:
  - Show and introduce your chosen piece of media, which artist/artwork is it about?
  - What opinions about the artist are expressed in your chosen piece of media?
  - What opinions about the artwork are expressed in your chosen piece of media?

# Writing on authors

- In your group, now discussing the following:
  - Does your chosen piece of media talk about the creative process of the artist? If so what's that?
  - Does your chosen piece of media express anything about the authorship of the work?
  - Does your chosen piece of media mention the identity of the artist? Does it link the identity to the artwork? If so, how?
  - Does your chosen piece of media link the artist personal life to the artwork? If so, how?

# Writing on authors

- Now discussing the following:
  - Do you agree on the opinions expressed in your chosen piece of media? Why or why not?
  - If you were asked to write a piece for the artist/artwork, what would be your approach? What will you write about?