

The Inventory of Roland Barthes'

The death of the Author (1967)

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This written response uses the method of inventory to catalogue Roland Barthes' essay *The Death of the Author* (1967). By breaking the text into seven conceptual parts, I aim to understand how its structure shapes the meaning of the essay.

In this process, I use "*Author*" as a key term to examine each paragraph, tracing how the concept and argument of the Author transform throughout the text.

This inventory deconstructs the original essay and turns cataloguing into a way of reading.

By listing and separating the sections, the structure itself reflects the content of the text. At the same time, this approach also responds to the core idea of *The Death of the Author* — that the reader is free to interpret the text.

1) **Author is not the origin of text:**

Barthes uses an example to illustrate the idea that once a text is written, the concept of the author is erased.

2) **The birth of Author:**

Barthes reveals the idea of the Author emerged in modern society, shaped by rationalism and the Reformation's celebration of the individual.

3) **The illusion of Author's intension:**

Barthes uses an example to explain the idea of when text been written out, the concept of author is erased.

4) **Author exists only in the moment of writing:**

This part is about how language replace the author. Language speaks by itself; the "I" of writing is only a temporary position.

5) **Author is replaced by the operator of language:**

The modern scriptor no longer creates meaning but operates within language itself. Writing becomes an act of performance rather than personal expression.

6) **The disappearance of Author, and the open structure of language:**

Without the author's single voice, the text becomes a multi-layered web of quotations—a space of many writings that interact without hierarchy.

7) **The death of the Author:**

Meaning is no longer fixed by the author but generated by the reader. The unity of the text lies not in its origin but in its destination—the reader who gives it life through interpretation.