

**Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" (1969)**

discourse-- concepts and theoretical relationships within a work

discursive units: natural history, political economy

author function-- text points to a figure who is outside text and who precedes text

Beckett: "What matter who's speaking?"

aligns with pastiche

-- does it matter who has the authorial voice?

--116/ the basis of writing is not

the exalted emotions related to the act of  
composition

(or the insertion of a subject into language)...

rather,

it is concerned with creating an opening where  
the writing subject endlessly disappears

Death of the author; writing today kills the author

|| the author has disappeared

Nietzsche: god and man died a common death

123/ the author's name is not a fx of a man's civil status...

nor is it fictional...

it is situated in the breach...

among the discontinuities..

which gives rise to new groups of discourse  
and their

singular mode of existence

when did this shift in author function happen?

125/ late 18th c., when ownership and copyright rules were established

this is when the transgressive properties of writing became the forceful imperative of literature

the author function rises out of the scission (division and distance) between the actual writer and the fictional narrator

author function is tied to the legal/institutional systems  
that define and articulate discourses

\*\*\*131/ produce the possibility and the rules of formation of other texts...

i.e. they don't just produce their own work  
they establish the endless possibility of discourse