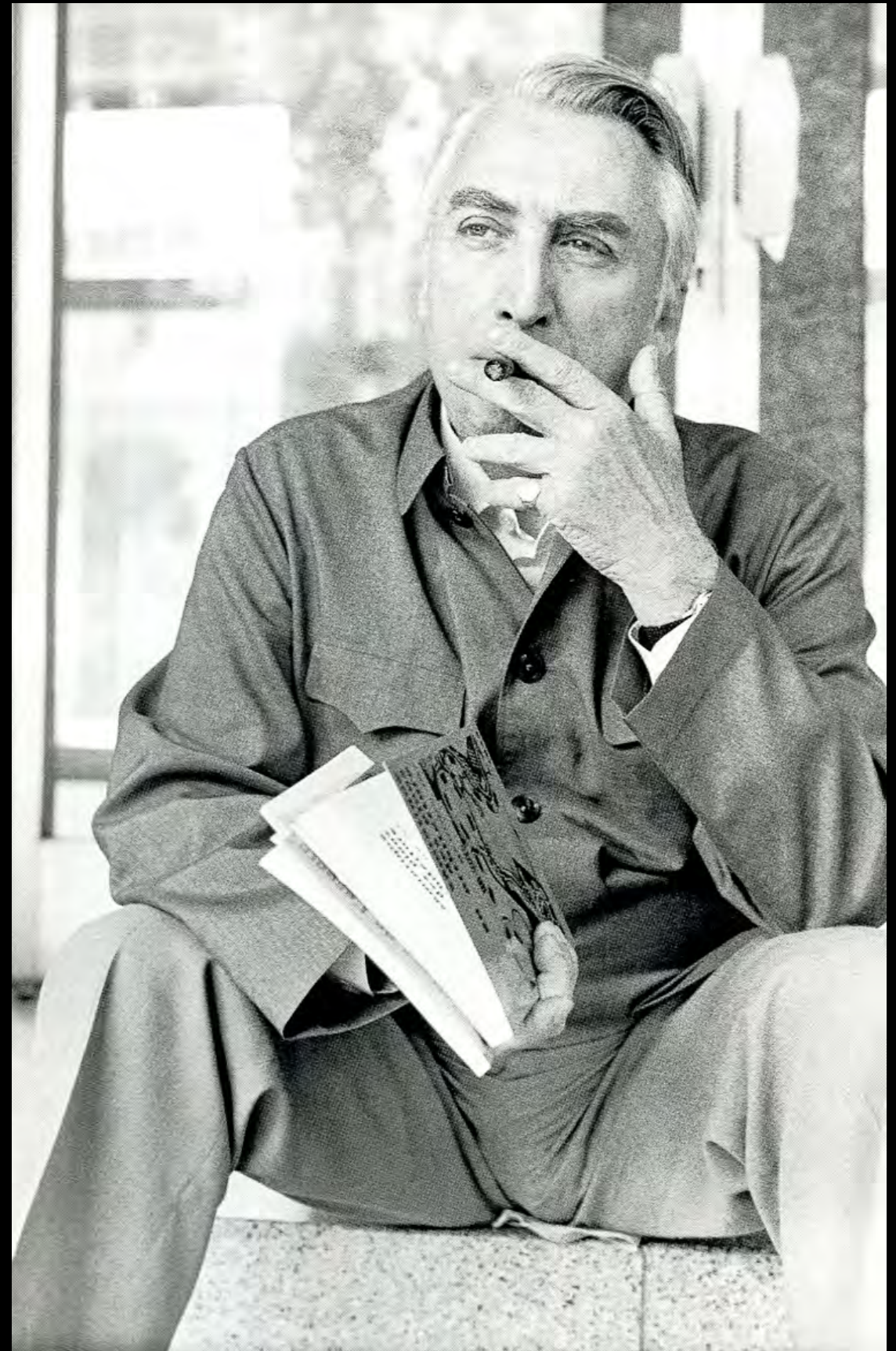


- Main point (or points)?
- Why does it matter?

The Death of the Author

Roland Barthes
1967



“The author is a modern figure, a product of our society insofar as . . . it discovered the prestige of the individual.”



Miró.

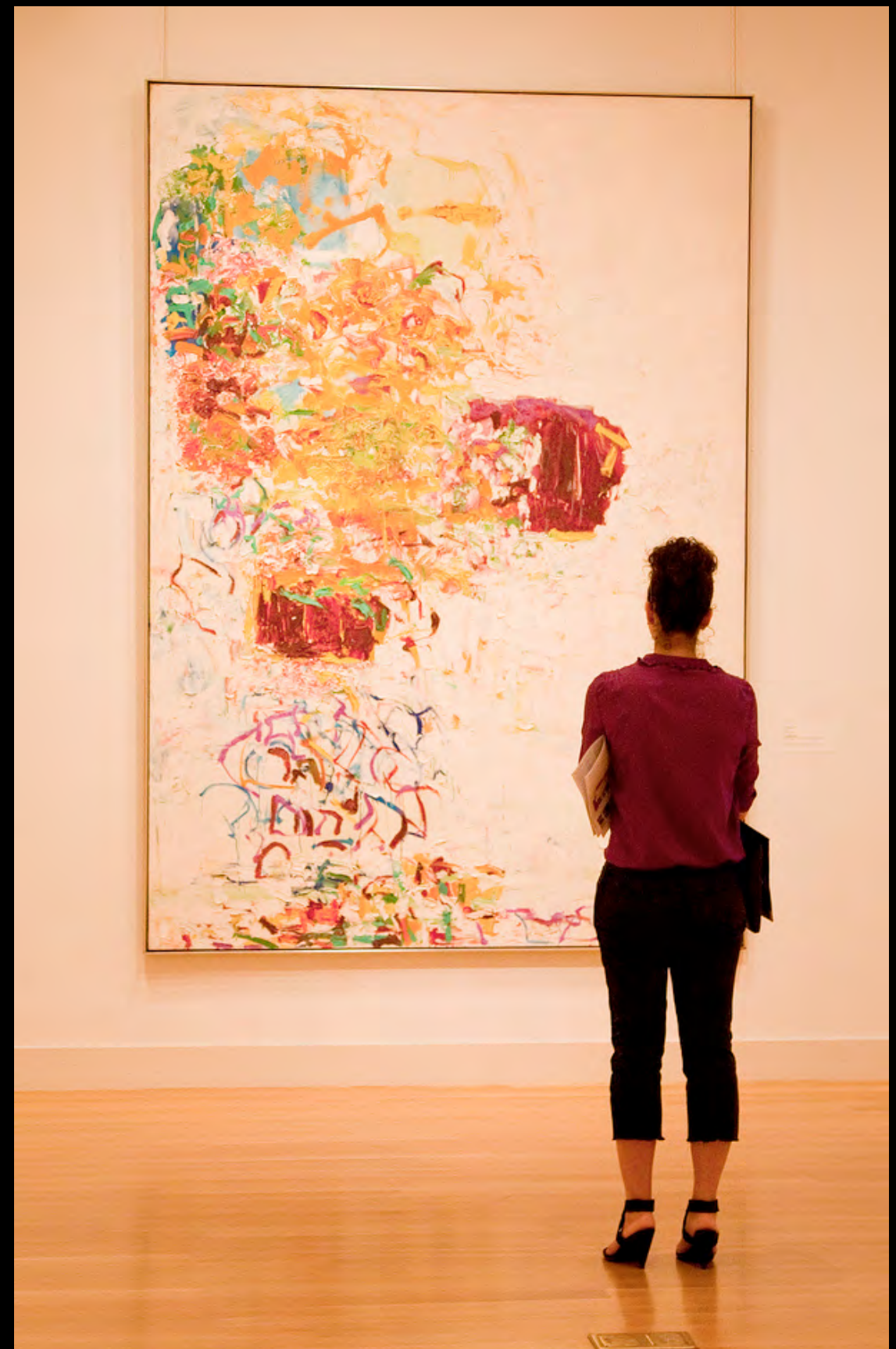
H. Matisse

“To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing. Such a conception suits criticism very well, the latter then allotting itself the important task of discovering the Author (or its hypostases: society, history, psyche, liberty) beneath the work: when the Author has been found, the text is 'explained' - victory to the critic.”

*“every text is eternally
written *here and now*.”*

*“the true place of the
writing . . . is reading”*

*“The reader is the space on
which all the quotations that
make up a writing are
inscribed without any of
them being lost; a text's
unity lies not in its origin but
in its destination.”*



“Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that *someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted.”

What kinds of discourse
do we attribute an Author?

What is an Author?

Michel Foucault
1967



“It is not enough . . . to repeat the empty affirmation that the author has disappeared. Instead, we must locate the space left empty by the author's disappearance, follow the distribution of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings its disappearance uncovers.”

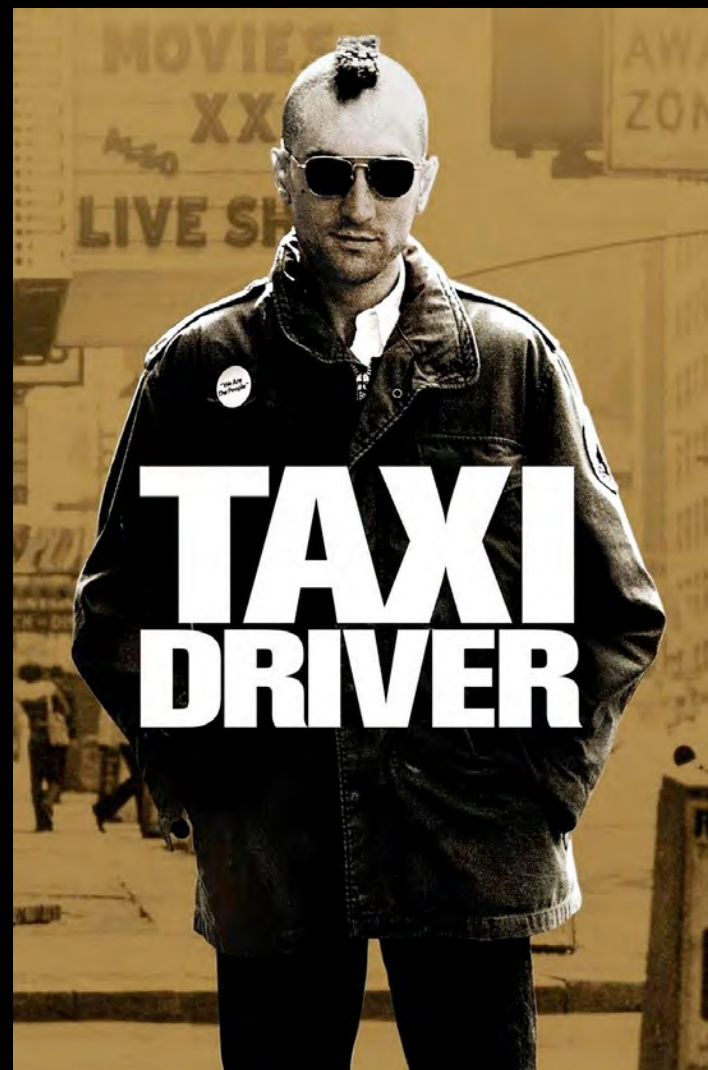
Four Characteristics of the “Author Function”

- Linked to the juridical and institutional system that encompasses, determines, and articulates the universe of discourses.
- It does not affect all discourses in the same way at all times and in all types of civilizations
- It is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a discourse to its producer, but, rather, by a series of specific and complex operations.
- It does not refer purely and simply to a real individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to different selves, to several subjects – positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals.

juridical and institutional system



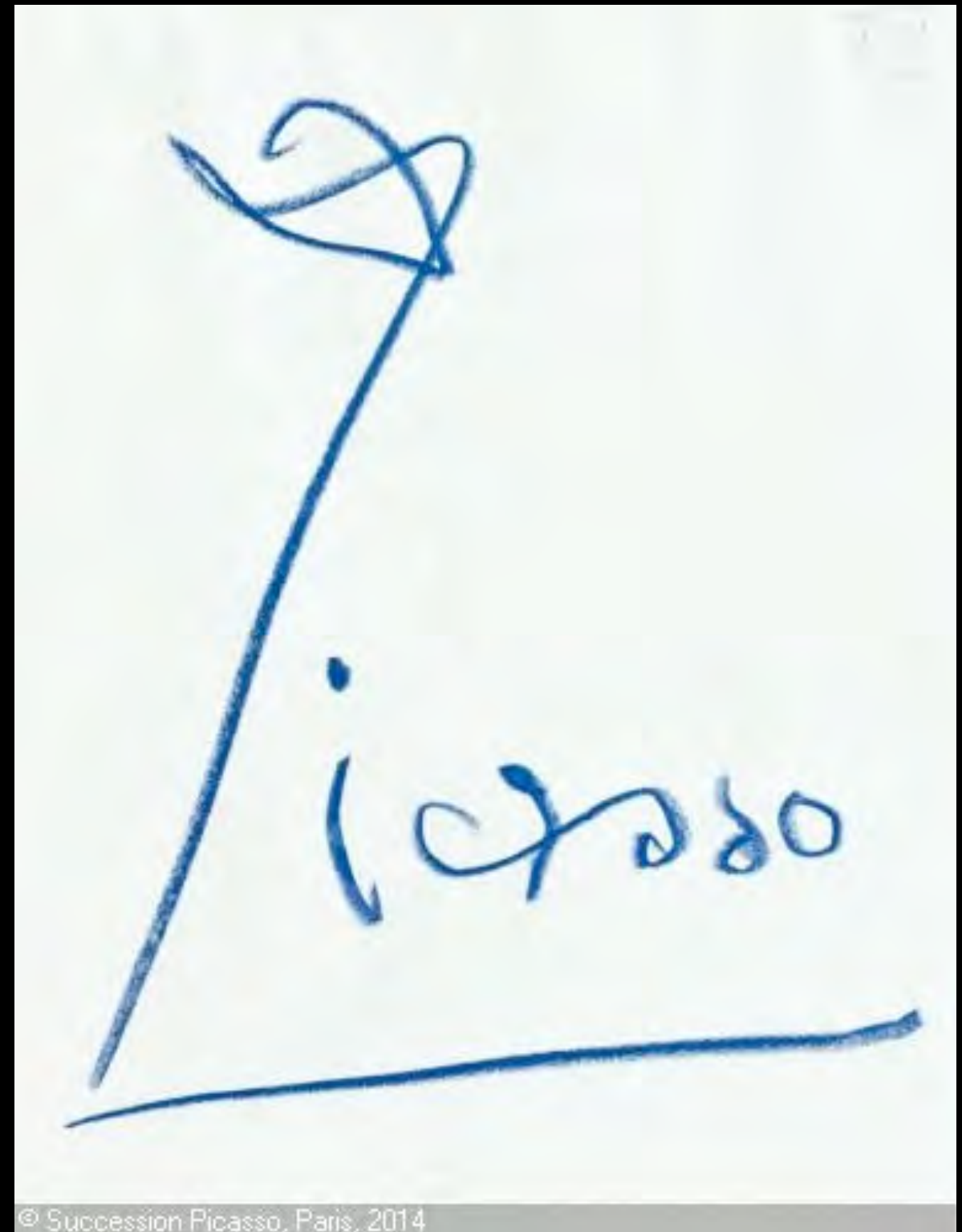
does not affect all
discourses in the same way



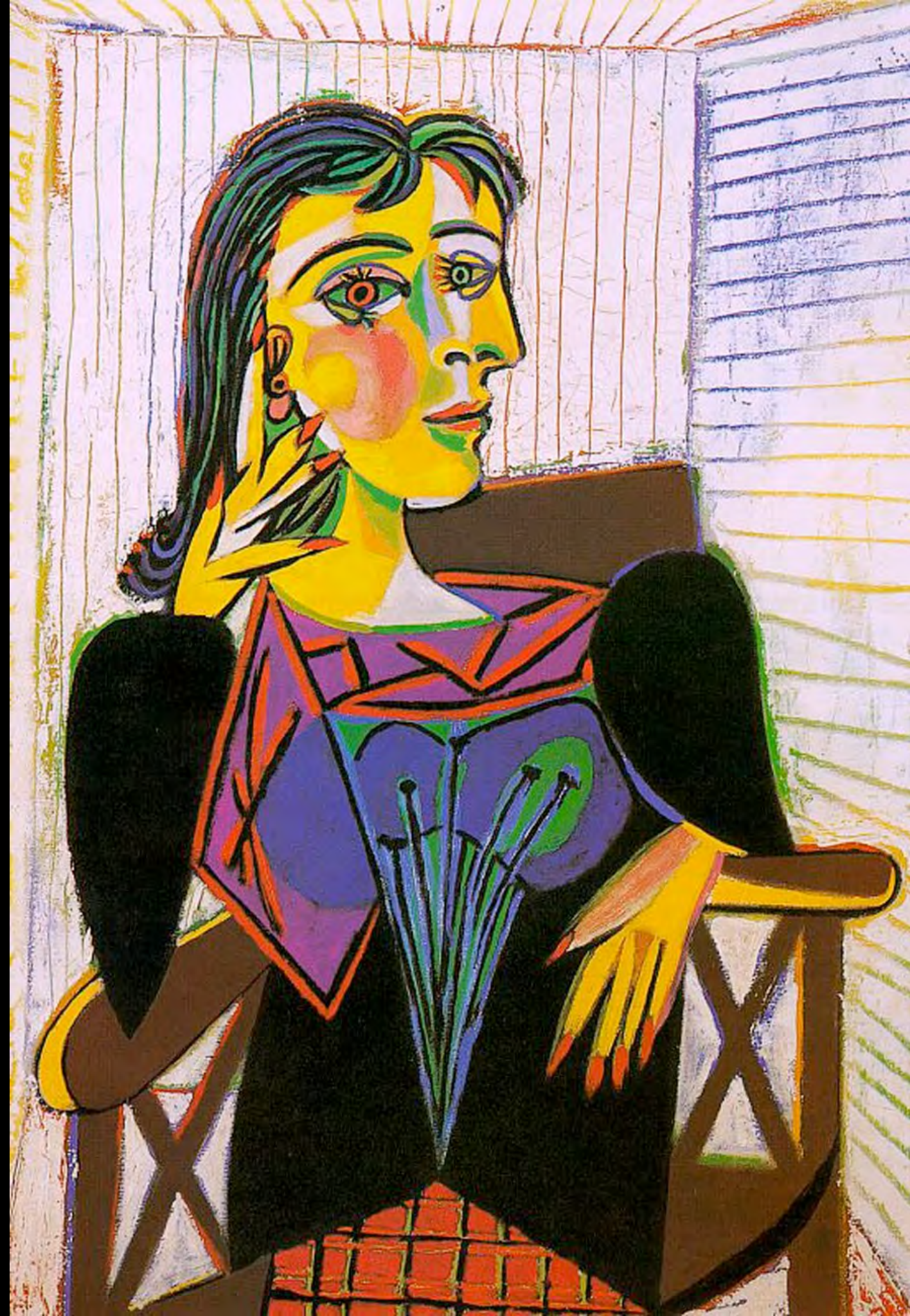
The Author's Name

serves “a classificatory function. Such a name permits one to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others.”

* Status *



© Succession Picasso, Paris, 2014







The “author-function” is the result of a
“complex operation” that “constructs a
certain being of reason we call
‘author.’”

The author can *neutralize*
contradictions across different texts.















Four Characteristics of the “Author Function”

- Linked to the juridical and institutional system that encompasses, determines, and articulates the universe of discourses.
- It does not affect all discourses in the same way at all times and in all types of civilizations
- It is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a discourse to its producer, but, rather, by a series of specific and complex operations.
- It does not refer purely and simply to a real individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to different selves, to several subjects – positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals.

“In short, it is a matter of depriving the subject . . . of its role as originator, and of analyzing the subject as a variable and complex function of discourse.”

–Michel Foucault