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SORRY, ROLAND BARTHES! THE AUTHOR WILL NEVER DIE!

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ABSTRACT

The prevailing classical point of view about a literary work is that it is a legitimate son of its author and a reflection to his life, education and psychological condition. Illuminating the text with data about the author's life helps the reader to identify with the author's thoughts and makes him come closer to his emotional experience. After the classical period, a new approach of criticism appeared simultaneously with the appearance of structuralism that calls for concentration on the language of the text and isolating it from its author, who no more has authority on the meanings and indications of the text. The idea of *the Death of the Author* goes back to philosophical and intellectual thoughts that were connected to the objective circumstances that prevailed in Europe after its revolution against the Church. The German existentialist philosopher Fredrick Nietzsche introduced the idea of 'Death of God' and rejected the supernatural perspective that is employed to explain the ambiguous or mysterious issues. This rejection was received by a wide reaction among the European critics, who were eager to destroy the supernatural approach of explaining the texts and enthusiastic about giving way to the appearance of the man with all his human abilities, which are perceived by the intellect and anything else is considered dead.

The axiom or postulate of the 'Death of God' was borrowed into the literary criticism. The Western critics, headed by Roland Barthes, declared the idea of *the Death of the Author*. Barthes called for *the Death of the Author* through giving more weight to the text than the author. Here, the language affects more than the author because it is the language that speaks with the reader and not the author. Thus, we find that Barthes makes fun of the critics who put the writer within the text and try to reach his deep psychological dimensions. For Barthes, the text is a linguistic means of communication that the research should start from it, namely, from its structure, its indications and its metaphors. Barthes maintains that we should not analyze from the outside, namely, through the author and his psychological structure.

The theory of *the Death of the Author* left a great effect on the studies of linguistics and critical theories through its direct and daring call to break and denounce the legend of the 'author' and destroy the artificial holy barriers between the text and its readers. All this was considered a 'revolution in the world of literature. The reader has always had absolute freedom in opening and closing the indicative imagination and many times far from the indication of the author.

Key words: Death of the Author, criticism, Autobiography, Post-Structuralism, Russian Formalism, Semiotics, postulates.

Introduction

Roland Barthes (1915-1980) published his essay *La Morte De L'auteur/ The Death of the Author* in 1968 at the time of the popularity of the movement of Structuralism and Post-Structuralism. He republished it within a group of essays in a book with the title of "Image-Music-Text" in which he mixed between the postulates of Structuralism and post-structuralism.¹

The theory of the Death of the Author aims to isolate the text from its writer and argues that the personal thoughts or circumstances of the author's life have no effect on the text and called for treatment of the text as a purely literary text, irrespective of everything outside the written paper. From now on, the text, on all its levels and tools, and from its creation and reading, appears in such a way that the writer is made completely absent. His role ends with the end of writing the text and the load falls on the reader in his attempt to 'snipe' the meaning in its multiplicity and variety. This is what makes the reader a partner in the process of text-production. The reader's role is not less important than the author's role and it is impossible to separate the process of reading from the process of writing as they are concomitant.

Roland Barthes confirms that despite the fact that the writer's empire is still greatly dominant, some writers tried to shake it a long time ago. Besides, a number of European critics preceded him to the postulate of the 'Death of the Author' including the French author Mallarmé (1842-1898), who was the first prophet of the necessity of substituting the position of the writer by the position of the language because it is the language that speaks now and not the author. Thus, the meaning of writing becomes 'reaching of the language a point where it moves by itself and not the (I), the writer. Barthes also pointed out the efforts of Paul Valéry (1870-1945) that were complementary to the ideas of Mallarmé. Valéry

ridiculed the author and considered resorting to his inside a mere nonsense. In fact, it is necessary to focus on the linguistic nature of the author and the linguistic structure of his work and keeping him away from it."²

The Russian Formalism prepared the way for Structuralism at the beginning of the twentieth century and it was the preceding movement that excluded the author and isolated him. It also focused on the linguistic structure and the potential indications that lie below the textual surface; "in order to seize the poesy of the text, there is no need to depend on the writer's psychological condition or on studying his environment, his gender or his entity; the critic does not have to assume the role of the observer or the aesthetic authority that controls the creator and the reader because such criticism from these perspectives cannot substitute an objective scientific analysis and description to the art of the language. The Structural Movement emerged originally from the investment and reemployment and reinterpretation of the theories of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913).

Saussure himself did not know about something called 'Structuralism' and he did not expect that his theories might be reinterpreted in such a way that end up with what the Structural Movement. One of the most important new concepts that De Saussure introduced in linguistics is his differentiation between language and speech. For him, "language is a social institution, and the literary sentence is a system of signs that depend on language. With regard to 'meaning', Saussure argues that 'meaning' does not lie naturally in the word only but in the interconnectivity of words and their difference from each other within the system of language. In other words, the meaning does not exist outside the linguistic system and it is a product of relationships of words within the structure of the system of language.

¹Barthes, Roland (1977). *The Death of The Author, From; Image-Music- Text*, Translated from French by Stephen Heath. Fontana Press. An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, p. 142

²Barthes, Roland (1985). *The Death of The Author*. Translated into Arabic by Abd al-Salam al-'Ali. *Majallat al-Mahd*, 7th Issue. 2nd Year. Amman, p. 10-12, 23-40.

Besides, de Saussure argues that literature belongs to language. He also prophesied semiology and considered Semiotics (the science of signs) and linguistics to be parts of it.³

In order to study literature in a scientific way, the Structuralists adopted these theories and applied them on criticism of literature. First, they suspended the speech (of form and content of the text) and kept away the discourse of the author (content and theme of the text). They also excluded the creator of the speech or discourse and limited themselves to the analysis of the elements of language, depriving it of its indicative, subjective, social, economic and historical dimensions.

The Structuralism critics declared the 'death of the author' and limited the role of criticism to the revelation of the codes and ciphers of the text and the relationships that are created by it. They also turned the role of criticism into 'uncovering of the text and its internal rules that control the texture that connects between its units considering the text to be a system of signs and relationships whose message does not lie in its meaning but in its system and order. Thus, the structural reading starts with the text and ends with it as if it were a goal in itself and, consequently, the movement of the structural analysis starts moving from the inside of the text towards its outside,⁴ and not from its outside, which is represented by the author, context, period and environment.

The Structural theorists maintain that the text reveals a definite structure and system or systems and structures. The reader's role is to reveal its different systems and ciphers and should not add

anything of his own because the correct structural reading is the one that can reach the internal secrets of the text in its units and systems and relationships of its arrangements. Therefore, the Structuralist reader is considered a re-creator of the text and a giver to its indications because the text has no value without a reader because the indication of the text is decided by the reader and not by the text. Thus, the critics of Structuralism and Post-structuralism gave the reader absolute authority to interpret the text in such a way that sometimes, would exceed the clear indicative structure of the text. In other words, *the death of the author* is the only condition for the birth of the reading or, in Barthes words, "the birth of the reader is subject to the death of the author."⁵

According to Barthes, the reader is a 'producer' and not a 'consumer' to the text because he deconstructs and reconstructs it as he likes, and he has the right to inaugurate frank or silent dialogues to inquire its vocabulary. Barthes was not satisfied with that and he considered 'criticism' a kind of 'writing on writing' and a 'text that is added to a text' that he clothes with endless indications. The reader becomes the absolute authority that decides the meaning of the text through seeking guidance by the signs that the author employs but he is not committed to them and he can support, through the text, the meaning that the signs conjecture in his mind, and which are likely to change day by day and from one reader to another.

Actually, Barthes demands the deletion of the term 'author' from our dictionary and substitute it with the terms 'writer' or 'scripter' (La Scripteur). In Barthes' opinion, the writer has no 'emotions', 'moods', 'feelings', or 'impressions' inside him. He does not have that immense dictionary from which he derives the writing of an inexhaustible 'writing activity' because "life does not know anything but imitation of books and books are nothing but objects that are made of signs".⁶

³De Saussure, F. (1999). *Course in General Linguistics*. Translated by: Roy Harris, Duckworth, pp. 15, 98,113-116.

⁴By this, Barthes makes it clear that the meaning does not come from outside the text, which implies negation of the poem and the poet, who represents a limit to the interpretation of the text; *the Death of the Author* indicates refusal of the idea of the existence of a final or secret or divine meaning for the text and refusal of the existence of God Himself. Authorship is an authority that dominates the text and prevents the freedom of linguistic analysis and exploration of indications. See, for example: Barthes, Roland (1985). *Criticism and Truth*. Translated by Ibrahim al-Khatib. Al-Ribat: al-Sharika al-Maghrebiya li al-Nasherin al-Muttahidin, p.116-145.

⁵Barthes, Roland (1985). *Criticism and Truth*. Translated into Arabic by Ibrahim al-Khatib. Al-Ribat: al-Sharika al-Maghrebiya li al-Nasherin al-Muttahidin, p. 87.

⁶Barthes, Roland (1985). *The Death of the Author*, p. 25.

Barthes confirms that the type of biographical criticism that emphasizes the relationship between the text and the author has ended and the new psychologies have banned this type of analysis. Thus, Barthes put an end to the conflict between the two competing lovers on one sweetheart. Barthes murders his rival, the author, and takes exclusive possession of his sweetheart, the text, and enjoys it alone.

If the classical author looked at his work like a father at his son (because he preceded him), the situation today is different for the modern 'writer' or 'scribe', who is born at the same time as his text is born, and that was like that just because the text has no previous or following being to his writing. Therefore, the modern writer/ scribe buries the author and the reader triumphs over the writer. The relationship between the author and the text turns into a relationship of 'abrogating and abrogated', which means that the author no more writes his work, but he scribes it by his hand, deriving his effort from the language, which is the store of his inspiration.⁷

With these arguments, Barthes destroys the classical theory of imitation that considers literature as a mirror that reflects what exists in life. Barthes maintains that all these issues have become worn now, and linguistics has offered a significant analytical tool to destroy literature and showed that the 'expression' is an empty process that works without having need to be filled with the person of the addressees. The author, linguistically, was not more than a person who writes the text, and language knows the doer and not the person.

Thus, the author today has become a small statue on the other side of the literary scene, and the text is made and read in a way that makes the author absent from it. Barthes also argues that the text is no more a line of words that produces a unilateral meaning but a space of several dimensions in which different writings wed and dispute even though none of them is original because the text is a texture of statements that are produced from thousands of spots of culture, and is

made of multiple writings and a result of multi-cultures that intertwine with one another in a dialogue, imitation and opposition. These pluralistic aspects combine not in the writer but in the reader who replaces the writer. However, the moment that the writer was kept away, the claim of deconstructing the codes and ciphers became a futile claim just as the attribution of the texts to the author used to be. This means that we compel the text to cease, and impose on it an authority of final indication and closure of the writing; while the required thing is that we should rove through the space of writing and not to break through it. Writing creates the meaning constantly, and in order that the writing should restore its future, the legend should be turned upside down; *the death of the author* is the price that the birth of the reader requires, in as Barthes maintains.

By that, Barthes introduces what he calls *Dictionary of Texts with Different Elements*, in which the text goes out from its writer as successive signs taken from the language store. New writing sees that the writer copies his text deriving it from the linguistic store that lives inside him, which he bears throughout the years. Instead of the theory of *classical imitation*; the theory of the Romantic Expression, the theory of Committed Direction, Barthes introduces the theory of Textuality, which foretells the death of the author and the transformation of heritage into intertwined texts, in which the text explodes beyond the stable meanings into an absolute movement of endless meanings, which move over the text and cross all barriers, which Barthes calls 'spread' and 'extension'.⁸

Thus, after the reader was forgotten in the classical literary theories, the theories of 'Reception and Interpretation' returned to him his right and importance and put him at the top of its priorities as a 'producer and interpreter' of the text. The authority of literature moved from the author and the text to the reader, the third head of the literary golden triangle.⁹ In this way, the reader has become

⁸Al-Matwi, Muhammad al-Hadi (1997). *Fi al-Ta'ali al-Nassi. Al-Majalla al-'Arabiyyali al-Thaqafa*. Tunisia, Issue 32, p. 187.

⁷Barthes, Roland (1985). *Criticism and Truth*, p. 10: ⁹Barthes' Triangle is based on three main concepts: Text, Language and Reader. The Author, undoubtedly, dies through three concepts that

governed by the strategy of the group that he belongs to, and is pushed to the warning against falling into the reaction that pushes him into falling in the myth of the 'reader' after having got rid of the myth of the writer and the text. As a result, rules were devised in order to control correct the reading in addition to queries about the futility of multiplicity of readings and whether all of them are valid and produce correct interpretations! Besides these rules, there are warnings that the reader might not give up his subjectivity and desires and, consequently, they might be reflected in his reading interpretations. The reader started to receive the text in order to revive it into a new life and thus, writing becomes a state of self-representation.¹⁰

Analytical Review of the 'Theory of the Death of the Author'

This study introduces an analytical review of the theory of *the Death of the Author* and tries to give answers to queries that are deemed legitimate and necessary such as:

- Is the term *the Death of the Author* considered a purely analytical procedural method?
- Has this theory been practically successful?
- Is this theory applicable? If it has succeeded in various cultural sectors, has it succeeded in sectors that are extremely sensitive and emotional and tend more to reading the margins than reading the text OR does it tend more to be active in talking about the author than about his product? The major query is: Did the theory of the *Death of the Author* appear in order to solve the problem of the text and its indications? Or did it

appear in response to prevailing philosophical visions or as a discourse of the familiar things and the rational logic? The question that arises here is this: if the human being is the creature who created language, how can we allow it to kill him?

In my view, Roland Barthes ignored or omitted such questions when he put down his theory. We can also add that this theory will continue moving in the circle of utopianism of the literary imagination in the inapplicable way of science fiction.

In my view, the critical postulates are non-final views and are subject to debate and refutation. Therefore, each time a certain method of literary criticism appears, another opposite method appears as a reaction to it. The reasonable attitude is that we should not see critical postulates as final stable scientific facts but as relative views that are transformable and therefore, we should not take them as for granted but subject to debate and discussion. I believe that we should look at the critical views and postulates in their historical, cultural and mood context that produced them rather than dealing with them as abstract concepts that are true and valid for every time and space.

The other point is that we often ignore or omit the real indications of this or that critical postulate. With regard to the postulate of *the Death of the Author*, I believe that, in its best case, it was probably understood to imply that the connection of the author with his text stops when he finishes writing the text. After that, the author has no right to talk about his text, but if he does, he should not impose his viewpoint and personal special interpretation on his literary work. Besides, the reader should not mix between the text and the author's life and should look for the meaning of the text from within, and not in the biography of the author.¹¹

require an educated reader who reveals the meanings of creativity and reaches the stage of the 'pleasure' and poesy of the text, transcending the current projection reading. The *death of the author* is a result of the birth of this kind of reader. The text in its structure puts the vocabulary and the reader discovers the meaning and clothes it with indications. Thus, the reader is the producer of the text and he indirectly formulates the text without consuming it externally. See: Barthes, Roland (1977), *The Death of The Author, From; Image-Music-Text*, p. 146.

¹⁰Barthes, Roland (1977). *The Death of the Author*, p. 13.

¹¹According to Barthes, the curtain has come down on old methods in which the author remained the undisputable knight. Neither the author's biography nor his era or education mean anything to the interpreter of the text, and he is completely isolated from all that. The text is

In his essay *The Death of the Author*, Roland Barthes declares that writing is the destruction of every voice, and thus, he pushes the author to death when he cuts his relationship with his creative text. In view of this, writing, which Barthes calls 'Textuality', starts depending on the notion that language is the speaker and not the author. Thus, the Structuralists and Barthes do not see the idea of pre-writing because the text is not resurrected until writing starts. That is not realized until the reader starts deconstructing and analyzing the creative work linguistically, and finishes decoding its symbols that allow understanding the relationships that consist in the text.¹²

In my view, Roland Barthes did not call for abolishment of the author and deleting him from memory but he wanted just to liberate the produced text from his authority and wanted the reader to forget him. He also asks the reader not to give importance or care to anything except the language of the text and its indications because the author writes his text for the reader and no one else. Therefore, we should work on mixing the text with the reader and the reader with the text. The author is invoked only after reading the text. The reader is entitled to interpret the text as he likes under the

even not satisfied with its analysis and deconstruction. Barthes said that there is no fixed meaning for the text and meanings are gradations whose colors differ according to the context of narration and consequently, the structure of the text itself differs. Barthes looked at the text as a 'closed text', that is, 'introverted' into itself and is not open onto anything outside it, historically, socially, or politically, and is not interactive with anything outside itself. Nothing from outside introduces anything to the text or helps to understand or interpret it. The text is satisfied with itself and is established on a system of discipline, harmony and satisfaction, which are represented in its structure which has to be existent in it. It is also characterized by being total and works automatically and is replaceable by other similar elements. Because of these specifications that the text enjoys, it is independent and has a self-value that grows from within it. Its value appears in its independence, in its liberation from subordination to any external element. For more information, see Barthes, Roland (1977). *The Death of the Author*, p.13.

¹²Barthes, Roland (1977). *The Death of the Author*, p. 122.

impact of his cultural heritage and not according to the author's desire.¹³

Barthes starts his essay by introducing a descriptive sentence from the story of *Sarrasine*, which was written by the French author Balzac¹⁴. The sentence describes an image of a castrato who is disguised as a woman. He says: 'This was the woman herself, with her sudden fears, her irrational whims, her instinctive worries, her impetuous boldness, her daring and her delicacy of feeling.' After this sentence, Barthes asks immediately:

"Who is speaking thus? Is it the hero of the story bent on remaining ignorant of the castrato hidden beneath the woman? Is it Balzac the individual, furnished by his personal experience with a philosophy of Woman? Is it Balzac the author professing 'literary' ideas on femininity? Is it universal wisdom? Romantic psychology? We shall never know who the speaker is, for the good reason that writing is the destruction of every voice, of every beginning and every point of origin."¹⁵

Thus, Barthes takes decision and delivers his verdict on us, the readers, that we will never know who said this quoted sentence and with no discussion or giving reasons except that "writing is the destruction of every voice!"

In my view, these queries that Barthes poses have no artistic, realistic and logical justification because they create confusion on the artistic and realistic levels. The narrator or the hero are artistic fictional characters that are created by the author's imagination and they cannot be equalized to the author as Barthes does in the form of his queries above! However, and by the logic of literature, the speaker is either the narrator (the narrating I/ first person) or the hero, and this is decided by the context of the sentence within the story. From the

¹³Ibid. p. 36.

¹⁴De Balzac, Honore', (1999). *Sarrasine: A Story from the Parisian Life, the Unknown Masterpiece, a Story from the Philosophical Stories*. Translated by Michael Khoury. Damascus: Publications of the Ministry of Culture, p. 55.

¹⁵Ibid. p. 142.

viewpoint of 'reality', the speaker is the author, the French novelist Balzac and all his experience and skill in life, all his knowledge about femininity, his universal wisdom, his Romantic mentality, and his being an individual creative Self. In the first line of the line of the story, Barthes admits that the author and the describer are the same person, Balzac himself. He says: "In his story *Sarrasine*, Balzac describes in the following sentence" but he wants to persuade us that Balzac is NOT the speaker and the speaker is Language itself. Barthes says:

"In France, Mallarme' was undoubtedly the first to see and to foresee in full extent the necessity to substitute language for the person who until then had been supposed to be its owner. For him and for us too, it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is [...] to reach that point where only language acts, 'performs', and not 'me'".¹⁶

It has been mentioned before that substitution of the author by language is a part of a comprehensive tendency that seeks to destroy the centrality of the individual Self as the source of literary creativity and as the active element in the motion of history, and robbing it of all the humane values for which it has fought a long time and started to achieve during the age of European enlightenment. Barthes' constant argument that language should speak and not the author indicates shrinkage of the authority of the author to be substituted by the authority of language, which means that it is not the author who creates the text but language itself.¹⁷

Therefore, Barthes says: "the 'author' is nearly a modern idea that appeared historically after the narrator. It is a product of our societies that discovered after the Medieval Ages the value and status of the individual thanks to the British experience and the French rationalism and personal belief in religious restoration. The philosophy of Positivism put a great importance of the character of the author as its doctrine is the essence of Capitalist Ideology. The author dominated the books of

literary history, autobiographies, magazine debates and even the authors who made effort to connect in their memoirs between their characters and their literary works. Consequently, the focus of literature in the familiar culture was on the author, his character, his history, and his tendencies.

The author I still the focus of criticism. For example, we read such comments: *Baudelaire's* works represent *Baudelaire's* failure and Van Gogh's works represent his madness and *Tchaikovsky's* work represents his vice. Thus, the search for interpretation of the literary work always moves towards the person who produced it.¹⁸ By this, in my view, Barthes uncovers his ideological tendency towards opposing the values that raise the status of the Self by describing it as a capitalistic bourgeoisie values. However, the targeted one for elimination is not the author only but the critic, the interpretation, the meaning of the text and the theme in all its realistic, social and historical dimensions turn into a call for negation of all the elements of the literary activity. Barthes also says:

"Once the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text is in vain. To give a text an author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final indication and thus, to close the writing. This suits the critic very well as criticism sees its fundamental task discovering the author, society, history, liberty, and the Self in the text: when the Author has been found, the text is 'explained', which is considered a victory to the critic. Hence, there is no surprise in the fact that undermining the author represents undermining of the Critic."¹⁹

Though the requirements of the performance of the creative process impose the existence of a psychological and epistemological connection between its elements: the author, the text and the reader, which gives freedom to rebuild the text for the reader. If the psychological distance is negated, the reader loses the ability to practice the skill of creativity in appreciating the artistic

¹⁶ Ibid. 143.

¹⁷ Bakhtin, Mikhail (1986). *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. 1st ed., al-Dar al-Baydha': Dar Tupqal, p. 68.

¹⁸ Barthes, Roland (1977). *The Death of The Author, From; Image-Music- Text*, p. 78.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 147.

work, and thus, the artistic work turns into a kind of absencing the reader, while the psychological distance allows the reader's presence to be equal to the presence of the author in order to hold a dialogue with him²⁰, but how does that take place if we suppose the death of one of the sides of the creative process, namely the author? Therefore, structuralism, in my view, is an abstract approach that is detached from the effect of man's active Self, which is the outcome of the general and comprehensive interaction with existence.

I would like to add that it is ironic that after Roland Barthes excluded the author and all the fundamental elements of the literary work, he kept the reader. However, he did not keep him till he deprived him of all his life and human components.

He says that "the reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost... the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted. Thus, the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author."²¹

According to Barthes semiological reading that is based on sending free clues that are not confined to the borders of dictionary meanings, the text gains creative reading impact and the trained reader becomes the maker of the text. Consequently, he has to be aware of the concepts of the text, its specifications and its elements, and should master the rules of the language.

As we see, the theory of *the Death of the Author* does not believe in the person's effect on his reality and depends only on the changing effect of the text on the reader, and thus, Barthes gives advantage to the reader over the writer in producing the meanings and indications of the text. On the other hand, we see that it is impossible to separate between the text and its author. Analysis of the text and its vocabulary and indications are integral part

of the entity of the author or creator. In view of this, I believe that there is strong need to give the author his space, too, because there is no fixed meaning for the text but there is a fixed and constant author to it. This author has several intellectual and human values that constitute his total education and culture. Barthes continues in his inflexible argument on denying the relationship between the author and his text claiming that:

"The author, when believed in, he is also believed to be representative of the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line" divided into a *before* and an *after*. The author is thought to *nourish* the book, which means that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it. His relation with it is like the relation of a father to his child. In complete contrast, the modern scripiter is born simultaneously with the text. He in no way precedes the writing; every text is eternally written here and now."²²

Let us ask ourselves again: if the author is NOT the legitimate father of the text who thinks and lives and suffers for it till it is born, what is the source of the language or writing that the text consists of?

Barthes considers every text as an intertextuality²³. In other words, "the text is made of multiple writings

²² Ibid, p. 145.

²³ By this question, we enter the postulates of Textuality and Intertextuality. Terry Eagleton talked about Textuality and Intertextuality saying: "All literary texts are woven out of other literary texts, not in the conventional sense that they bear the traces of 'influence' but in a more radical sense which means that every word, phrase or segment is a reworking of other writings which precede or surround the individual work. There is no such thing as literary 'originality', nor such thing as the 'first' literary work: all literature is intertextual. Intertextuality is the belief that there is no single original text, and if there is one, it must be a reformation of other previous texts, whether the author is conscious or unconscious of that. The result is the death of the author again and negation of originality and creativity.

The theory of Intertextuality allowed the melting of the efforts of other authors in a new text without having to

²⁰ Ramadan Muhammad, Bastawisi (1406 h. /1985). *Al-Jamil waNazariyyat al-Funun*. Riyadh, p. 349.

²¹ Ibid. p. 148.

drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation."²⁴ Consequently, there is no one original text but there is a number of intertwined texts. From that perspective, my point of view is that the text is a texture of voices and allusions that form it through intense adjacent intertextual relations. The text is disconnected and spread, which diverts its original meaning and assumes futile complicated meanings and interpretations that lead to going deep into associations, symbols and ambiguities.

My conclusion is that Barthes states that the new text, which consists of other texts, is based on the destruction of previous texts according to his assumption, though the structure of the new text is completely different from structure of the previous text, and its language pushes the text to disengage from the previous texts. I believe, too, that Barthes call for the postulate of 'Intertextuality' prepared the way for the appearance of the theory of *the Death of the Author*, who is considered to be a scripter of a previous author.

Barthes says: "In this meaning, the text is not a group of thoughts that the author turned into various words and sentences, and the author is not a creator, because the text comes from quotations

refer or allude, though the deconstructionists introduced various interpretations such as: the formulated text shows the previous texts in different forms that were invisible and without intertextuality; if there was no intertextuality, the texts would not appear in their new attire, though the deconstructionists claim that the initiator of the text has drawn from his unconsciousness unintentionally. This is a hidden implies a hidden acknowledgement of the author, whom they insists on excluding. No matter how extensive the explanations are starting with Barthes, through Julia Kristeva and Gerard Genette, Jacques Derrida and the Formalists *Shklovsky* and Bakhtin, Intertextuality in its concepts and tools has ignored the author completely and supported the text in all its levels, depending on Derrida's famous statement: There is nothing outside the text. Derrida considers the text as a linguistic structure that has its own ordinal system, in whose details the receiver cannot dive if he is not acquainted with all its levels and allusions. (See: Terry Eagleton (2003). *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, University of Minnesota Press, p. 119.

²⁴Barthes, Roland (1977). *The Death of The Author, From: Image-Music- Text*, p.148

from different centers of knowledge.²⁵ I also believe that not every text is full of gaps that have to be looked for, as the Structural approaches argue, but no text is void of creativity and presence of an author, no matter how big or small the size of marginalization and exclusion is.

As we see, the Western critical approaches gave care to the text and ignored serious aspects that are represented in the intellectual and human values that are headed by the author, the initiator of the text. Besides, even if we accept Barthes' argument that the 'text is made of different texts that are quoted from different cultures that go into mutual figurative and metaphorical relations of contestation, parody and dialogue', the question that introduces itself insistently is: Who brought these different writings and wove a text of them? Who produced the previous texts and writings that made the text? Will the independence of the text, away from the author and through interaction with the reader, produce a new creative addition? Isn't it the human Self?

This is a question that was introduced by the supporters of the Theory of Reception that was developed by Hans Robert Jauss (1921-1997) and Wolfgang Iser (1926-2007), who called for rewriting and rereading literature in view of the aesthetics of reading and the reactions of the readers. According to Jauss, we can realize that the literary studies are not analyses of texts but a literary communication through the historical, social and cultural circumstances and how the literary work gives answers to many issues.²⁶ In my view, the reader's mission is limited to receiving the indications and in the way that suits him, even if the text is modest in its style and structure.

²⁵Barthes, Roland (2002). *Writing Degree Zero*. Translated into Arabic by: Muhammad Nadim Khashfeh. Markiz al-Inma'a al-Hadhari, p. 44.

²⁶Jauss, Hans Robert (2014). *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Translated into Arabic by Khalifa Babahawari. Markiz al-Shuruq li al-Abhathwa al-Dirasat, p. 89; Hassan Muhammad, Abd al-Nasser (2002). *Theory of Reception between Jauss and Iser*. Cairo: Dar al-Nahdha al-'Arabiyya, p. 133.

In view of this, we cannot rob the critic of his role in rectifying the text and revealing its aesthetics and negativities from a literary, aesthetic and structural point of view because not every prose poetry text, for example, achieves the poetic conditions and the conditions of the prose poem. Here appears the role of the critics in justifying the attribution of a text to a given literary genre, irrespective of the readers' admiration of the text. Therefore, the role of the author should not be deleted, and he has to realize the extent of his involvement in the maze of the literary genres and the right of his text to be celebrated by the readers through reading it. Here, a significant problem in analysis appears. The reader might make his own interpretations according to a goal that he seeks to confirm without having to pay attention to which genre the literary text belongs. The question that remains waiting for an answer is: Should we be satisfied with *the death of the author* and watch how the text leaks like gel? But what will happen?

Will the author continue producing similar texts to the ones he has produced? Or should he realize some of his negativities and the hidden things of the styles that he missed? In this way, the structural perspective of existence, according to Roger Garaudy (1913-2012), appears to have no connection with the historical and social entity of the human being, except with the formal linguistic relations that adopt the absolute aesthetic method of things whose indications are constituted automatically without the interference of Man.²⁷

Lucien Goldman (1913-1970), who introduced the method of Genetic Structuralism, realized the danger of the attitude that Barthes was leading them to by isolating and excluding the author and the context from the linguistic structure that is satisfied with itself. What reinforced his conviction of the danger of the Structural Method is his Marxist political and intellectual affiliation, which refuses the Structural formal luxury in the purely linguistic viewpoint about texts. Goldman called for connecting the internal textual structure with the

movement of social history and cultural context and combining the three parts of the text: form, structure and context. He maintained that the vision of the world constitutes, with the indicative structure, a complete unity, which supposes the movement from a static vision that is imposed by stability of the linguistic structures to a comprehensive coherent and dynamic vision so that we will be able to understand the text from all its angles.²⁸

Isolation of the literary discourse from the historical and cultural context led, according to Michel Foucault (1926-1984), to *shortage of Structural Criticism*. Edward Said (1935-2003) supported him in that when he connected between the theory of discourse and the political conflicts on the level of thought and practice. However, the more threatening thing is the emptiness of the text, according to Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), who called for the mess of interpretation that rebels against the space of interpretation because the intention of the author does not exist with the death of the author and absence of the text.

Robert Holub (b. 1948), however, called for the dialectic relationship between the text, the author and the reader. He argued that the meaning and structure result from the interaction between the reader and the text, which comes closer to an artistic work in its interpretations that are taken from the intertwined social and cultural amounts of information, which constitute a common means between the author, the text and the reader.

Thus, Barthes moves from *the Death of the Author* to the *Pleasure of the Text*, with which he completes his theory. It is a subjective creative action that the reader feels of through his interaction with his interpretations of the text, which he extracts far from the influence of the author.

The author will stay in the previous formula alive watching the final exits so that he will use them later. Alternatively, another author might replace

²⁷ Garaudy, Roger (1985). *Structuralism, the Philosophy of the Death of Man*: Translated by George Tarabishi. Beirut: Dar al-Tali'a, p. 83.

²⁸ Goldman, Lucien et al. (1986). *Genetic Structuralism and Literary Criticism*. Translated by Muhammad Sabila. Beirut: Mu'asasat al-Abhath al-'Arabiya, p. 46.

him and use the accumulations of feedback from a previous text in several intertextualities in order to create texts that confirm his constant existence beside the text and the reader. So, the death of the author means dryness of the visual memory of the text. By this, Structuralism revealed a non-human tendency when it declared the death of the author, which implies that it does not believe in man's ability to affect history and social reality as an active Self; it looked at him as isolated and submissive to the domination of the linguistic model and structural sets, and thus, it deprived him of every freedom or ability to practice the human administration."²⁹

In my view, it is clear that this method does not take care about what the text says or about the values that it expresses. It does not have any social or political or moral role, either. Nothing of that has any significance and the whole significance is only in the form, and the language is the only voice and only speaker in the text. In this form of formal criticism, literature stopped to be a reflection of experience or an image of reality. Being as such, literature turns into itself and becomes merely a linguistic achievement. The value and significance of its author and critic lie in the language only.

In this way, literature was separated from the world and fell into the lap of language or, actually, it was imprisoned in the prison of language and thus, Malarme's statement prevailed: "Not with thoughts do we make lines [of poetry] but with words". Al-Kurdi says that deliberate disregard of the world of values destroys the Structural Criticism by excluding all the aesthetic and moral contents from which no masterpiece of artistic work is void. The author grows in the world of values and is affected by it, and consequently, it is necessary to have a clear critical attitude that confronts the methods that benefitted from the text as much as they ruined and tore it by excluding the creative

author, without whom no great immortal works would appear in the world.³⁰

Abd al-Malik Murtadh supports the idea of the author's connection to his text and introduces a balanced vision that is not tempted by the idea of *the Death of the Author*. Despite his refusal to the pure contextual readings that kept the text away from its aesthetic elements that lie in its linguistic structure, he gives the author his creative practical position that relies on his realization of the risk of being drifted after the postulates of the structural criticism that have no intellectual justifications as "the creator is the master and owner of his creation and no society, nor time nor people can dispute with him, despite our belief in the idea of intertextuality. This confirms the belonging of the text to its author and the postulate of *the Death of the Author* is a critical fallacy that contradicts the sound logic regarding the connection between the creators and their works. Besides, there are some interpretations that cannot be reached or understood except by knowledge of the author and his geographical and psychological life circumstances. Hence, the writer's responsibility remains valid and ready to move the circles of interpretation into different directions and paths, even if this is the business of both the reader and critic alike.

The reader, according to Abd al-Fattah Kilito, reads the text from perspectives and interests that concern him or the group that he belongs to, and the reader always aims at a certain objective that he seeks to prove; consequently, he is likely to accept the texts that identify with his choices and interpretation. In addition, the *ideologized text* will keep the author's impact clear in it through his political and non-political thoughts. Here, the author is the director to the reader towards some indications that he intended but the reader does not know that the author is taking him towards his thoughts in a subtle and smooth way, and by that, the writer becomes strongly present in the text.³¹

²⁹Tamer, Fadel (1994). *Al-Lugha al-Thaniya fi Ishkaliyyat al-Manhajwa al-Nazariyawa al-Mustalah*. 1st ed. Beirut: al-Markiz al-Thaqafi al-'Arabi, p. 114.

³⁰Al-Kurdi, Muhammad Ali (1983). Structural Criticism between Ideology and Theory. *MajallatFusul*. Cairo: First Issue, p. 33. (In Arabic).

³¹Murtadh, Abd al-Malik (1989). *Fi Nazariyyat al-Nas al-Adabi*. *Majallat al-Mawqef al-Adabi*. Damascus, p. 201.

Abd al-Aziz Hamoudeh argues that the theory of Death of the Author tries to celebrate the impossibility of solving a group of familiar problems. Hamoudeh adds that the role of the author's intention is to give the literary language the role of interpretive postulates, and the error in these modernist critical theories lies in the conception that these postulates are real problems. Barthes's moodiness and his interest in vogue and being different made him declare the Death of the Author. However, in his speech about Semiology, he admitted the author's existence because there is no benefit from excluding him from his creative product.³²

In conclusion, the theory of *the Death of the Author* in all its intellectual and literary dimension is considered a feat in the air in the direction of an awareness that has not been formed yet and, I suppose, will not be completely formed at any time because the complications of the human soul and the orbits of the soul and everything that is connected to it will prevent that.

Barthes' declaration of *the Death of the Author* was not sufficiently convincing; it actually pushed the literary criticism into what Barthes called 'inevitability of the form', which entails exaggerated interest in signs and employed indicators that resulted in absolutism and loss of poesy in analysis and difficulty in the employed language.

In my view, the author has a retroactive role in the context of the historical and cultural role of his final product that is represented in the text. Textual reading by the readers does not justify creation of new works through their multiple interpretations and are not sufficient to complete the creative link of all their elements.

Therefore, the existence of the reader and the critic will have a great effect by its feedback in enriching the author's memory with a group of considerations that might enrich his following creation and here, in my view, there are certain

points of weakness that appear in Barthes' theory of *the Death of the Author*.

In addition, the theory of *the Death of the Author* faces a number of problems such as the intentional role of the author, the role of the interpretive theories of the texts, negativity of the objective circumstances of the texts etc. If the theory of *the Death of the Author* appeared as a response to specific philosophical visions, the human being, consequently, is the inventor of the language. Hence, how can it exclude him? Ultimately, the text is a product of a system of thematic intertwinements that result from the author's interaction with his environment. It is also the thing that constitutes the deep and fundamental memory of the author, from which he derived his thoughts and creative choices. Therefore, the reader's interpretation of the text and following conclusions that he might draw from the text are born from a different social and cultural system. Therefore, the visions and indications are likely to differ, but what gives the text its time power and constancy is the first system or set that colored the author's thoughts and style.

Summary

After an analytical exposition of some critical postulates that are related to the text and *the Death of the Author* in this study, it appears that the structural perspective of the entity of the creative author does not meet the requirements of the comprehensive critical analysis. It also shows that the theory of *the Death of the Author* is a nihilistic outlook at the creative process; it is a comprehensive tendency that excludes the Self of the individual from the center of the human existence and denies any active role by it in the history and substitutes it by the language in such a way that turns the Self/ entity into a product of the language and not vice versa and thus, the world and everything in it turns into a text.

The theory of *the Death of the Author* decreases the author's intellectual right and credit and his great effort because it separates the text from its creator, his experience and his skill in life. It is also a rereading of the text from a critical angle or an impressionistic reading to form an image about it

³²Hamoudeh, Abd al-Aziz (2003). *Al-Khurujmin al-Tih* (Dirasa fi Sultat al-Nass. *Jaridat al-Riyadh*. Issue 298, p. 38.

far from the intention and objective of the author. The theory also sees that the author's text is a collection of quotations from previous memories and information, arguing that every text is preceded by a text from which it quotes. This is an argument that is denied by lots of people who are engaged in the art of writing.

Theory of *the Death of the Author* has some arbitrariness in raising the value of the text at the expense of the author, which I consider a kind of a 'creative mess' as it is impossible to jump over the rational logic, and I wonder: How can we allow the language to murder the human being who created the language itself? Language, according to Barthes, is the speaker in the text and not the author!

According to Barthes, the reader becomes the point of interest because he gives the text its greater position through his interpretations that he makes without having previous measurements. Thus, the reader becomes the real creator of the text because he extracts from its moving and lively meanings as a rigid text where the role of the writer has ended. He considers the text an indicative practice in which he employs all his capacities as the text is an intertextuality and intertextuality demands the reader to realize all the relations between the text and other previous or later texts. Consequently, the text stops to be connected to the Self of the author and his possession but the possession of the reader.

In spite of our knowledge that the reader is the master of the situation after printing the text and the exit of the author from the context of life (by his actual physical death, for example), analysis of the text, its sets, systems, indications and language in its various levels of grammar, syntax, intonation, sound and semantics, cannot be complete without dealing with the author.

Actually, the author's suggestive and interpretive existence are concurrent through his circumstances and environment that produced the text, and which will be taken into consideration at the time of making interpretations. However, that is subject to several elements of cultures, which constitute a fertile field for producing a plenty of interpretations that concern all the authors.

The subject of *the Death of the Author* will continue to raise controversy but in the meantime, let us pose this question to the readers of this study: Can the this Barthesian theory be valid or applied to the literature of confessions including autobiography, which is established on the principle of self-confession? Who is more entitled to write one's biography, the author himself or someone else? Many poems, attitudes, sayings, wise statements acquire their significance from their speakers. In many cases, we read a certain poem and when we read the name of its writer, we reread it recalling everything that our memory missed in our first reading because of our pre-refusal to the unknown writer and alienation from him. Often, the significance of the author dominates the text and this is what some unknown poets or those who look for more fame noticed. Some of them deliberately tried to market their poems by attributing their poems to a popular poet.

In my view, the theory of the *Death of the Author* is a condescending philosophical one. *The Death of the Author* is intended to understand the text in another way that is based on Aristotle's way that is established in the reader's mind. There is no doubt that this is a strange shocking argument but this is what Roland Barthes calls for openly in his essay *The Death of the Author*. Therefore, this theory requires a lot of contemplation and thinking and needs reconsideration of the results of the previous methods. The text and the author are one integral whole and it is impossible to separate them under any circumstances even if they are strong and convincing.

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