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Author, Text, and Writing:
Roland Barthes and “The Death of the Author”

Asst. Prof. Almujaalli, Hussam, Ph.D.

Email: ahussam@ksu.edu.sa

King Saud University, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Roland Barthes’s essay “The Death of the Author” talks about the role of writers when they are creating content. I examined the meaning of Barthes’s essay, which advocates separating writers from their texts. Although the essay does not refer to the literal death of writers, it implies that distinguishing them from their texts can lead to an understanding of their content based on readers’ backgrounds and previous understandings. I concur with Barthes’s argument that if some readers attempt to understand writers, they might want to read the content from the writers’ perspective, which would limit the readers’ understanding of the texts. Therefore, for readers to fully grasp the meaning of a text, they must interpret the words based on their understanding and experiences, not from the authors’ point of view, because words have different meanings for people from different parts of the world.

Keywords: author, Death of the Author, Roland Barthes, text, writing.

Introduction

Understanding a text requires critical analysis, beginning with what the work addresses and extending to how the work has been received, challenged, critiqued, and utilized by others. This analytical approach may appear to unfairly judge an author, since it does not simply privilege his or her views, taking the work's intended meaning as the most substantial quality about it. But a critical analytical approach is necessary, since readers must understand the text in the larger context of both its production and its reception.

The present writer will analyze Roland Barthes's (1915–1980) influential essay "The Death of the Author" as the object of observation. The aspects that will come under consideration are the argument of the text, which I will arrive at by close attention to the details of Barthes's essay, and the impact the text has had on other authors and discourses. The present writer maintain that Barthes's essay is instrumental in establishing the terms of the intellectual debate that surrounds it, both summing up the achievements of Structuralism and helping to develop the intervention of Post-Structuralism that the political and social upheaval of May 1968 in France helped to coordinate.

"The Death of the Author," written in 1967 and published in 1968, defined itself via the limitations imposed by Structuralism and other modes of formalist criticism. While the article was well received in France, particularly in the wake of the student uprisings of May 1968, which were themselves reactions against the restrictions imposed by authority, the essay has frequently been misjudged by critics. In drawing attention to the discrepancy between the date of composition (1967) and the date of publication (1968), I aim to demonstrate a certain "transformation" that had been going on for some time, both in French literary theory and in this particular work by Roland Barthes.

Since the 1950s, Barthes had attempted to disassemble the status of literature and the established convention of the "creator" that existed in French critical thought and in the wider public imagination. This convention embodied political and economic considerations—for example, theories of authority and expertise—that Barthes had been at work to undermine in other contexts. As he once stated, "The author is a modern figure" (quoted here from Leitch, 2010, p. 1322). Stranger than this assessment of the writer as a kind of fiction (i.e., "character") are the words Barthes used to depict the social state of being a writer: "the author still reigns" (quoted here from Leitch, 2010, p. 1322), and "the image of literature to be found in ordinary culture is tyrannically centered

on the author” (quoted here from Leitch, 2010, p. 1322). These quotations reveal that Barthes viewed the idea of the writer as a tyrannical concept, one that still ruled over the modern world and demanded too much attention from the culture. At the end of the day, by conflating the work and the writer, the traditional understanding of the writer, and likewise of the reader, vested too much authority in the notion of the writer as a specialist and ultimate arbiter (North, 2010, pp. 1377-1385).

An Overview

Although revolutionary in some respects, “The Death of the Author” communicated a scholarly position that was being developed elsewhere and that would be communicated among students who were attending the classes of Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) in Paris. What this means is that, like Lacan, whose psychoanalytic work targeted the conception of the unified self, the self that could fulfill one’s own needs, Barthes’s essay takes aim at the notion of a finished and unified subject known as the author. If the subject is disintegrated into dialect (talk), if the unconscious is (as Lacan said) structured like a language, and if it is therefore prone to the kind of signifying slippage that forever bars the signifier from the signified, then the creator or the autonomous maker can also be seen as fiction.

In this sense, Barthes’s work fits into a larger development in Post-Structuralism that used Lacanian observations to disturb the rigid forms of identity and desire. However, Barthes’s work comes out of a second tradition as well—namely, the tradition of Marxism. From this perspective, the notion of a “creator” is a modern-day development, derived from an industrialist belief system that conceded significance to the creator’s individuality. Behind this idea of the individual creator lie specific theories of possession, property, and benefit. “The Death of the Author” is merely another form of expert, one that can assert capitalist control over production. “The Author” is additionally part of the Enlightenment tradition that prioritized independence. This conversely brought into play the ideas of mastery and uniqueness. The ultimate arbiter of the text would therefore be the individual maker, his (or her) tastes, history, and interests, which could assert dominion over the meaning of the work. Finally, Barthes’s claim about the author traces its lineage to one more source, the Romantic idea of the essayist as a maker. In this case, the writer is a chronicled substance, made by Romanticism, which gives weight to the

essential nature of subjectivity (Allen, 2004, p. 96).

In accordance with much of his work, Barthes's essay on the author is short. "Myth Today," in which Barthes lays out his approach to analyzing cultural systems as second-order signification, is one exception. This perhaps explains part of Barthes's appeal, namely, that he was able to express complex and relevant ideas, which disturb the way in which we see the commonplace aspects of life (a glass of wine, a political poster, the idea of the author), showing that behind these seemingly obvious and transparent concepts and experiences there exists a deeper ideological meaning. Although American journalists would later decide that Barthes's works was troublesome, that were because they were coming to Barthes twenty years late, outside the particular pressure of the time of composition.

When the essay was distributed in 1968, its insurgent tone hit a relevant note, keeping with its particular time of upheaval and rebellion against general and specific modes of authority. On the grounds that the essay originated before many contemporary hypotheses emerged, subsequent Post-modern deduction has accepted that the point Barthes was making is that the creator does not exist and that the craftsman has been annihilated. Notwithstanding these assumptions, the creator was restored in 1971 in Barthes's *The Pleasure of the Text*, which reveals that the full destruction of the creator was not Barthes's intended plan (Moriarty, 1991, p. 58).

Barthes attempted to broaden the importance and understanding of the idealized author in order to incorporate the connection between different writings and the reactions of readers. The German School of Constance would take up this concept of the dynamic reader and develop from it the theory of "reader response" and the effect of plural readings upon acts of elucidation. The theoreticians of Constance created Reception Theory to clarify the communication between the work and the gathering of people as the "skyline of desires." However, a refinement is necessary: the researchers of Constance, including Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, were inspired by the understudied developments of the late sixties. In particular, they were motivated by Barthes's argument against the concept of French Literature as a system of possession and control. Traditional Marxism would require the idea of property, yet Structuralism would comprehend composition, not as property, but rather as a feature of an etymological framework. From either or both points of view, the content (tasteful or not) is plainly superfluous. "The Death

of the Author” advances a series of thoughts that are more substantial than the general reduction allows. Barthes is interested in much more than whether or not the author is “dead.” It is here that Barthes would compose the idea of “intertextuality” (Arrojo, 1997, pp. 21-32).

A few years later came Surrealism. Because of the utilization of mental amusements—for example, programmed thinking and automatic writing—it was Surrealism, Barthes stated, that “desacralizes the image of the author” (quoted here from Leitch, 2010, p. 1323). What Surrealism helped to show, or what Barthes reads it as embodying, is that the creator’s language is always caught in the dialect itself. The origin of meaning can never lie with the writer as the sole possessor of authenticity or truth; instead, meaning lies in the possibilities of language and the games of arrangement. Composing for Barthes involves losing the subject and the personality: it takes place at “zero degrees,” in the whiteness, the blank, in the plurality that erases the authority of the subject. Since post-Enlightenment logic tested the thought of the Cartesian subject, a written work pulverizes each voice and each starting point. When one describes/composes/speaks to, Barthes noticed, a hole shows up, and the voice loses its “inception” (quoted here from Leitch, 2010, p. 1324).

The content of writing, according to Barthes (quoted here from Leitch, 2010), is “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture” (p. 1324). Therefore, certain results happen: in the first place, “the book itself is only a tissue of signs, an imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred” (quoted here from Leitch, 2010, p. 1325), and it is “useless” to attempt to “translate” content (Knight, 2000, p. 12). At best, the author is a conduit, an object that is spoken through by the citations of a thousand texts that have already entered the universe. The composing hand turns out to be disconnected from the voice, and composition follows without beginning. The outcome is “content” that is a multi-dimensional space, a texture of citations, enacted from a large number of sources from present-day culture. As Barthes indicates, “the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings” (quoted here from Leitch, 2010, p. 1324). According to Burke (2008), a book is a woven fabric of signs, perpetual impersonation, with significance deferred without limit.

To force an author upon content is to force a brake on elucidation, to give

a work its final meaning. Composing ends up noticeably closed. The “writer” turns into a part of the reading, a hypothetical assignment, a fiction utilized for rambling comfort. A name like “Vincent van Gogh” is merely an industrial development appropriate for offering workmanship, and Ernest Hemingway is a signifier of a specific class of American written work. Throughout the years, Barthes presented a case that a work could be just of its own time—keeping in mind, however, that the end goal of workmanship is a composite of its time (Irwin, 2002, p. 25).

Content is comprised of various works, continuing from a few societies and going into exchange, into spoof, into contestation: yet, there is a site where this variety is gathered, and this site is not the writer. The site is instead the reader. The reader is the very space in which the references (from which the written book is made) are recorded. In this space, all of the references are retained; the solidarity of content is not in its inception but rather in its reception. To rehearse this concept in a slightly different way, we might say that the solidarity of content is not in its source but rather in its goal. Yet, this goal can never again be close to home: the reader is a man or woman without a history, without a memoir: the reader is an ideal somebody who gathers into one all of the strands of the composed object (Chambers, 2001 p. 8).

Be that as it may, “The Death of the Author” does not refer to death in a literal sense. Instead, it indicates the reader’s organization in attributing implications to content. The reader and the author co-make content that in and of itself cannot be solitary or limited as a “work.” The work is instead intrinsically intertextual. The process of composing involves numerous compositions that are occupied with a discourse. Composing is the place where variety is gathered, not by the writer, but rather by the reader. Following this line of reasoning, it is fair to conclude, with Barthes, that “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author” (quoted here from Leitch, 2010, p. 1326).

Thus, the writer must kick the bucket, keeping in mind that the goal of his or her passing is to permit space for the reader. All things considered, it is the reader who makes meaning. In “From Work to Text” (1971), Barthes took up the subject of the breakdown of the limits of the “work” into a form of “content” that has no limits. At the time that he was composing this piece, the old controls over academic disciplines were separating, creating the possibility of interdisciplinary approaches, a blending of fields and callings.

Barthes condemned Structuralism for setting up a meta-dialect to study dialect, asserting that a meta-language is a semantic inconceivability, for one can never get away from the impacts of dialect. Post-Structuralism, or a reevaluation of Structuralism, concedes that it can never be a hypothesis, just a movement, in light of the fact that the Post-Structuralist can never escape dialect. In the event that reading is a performative movement, at that point “the Text...practices the infinite deferent of the signified.... Thus is the Text restored to language; like language, it is structured but off-centered, without closure.... The Text is plural...; it accomplishes the very plural of meaning” (quoted here from Leitch, 2010, p. 1328). What this means is that the text relies on “scattering.” In other words, different readers can attribute different meanings to the same text. Although less notable than “The Death of the Author,” in “From Work to Text” Barthes was able to clarify or build up what he sketched initially in the prior essay—to give in effect an incredible description of Text as that which absorbs the energies of writing.

For Barthes, the consumable work, what we might regard as the traditional “book,” delivers more than mere weariness; it creates queasiness. Throughout much of his work, Barthes joined Marxism with Structuralism to study the middle-class legends installed throughout culture. Like other Post-modern writers, he was suspicious of the extent to which dialect can be used to censure dialect. According to this line of thinking, a line followed by Barthes and kindred commentators, the problem is as follows: how to avoid a meta-dialect that will be ensnared in the dialect being analyzed. For traditional essayists, there is no chance to get out of this difficulty. Yet, later authors discovered an answer to the issue of dialect. Barthes was a critical connection between Structuralism and Post-Structuralism, since he comprehended that the utilization of dialect is equivalent to the utilization of energy. The world is composed of dialect, a logosphere created out of discourses that make their own reality by their interior forms and their internal associations. Thus, Barthes spent his vocation analyzing how the utilization of dialect and its structures develop “certainties” that are acknowledged as “reality” rather than what these contentions really are: writing (Foucault, 2010, pp. 1475-1490).

The Focus of “The Death of the Author”

“The Death of the Author” is a Post-Structuralist message that maintains that there can be no basic structure in writing. Accordingly, mirroring the

thoughts of Derrida, Barthes asserts that when writers use words to form texts, they relentlessly intermingle the expressions of societies. While this sounds extremely unpredictable, basically it implies that writers can have no control over readers, and that words can pass on no significance or purpose other than what the reader encounters. In this post-postmodern milieu, these thoughts may not convey as much influence as they did in Barthes's time, when New Criticism and close readings were at their pinnacle (Arrojo, 1997, pp. 21-32).

In brief, the main thoughts that Barthes expresses are as follows:

1. The barrenness of the writer controls composing or the authorial experience.
2. The energy of the reader is the determining factor in characterizing the significance of a literary text.

Barthes's initial point is that the act of composing (for example, what I am doing now) reveals a lack of bias, a condition that depends upon no voice, no character, and no identity. In composing, there is just a negative space. In other words, according to Barthes, "Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost" (quoted here from Leitch, 2010, p. 1322). For this to happen, for the composition of this identity-less, unbiased sort to occur, the writer must eradicate his or her own personality. In Barthes's words, "the author enters into his own death, writings begins" (quoted here from Leitch, 2010, p. 1322). Barthes explains this with a short history of writing as motivated by glory. Furthermore, Barthes claims that the reader emerges as the more significant element in the transaction between reader and writer, because the reader can replace the writer (Chambers, 2001, p. 10).

A noteworthy point that Barthes makes is derived from Post-Structuralist semantics. He affirms that dialect is separate from unique expectation; it is drawn from huge social memories and encounters. Thus, the main capacity that a creator can have is:

1. to choose from a huge inner lexicon, in a manner of speaking, of words that play off each other; and
2. to blend and consolidate components in ways that do not sound excessively like different pasts mixed together.

It is by these same means (the huge internal lexicon) that Barthes can accord readers the eminence that authors once possessed: readers have a capacity to join words that play (an idea credited to Derrida), which enables them to infer a unique significance from the record. Readers wind up plainly preeminent as they contribute significance and purpose to texts (Derrida, 1988, pp. 259-296).

An Analysis of “The Death of the Author”

For the most part, I concur with this announcement. There can be no genuine level of autonomous deduction accomplished by readers if their musings are directed by the author’s suppositions and predispositions. Consequently, there should be a separation between authors and the individuals who read their works (Allen, 2004, p. 57).

Barthes gives two primary reasons why the demise of authors is an inescapable but helpful event. In the first place, he states that literary creators are just a route through which a story is told. They neither make the story nor frame it. The activities in the story have already taken place. The writer is just retelling a story that has, until the moment that he or she tells it, existed in ordinary form. Barthes’s contention against unique ideas is extremely convincing, particularly considering the numerous ways that stories have been sensibly separated into an anticipated succession of occasions.

For example, Vladimir Propp (1895–1970), a Russian Formalist, utilized Formalist methods to limit Russian folktales to thirty-one possible plots. Every folktale employs at least some of these morphological details, arranging them in whatever fashion, to create what appears on the surface to be a new story. Most present-day children’s stories are only an adjustment of a model children’s story, and they take after the general capacities (Derrida, 1988).

Indeed, most fiction stories follow run-of-the-mill patterns. They begin with a complication, move into a period of preparation and difficulty (for instance, a saint overcoming an obstruction), and end with some resolution of tension. There are no unique considerations. There are only standard props, rearranged on the stage, to create a variation of an essential tale. Music, design, and films are a case of the ceaseless reusing of thoughts. These variations are substantial enough to be satisfying. It is unavoidable that new styles will be utilized to replace old ones. As Barthes argues, it is easy to find in every single

element of society old thoughts being dressed up and reused as new ones. (Leitch, 2010, p. 1325).

Barthes's second point is that if readers were to see a work through the author's eyes, they would learn nothing from the reading. By hitching the author to the content, by making one in fact dependent on the other, the content is consequently restricted. Rather than drawing their own significance from the content by utilizing their own particular encounters, a process that would empower their own lives, readers are confined to discovering what the creator intended. Readers concentrate on understanding an author's conclusions, whether or not they concur with the author. As a result, readers do not concentrate all of their specific capacities to assess a piece in its totality (Burke, 2008, p. 125).

Barthes claims that the status of readers ought to be elevated, not the status of authors. In the event that readers increase any profound understanding from a bit of composing, it ought not to be considered because of the author's virtuosity. The credit should instead go to the readers, whose individual encounters produced their understanding. Barthes trusts that when readers convey significance to content, at that point there can be no restriction to their understandings, since all individuals on the planet have their own particular, one-of-a-kind encounters with the world that have molded them (Culler, 2002, p. 41).

In short, in "The Death of the Author," Barthes argues that readers' interpretations of a text are more important than the author's intentions. That being said, the death of the author is not generally a fundamental event. Now and again, the author is required to be nearby for readers to accomplish a more accurate comprehension of what they are reading. For example, when Kurt Vonnegut (1922–2007) was writing *Slaughterhouse 5: A Children's Crusade*, he experienced an awesome push to make himself known toward the start of the book. The whole first section is told in the first person as the writer discusses how he needed to compose a book about the destruction of Dresden during World War II. Vonnegut was in Dresden as a prisoner of war when the city was bombarded, and he was one of the main survivors. In the principal section of the book, he depicts how he needed to compose a book about the destruction of Dresden for a considerable length of time (Allen, 2004, p. 115).

After acquainting the reader with himself, Vonnegut largely removes himself from the story and begins to recount the tale of Billy Pilgrim, who

likewise survived the firebombing of Dresden. However, head damage has caused him to lose his grasp on reality. Thus, Pilgrim ends up plainly unstuck in time, which makes him streak forward and backward from the past to the future and back once more. If, as a reader, I did not know about Vonnegut's experience as one of only a handful of survivors of the destruction of Dresden, I would not have the capacity to comprehend the book. Instead, I would consider it an insane and disconnected narrative, and not draw any significance from it. That is, by looking at the story through the eyes of the author, I was able to comprehend the book in a way that I would not have been able to do without that perspective (Chambers, 2001, p. 75).

If an author addresses a subject that the reader already knows about through personal experience, then the introduction of the reader comes at the cost of the death of the author. Be that as it may, if readers have no encounters on which to base their judgments or no pathways into the material, and therefore no way to understand it, then it may be necessary for the author to tell the readers about his or her own encounters. I agree with Barthes's contention that readers' translation and comprehension of content are what is important. Taking that as a given, the readers' comprehension is best aided by the nearness of the author (Arrojo, 1997, pp. 21-32).

To be safe, an author should show up on the off-chance that his or her arrival will aid the readers' comprehension. Once again, the emphasis is on the readers and their comprehension, not on the author. It is inescapable, however, that most readers will have some sense of a book before they begin it, and even before they observe the author's name on the cover. Readers never come empty-handed to the reading process. They already have expectations about a book, perhaps because they have read another book by the same author, which they loved or hated, or because the book (or the author) has an existing cultural reputation. Creators need to take credit for their work. However, Barthes argues that where a work started is not critical; it is only the goal of the work that matters (Moriarty, 1991, p. 14). What this suggests is that a reader's expectations of a text necessarily form a part of the hermeneutic circle. The meaning of the text in part depends on what the reader brings to it.

If we somehow managed to take Barthes's assertion that writers never make new material, but only repurpose odds and ends from past works, asserting credit for a work would amount to a form of plagiarism. Writers would be assuming acknowledgment for considerations that were not their

own. Putting their names on books could meet all the requirements for licensed robbery—unless writers are not claiming credit for the ideas themselves, but only the arrangement of those ideas. So, perhaps creators are not dead by any stretch of the imagination. All things considered, if writers were totally dead, there would be no names on the fronts of books. In addition to the fact that they would not be permitted to assume praise for a story that has already been told, they would not be permitted to influence readers' elucidation of that story (Burke, 2008, p. 87).

Although Barthes believed that knowing an author's biography narrows readers' interpretations of that author's books, I doubt that most readers would prefer not to know anything about the writers whose books they were reading. To what extent is it appropriate to widen readers' points of view? Some people live profoundly protected lives, only reading books, magazines, or newspapers, or only viewing films or TV shows, with whose philosophy or politics they already agree. They totally disregard anything that might challenge that philosophy or politics. If authors' names were somehow removed from books, readers would not be able to follow authors' literary progress. On the other hand, readers might feel more empowered to interpret the meanings or intentions of such books. But in real life, most authors are not anonymous, and their fame or reputation influences readers' interpretations of their books (Irwin, 2002, p. 74).

In some cases, authors' names can be intimidating. For example, some students might be afraid to read a story by James Joyce, simply because they know Joyce's reputation as a difficult author. But it could work the other way, too. That is, readers could ascribe more profundity to a story by an author like Joyce than they would to a story by, say, J. K. Rowling. In this case, Joyce would not be "killed," but deified.

In any case, I do not believe that authors will ever be totally "dead"—that is, anonymous. Barthes states that authors ought to receive neither acclaim for an excellent book nor rebuke for a terrible one, but that is precisely why authors will never be completely anonymous. Readers need heroes and scoundrels—that is, individuals to admire and to detest. Talented authors receive praise from their readers and even honors from society, while untalented authors receive comparable amounts of criticism.

Barthes composed "The Death of the Author" in 1967. Two years later, in 1969, Michel Foucault published "What Is an Author?" The similarity of these

essays in thematic content demonstrates that an investigation into the concepts of authorship and authority was already under way in the late 1960s. That period was marked by the emergence of Poststructuralism, which I have already briefly addressed in this paper. What is important to note here is that every intellectual movement carries with it, and emerges out of, a set of beliefs and hypotheses about how the world operates, how literature functions, and how analysis can be undertaken. In effect, Barthes's and Foucault's radical new hypotheses destabilized everything that was viewed as already settled. In particular, the postmodernist assault on settled methods and beliefs took aim at the very idea of truth, subjecting it to a new kind of scrutiny.

Postmodernists take enormous delight by using language to disturb meanings—unlike earlier writers, for whom clarity and precision were vital. Although clarity and precision are usual attributes of the French language—which is rigorously monitored and controlled by official channels even to this day—writers like Derrida exploited the fissures in language, the verbal possibilities, and the play in order to show how the meanings of words can slip into new meanings, even contradictory ones. For example, in Shakespeare's day, to say that a woman was "nice" was to call her a prostitute. To create such reversals in modern times, postmodernists invented their own words and phrases. For example, Derrida coined the word *différance*, which plays with the meanings of *difference* and *deferral*. Derrida was living in a post-1968 world, when social upheaval merged with critical thought to produce a form of thinking that was wary of authority itself (Irwin, 2002). That was the intellectual climate that inspired Barthes to compose "The Death of the Author."

From the Renaissance forward, Western civilization developed two essential features: flexibility and independence. Flexibility implies opportunity, and independence implies self-reliance. When these attributes merge together, they shape an unmistakable perspective that is totally original.

Conclusion

According to Barthes, words are close to authors' hearts and hands, but once authors have composed something, the interpretation of their written work is up to readers. The meanings that authors ascribe to words may be idiosyncratic and may not exist in readers' minds, because readers have their own view of language and their own particular foundation that will determine

how they receive and shape language. Furthermore, the circumstances in which authors compose words may be absent when people read them, and thus the words take on alternate meanings. To summarize Barthes's thinking about these issues, authors *articulate* issues, and readers *observe* them. Readers appreciate various ways to read a text, which they may amplify or even contradict on a second reading.

The present writer have attempted in this essay to situate Barthes's essay within two contexts. First, I have tried to show how his argument relates to the historical period in which he developed it, a time of political and social unrest, during which the younger generation explicitly challenged the assumptions of the older generations. Second, I have tried to show how Barthes's essay lies midway between two intellectual fields: Reader-Response criticism and Poststructuralism. Where the former gives weight to meanings produced by readers, the latter shows how meanings are ambiguous or contestable at best.

It is critical here to shed more light on what "writers" are, according to Barthes, who contended that written works are not subjective but objective in nature. In other words, nothing outside the text has any significance or relevance. This is an exceptionally clear contention that composition is essential, but writers are not.

Another noteworthy part of Barthes's approach is that he invalidated the starting point of the writing experience. Before composing, unquestionably the creator needs to make an association between what he considers and what might be the proper words for his thoughts. He must also consider the connection between his experiences and his ideas. Furthermore, authors must address how much, and in what way, they attempt to confine themselves away from the subjectivity or objectivity of their practice.

Lastly, Barthes claims that precedence has always been given to writers and not readers, whereby the former are seen as the creators, and the latter are seen as mere receivers. In this model, reading simply amounts to extracting meaning from a text. The meaning is lying there, on the surface, and one merely has to scoop it up.

In line with a movement that gained steam in the twentieth century, Barthes is implicitly arguing that reading is not a receptive but a creative act. Good readers can see what is in the text, even when the writer cannot. There is a kind of Freudian element here, insofar as the meaning can be seen as the writer's unconscious. What goes into the text is really beyond the writer's full

control. This notion of the unconscious appears in other theories of textual composition, including Fredric Jameson's argument about the political unconscious of a given work. Jameson suggests that every text has multiple layers, concentric circles of meaning, one of which is its political meaning, which has to be arrived at by revealing the unspoken codes of the work. Barthes anticipates this advance in literary theory when he describes the death of the author and the birth of the reader.

In summary, to Barthes authors are a myth, over celebrated in society. They are the product of a capitalist culture that assumes ownership of everything, reducing all experience and ideas to commodities.

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المؤلف، والنص، والكتابة: رولان بارت و"موت المؤلف"

ا.م.د. حسام المجلي

جامعة الملك سعود، كلية العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية، قسم اللغة العربية وآدابها

ahussam@ksu.edu.sa

المستخلص

يركز مقال رولان بارت "موت المؤلف" على أثر المؤلفين عند إنشاء المحتوى. لقد بحثت في هذه الدراسة مقال بارت الذي يدعو إلى عزل الكتاب عن نصوصهم. إذ لا يشير المقال إلى الموت الحرفي للمؤلفين، ولكنه يشير ضمناً إلى إبعادهم عن نصوصهم يمكن أن يؤدي إلى فهم محتوهم بناءً على خلفيات القراء وفهمهم. أتفق -أيضاً- مع حجة بارت أن بعض القراء يحاول فهم النصوص من منظور الكتاب، وهذا يحد من فهم القراء للنصوص. لذلك، كي يفهم القراء معنى النص فهماً جيداً، يجب عليهم تفسير الكلمات بناءً على فهمهم وخبراتهم، وليس من وجهة نظر المؤلفين؛ لأن الكلمات لها معانٍ مختلفة للأشخاص من مختلف أنحاء العالم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المؤلف، موت المؤلف، رولان بارت، النص، الكتابة.