

Translating the Author-Function: the (re)narration of Christa Wolf

Caroline Summers

University of Manchester, U.K.

ABSTRACT

Narrative theory continues to offer new perspectives on the intercultural transfer of texts. Embedded in new narratives, the text opens up to new interpretations, resulting in the loss and acquisition of meaning. The writer's persona or *author-function* (Foucault 1977) is also renegotiated by cultural transfer, as it is cumulatively and dynamically constructed through readings of an author's texts and their interaction with literary or biographical contexts. The translated author-function may differ considerably from domestic perceptions of the author, and may also interact with these as in the case of the East German writer Christa Wolf, whose international author-function has served for contrast (if not conflict) with her reception in the German Democratic Republic and united Germany. This was particularly marked during the 1990s, when revelations about Wolf's earlier involvement with the East German Stasi led to censure by the German media and literati. This paper demonstrates how the translation of Wolf's texts and the construction of her international author-function have renegotiated her position within her domestic literary field.

KEYWORDS: author-function, GDR, narrative theory, Wolf.