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## AUTHOR

In COMICS STUDIES, the terms ARTIST, CREATOR, and WRITER are often used interchangeably, although each emphasises a different aspect of the creative process. While typically artist highlights DRAWING, writer SCRIPTING, and creator both, whether individually or in a team, the term author connotes an often singular and legal ownership of the entire finished product. In his influential article "The Death of the Author" (1967), Roland Barthes explores the limitations of traditional conceptions of authorial ownership in the study of LITERATURE, particularly as it pertains to the interpretation of a work. He contends that authorship presents a tyrannical foreclosure of meaning that can only be broken by the birth of the READER. In response to Barthes' propositions, Michel Foucault reminds us that the author's name "can group together a number of texts and thus differentiate them from others" (1969: 123), calling to mind the problematic exclusionary practices of valorisation of certain individuals and works in the CANON. He argues therefore for a consideration not just of interpretation but also of DISCOURSE, writing that "unlike a proper name, which moves from the interior of a discourse to the real person outside who produced it, the name of the author remains at the contours of texts (...). It points to the existence of certain groups of discourse and refers to the status of this discourse within a society and a

culture” (ibid.: 123). Owing to the historical relationships between comics, team production, and mass production, authorship remains a contested idea in Comics Studies, and the term has increasingly been relegated as an anachronism or avoided altogether.

Erin La Cour

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### AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Autobiography tells a chronological narrative of a person’s life from their birth to the moment of WRITING. As a LITERARY GENRE, it emerged during the eighteenth century (Rak 2004). Autobiography is commonly understood as involving a pact between the READER and the AUTHOR that is sealed by the NARRATOR, protagonist, and author having the same name (Lejeune 1975; Miller 2007), a feature adapted in autobiographical comics in the form of the autobiographical avatar (Whitlock 2006). This fidelity grounds the reader’s expectation “that an author takes to narrate his life directly (her life, or a part of it, an aspect of it) in a spirit of truth” (Lejeune qtd. in Miller 2007: 538). Every autobiography must negotiate the tension between the reader’s expectation that the author is SELF-REFLEXIVE regarding the limitations of MEMORY and self-knowledge, and the author’s own self-questioning (Miller 2007). These genre characteristics are shared by MEMOIR and other types of LIFE WRITING, which together are key cultural sites where questions of IDENTITY, experience, and meaning are explored.

Anna Poletti