

Lecture 5: Into Modernity

1) Inspiration vs. Imitation Revisited

2) Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie* (1595)

3) Authorship in Shakespeare's *Sonnets* (1609)

1) Inspiration vs. Imitation Revisited

Antiquity:	Inspiration	vs.	Imitation
	<i>poeta vates</i>		<i>poeta faber</i> <i>poeta doctus</i>
		[authority resides in]	
	transcendence (God)		immanence (rules/models) (reality/nature)

→ 'availability' vs. 'non-availability' of authority (cf. Scholz 1999)

Middle Ages:	Christianity	→	Church
	(mysticism) the Bible (God as Author)	→	institutionalized religion dogma/authority of the Catholic Church/canon of 'auctores' (Church Fathers and Christian readings of classics)
	↓ individual faith the Reformation Protestantism		
		→	[immanentization/secularization]

Medieval Authorship (cf. Bein 1999):

→ authorial signature as a cultural practice in the Middle Ages

a) collective oral anonymity vs. individualized anonymity in writing

- epic anonymity (vs. *Parzival*) ⇔ naming/identification of author admissible in prologue, epilogue, excursus
- lyric anonymity ⇔ presence of speaker/singer

b) 'Eigensignatur'

- placing epic in tradition or social context
- implicit and explicit signatures in poetry (personae vs. historical speakers?)

vs. 'Fremdsignatur'

- poets referring to poets (names stand for poetic positions and particularities) → names mark points of reference in discourse about literature
- pragmatic ordering function, e.g. in manuscript collections

2) Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defense of Poesy* (1595)

When the right vertuous E.W. and I were at the Emperours Court together, wee gave our selves to learne horsemanship of Jon Pietro Pugliano, one that with great commendation had the place of an Esquire in his stable: and hee according to the fertillnes of the Italian wit, did not onely affoord us the demonstration of his practise, but sought to enrich our mindes with the contemplations therein, which he thought most precious. But with none I remember mine eares were at any time more loaden, then when (either angred with slow paiment, or mooved with our learnerlike admiration) hee exercised his speech in the praise of his facultie. [...]

[N]ay to so unbleeved a point he proceeded, as that no earthly thing bred such wonder to a Prince, as to be a good horseman. Skill of government was but a Pedenteria in comparison, then would he adde certaine praises by telling us what a peerless beast the horse was, the one serviceable Courtier without flattery, the beast of most bewtie, faithfulnessse, courage, and such more, that if I had not beene a peece of a Logician before I came to him, I thinke he would have perswaded me to have wished myselfe a horse. But thus much at least, with his no few words he drave into me, that selflove is better than any guilding, to make that seem gorgious wherein ourselves be parties.

Wherein if Pulianos strong affection and weake arguments will not satisfie you, I will give you a nearer example of my selfe, who I know not by what mischance in these my not old yeares and idlest times, having slipt into the title of a Poet, am provoked to say something unto you in the defence of that my unelected vocation, which if I handle with more good will, then good reasons, beare with me, since the scholler is to be pardoned that followeth in the steps of his maister.

And yet I must say, that as I have more just cause to make a pittifull defence of poor Poetrie, which from almost the highest estimation of learning, is falne to be the laughing stocke of children, so have I need to bring some more available proofes, since the former is by no man bard of his deserved credit, the silly lat[t]er, hath had even the names of Philosophers used to the defacing of it, with great daunger of civill warre among the Muses. And first trully to all them that professing learning envey against Poetrie, may justly be objected, that they go very neare to ungratefulnesse, to seeke to deface that which in the noblest nations and languages that are knowne, hath bene the first light giver to ignorance, and first nurse whose milk litle & litle enabled them to feed afterwarde of tougher knowledges. [...]

But since the Authors of most of our Sciences, were the Romanes, and before them the Greekes, let us a little stand upon their authorities, but even so farre as to see what names they have given unto this now scorned skill. Among the Romanes a Poet was called Vates, which is as much as a diviner, foreseer, or Prophet [...]

The Greekes named him poieten, which name, hath as the most excellent, gone through other languages, it commeth of this word poiein which is to make: wherein I know not whether by luck or wisdom, we Englishmen have met with the Greekes in calling him a Maker [...]

There is no Art delivered unto mankind that hath not the workes of nature for his principall object, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend, as they become Actors & Plaiers, as it were of what nature will have set forth. [...]

Only the Poet disdeining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow in effect into another nature: in making things either better then nature bringeth forth, or quite a new, formes such as never were in nature [...] he goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely raunging within the Zodiack of his owne wit.

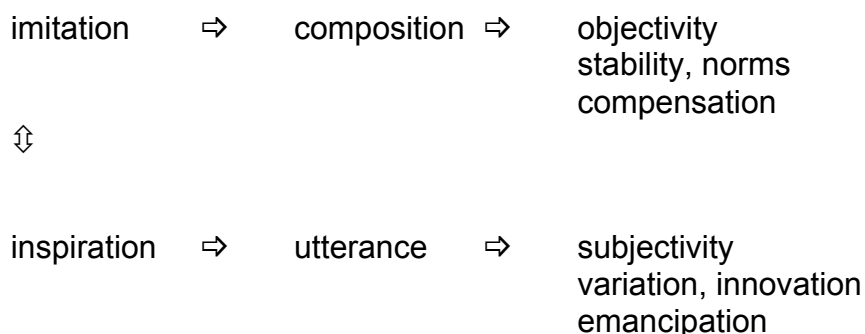
Neither let it be deemed too sawcy a comparison, to ballance the highest point of mans wit, with the efficacie of nature: but rather give right honor to the heavenly maker of that maker, who having made man to his owne likenes, set him beyond and over all the workes of that second nature, which in nothing he sheweth so much as in Poetry; when with the force of a divine breath, he bringeth things forth surpassing her doings [...] But these arguments will by few be understood, and by fewer graunted: thus much I hope will be given me, that the Greeks with some probability of reason, gave him the name above all names of learning. Now let us go to a more ordinary opening of him, that the truth may be the more palpable [...] Poesie therefore, is an Art of Imitation: for so Aristotle termeth it in the word mimesis, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth to speake Metaphorically. A speaking Picture, with this end to teach and delight.

Of this have bene three generall kindes, the chiefe both in antiquitie and excellencie, were they that did imitate the unconceivable excellencies of God. [...] In this kinde, though in a full wrong divinitie, were Orpheus, Amphion, Homer in his himnes, and manie other both Greeke and Romanes. [...] The second kinde, is of them that deale with matters Philosophicall, [...] But bicause this second sort is wrapped within the fold of the proposed subject, and takes not the free course of his own invention whether they properly bee Poets or no, let Gramarians dispute, and goe to the third indeed right Poets [...] which most properly do imitate to teach & delight: and to imitate, borrow nothing of what is, hath bin, or shall be, but range onely reined with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be and should be. These be they that as the first and most noble sort, may justly be termed Vates: so these are waited on in the excellentest languages and best understandings, with the fore described name of Poets.

For these indeed do meerly make to imitate, and imitate both to delight & teach, and delight to move men to take that goodnesse in hand, which without delight they would flie as from a stranger; and teach to make them know that goodnesse whereunto they are moved: which being the noblest scope to which ever any learning was directed, yet want there not idle tongues to bark at them. [...]

Now for the Poet, he nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lieth: for as I take it, to lie, is to affirme that to bee true, which is false. So as the other Artistes, and especially the Historian, affirming manie things, can in the clowdie knowledge of mankinde, hardly escape from manie lies. But the Poet as I said before, never affirmeth, the Poet never maketh any Circles about your imagination, to conjure you to beleeve for true, what he writeth: he citeth not authorities of other histories, even for his entrie, calleth the sweete Muses to inspire unto him a good invention.

Functional Dimensions of Modern Authorship:



Objectivity ⇔ Mediality:

- writing
- printing
- the written/printed text against the background of conventions (⇒ literacy)

To deal with the violence which is material history, people [in the late fifteenth century] resorted to excessive ritual [...] Writing itself is such a rite [...] which] remove[s] speech, the voice from the realm of the merely historical and accidental into the transcendental space represented by the typographic font, the space which 'legitimizes' or even inaugurates and authorizes all spoken historical discourse. The voice is, as it were, taken out of history and relocated in the apparatus of 'literature'.

(Docherty 1987, 13f.)

[T]he person normally thought of [...] as the 'reader' or audience is actually the one who, as master, is in the historical position of 'authority'; while the person dictating or rehearsing the text ([...] the 'author') is in the place of slave or servant or reader, with no personal authority, and no ability to inaugurate or initiate the text or its lecture.

(Docherty 1987, 2)

[I]n a modern print culture the words in question are not 'the author's words' in a strictly possessive sense: the author, at most, 'borrows' the words which the common lexicon is generous or gracious enough to afford an author.

(Docherty 1987, 22)

3) Authorship in Shakespeare's *Sonnets* (1609)

TO.THE.ONLIE.BEGETTER.OF.
THESE.INSVING.SONNETS.
Mr.W.H. ALL.HAPPINESSE.
AND.THAT.ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.

BY.

OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET.

WISHETH.
THE.WELL-WISHING.
ADVENTVRER.IN.
SETTING.
FORTH.

T.T.

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Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will,
And Will to boot, and Will in overplus.
More than enough am I that vex you still,
To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
Not vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?
Shall will in others seem right gracious,
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store;
So thou, being rich in Will, add to thy Will
One will of mine to make thy large Will more.
Let no unkind no fair beseechers kill;
Think all but one, and me in that one Will.

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If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy Will,
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there;
Thus far for love my love-suit, sweet, fulfil.
Will will fulfill the treasure of thy love,
Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.
In things of great receipt with ease we prove
Among a number one is reckoned none.
Then in the number let me pass untold,
Though in thy store's account I one must be;
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold
That nothing me a something, sweet, to thee.
Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lov'st me for my name is Will.

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