مجلة جامعة تشرين للدراسات والبحوث العلمية _ سلسلة الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية المجلد (25) العدد (18)2003
Tishreen University Journal for Studies and Scientific Research- Arts and Humanities Science Series Vol (25) No (18) 2003

Death of the Author in Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Approach

Dr. Musa Al-Halool*

(Accepted 4/1/2003)

□ ABSTRACT □

The primary focus of this paper is on how analogy functions rhetorically in the post-Romantic discourse on the death of the author, and where this rhetoric begins to break down. In this paper I will examine three rhetorical tropes employed by Eliot, Jung, and Barthes who resort to analogies in order to advance their arguments in such a seductive way that a counter-argument seems an exercise in futility at best and an unthinkable task at worst. I regard these theorists as rhetoricians because their basic approach, despite their scientific posturing, is to persuade their audience by rhetorical rather than empricial means. However, we may do well to approach their arguments with the skeptic notion that the use of most, not to say all, rhetorical strategies occurs at a critical juncture in the discursive formation, and thus is essentially a means of overcoming an argumentative hurdle. The crucial issue raised by this paper is: If the method is questionable, then won't the conclusions reached with the help of that method be questionable as well?

*** Assistant Professor Department Of English Language-Faculty Of Arts And Humanties English, Tishreen University -Lattakia-Syria.**

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موت المؤلف في النظرية الأدبية الحديثة: دراسة مقارنة

الدكتور موسى الحالول*

(قبل للنشر في 2003/1/4)

الملخّص

الهدف الأساسي لهذا البحث هو تسليط الضوء على الوظيفة البلاغية لمنطق القياس (التشبيه) الذي لجأ إليه إليوت ويونغ وبارت ليعلنوا موت المؤلف. ويدرس البحث الحِيَل البلاغية التي استخدمها هؤلاء في حِجاجهم في هذه المسألة. وينظر البحث إلى هؤلاء البلاغيين بصفة كونهم بلاغيين لا نقاداً، لأن تناولهم لهذه المسألة، رغم تظاهرهم بالاتكاء على المنهج العلمي، يهدف أساساً إلى الحِجاج من طريق البلاغة (الفهلوية) لا من طرقٍ علمية قابلة للاختبار. وهذا أوجب على البحث أن يتناول محاججاتهم بشيءٍ من التشكيك، إذ إن معظم، إن لم نقُل كل، الاستراتيجيات البلاغية يلجأ إليها من يلجأ عندما تصل محاججته إلى طريق مسدودة. وعليه، فهي من حيث الجوهر وسيلة لتخطي هذا المأزق. المسألة التي يثيرها هذا البحث هي: إذا كان المنهج الذي استخدمه هؤلاء البلاغيون مشكوكاً في صحته، ألا يحق لنا أن نشكك في صحة استنتاجاتهم أيضاً؟

*أستاذ مساعد في قسم اللغة الإنكليزية –كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية –جامعة تشرين– اللاذقية – سورية.

> 'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
> Go just alike, yet each believes his own.
> —Alexander Pope, "An Essay on Criticism"

In The New Science, Vico explains how the human mind functions structurally to grasp the truth. It contrives all sorts of devices with which to map out an uncharted territory of knowledge. Central to all intellectual curiosity is the locating of a center—a center that provides the perspective from which human beings proceed in their epistemological endeavors. This center, called by Derrida "not a fixed locus but a function" (150), can be erected in many different ways, one of which is what I shall call the analogical discourse. Resorting to analogies as an argumentative tool is by no means new. Yet, the success or failure of analogical discourse is entirely dependent upon the context and the suitability of the fields of comparison.

The frequent use of analogies is always coupled with the intention or hope of making a better elucidation of a problem, giving it a convincing edge, substantiating or taking a convenient shortcut to a complicated argument. Yet, analogies are by nature subjective and seductive. As a result, the conclusions reached with the aid of these strategies cannot be verified empirically. All they need is good faith to be endorsed as valid and acquire currency among believers/readers. Here lies the danger—the danger of passively surrendering to a conclusion reached and endorsed as a legitimate argument purely on account of the seductive appeal of its means. It also seems that rhetoricians resort to analogies under various conditions of duress, which perhaps explains the nature of their desperate choice. For once the analogy provides the necessary relief, it is dismissed as either burdensome, self-defeating, or lame.

A favorite analogy for many literary critics and philosophers is the fable of the seven blind men and the elephant: some use it to illustrate that no single perspective can comprehend truth in its entirety; Ngugi wa Thiong'o in Decolonising the Mind, on the other hand, cites it to illustrate how one's stance in relation to something else shapes and informs his/her attitude toward the thing perceived (88). In sum, an analogy expresses the rhetorician's inability to deal with a phenomenon on its own terms. So, in order to overcome this inability, the rhetorician's mind invents what Cleanth Brooks analogically calls a "scaffolding." The question, however, is: What if the scaffolding is teetering over a void? Does it bear a push?

Smith and Liedlich note that "The analogy is especially helpful in explaining the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar" (57). While noting the "useful and explanatory purpose" of analogies, Winkler and McCuen, on the other hand, stipulate that they be "used to illuminate minor points of an argument" (emphasis added). If not, it will be "risky to frame a massive argument in the language of analogy" (159). Below is their elaboration of how and where the analogical argument breaks down:

> A special kind of faulty relationship between ideas can occur when they are equated through the use of an analogy. Two ideas may be brought into relationship with each other despite the fact that they involve different values and principles. The result is likely to be an oversimplification of the argument. (159)

In this paper I will examine three rhetorical tropes employed by three well-known literary theorists who resort to analogies in order to advance their arguments in such a seductive way that a counter-argument seems an exercise in futility at best and an

unthinkable task at worst. I regard these theorists as rhetoricians because their primary objective, despite their scientific posturing, is to persuade their audience by rhetorical rather than empirical means. However, we may do well to approach their arguments with the skeptic notion—in itself a dangerous approach sometimes—that the use of most, not to say all, rhetorical strategies occurs at a critical juncture in the discursive formation, and thus is essentially a means of jumping over an argumentative hurdle—to continue the analogy of the scaffolding. It must be noted here that the primary focus of this paper is on how analogy functions rhetorically in the post-Romantic discourse on the death of the author, and where this rhetorical function begins to break down.

T. S. Eliot's Catalyst

In "Tradition and the Individual Talent, " T. S. Eliot uses a scientific analogy to illustrate his impersonal theory of poetry. Eliot's essay must, of course, be read in its historical context. Hazard Adams sees it as "an attack on certain critical emphases in Romanticism, particularly the cult of originality and the idea that a poem is primarily an expression of the personality of the poet" (760). In all fairness to Eliot, however, it must be noted that his "antipoetic coldness" (Adams, 760), manifested in his fervent desire to divest the poet of his individual personality, was primarily an attack on the critic not the poet. Here is how he sees critics at work:

> One of the facts that might come to light in this process is our tendency to insist, when we [critics] praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else. In these aspects or parts of his work we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man. We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors; we endeavor to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. (761)

However, Eliot does not spare the poet from his scathing remarks. Having diagnosed the critic's astigmatism, he now turns to diagnose the poet's myopia. "No poet, no artist of any art, " says Eliot, "has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists." This historical sense, as Eliot calls it, is a prerequisite for "anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year." The historical sense "involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence." Eliot further elaborates on this point by insisting that a poet, in order to deserve the edifying title of a traditional, i.e. impersonal, poet, must write "not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order" (761).

Eliot posits an ideal order already inhering in the whole Western canon: "The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them." Eliot's critical trajectory is clearly heading towards the establishment of an interactive theory of art, a theory that sees works of art of all times interacting with, and sustaining, each other. Precisely because Eliot's theory of art is interactive, it negates perforce any stagnation in this ideal order.

> The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must

> be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. (762)

To sum up, Eliot conceives of the history of art as one continuum. It is precisely this conception which leads Eliot to think of art as forming one ideal interactive order. Now this conception has at least one consequence that affects the position of the poet in the Eliotian poetics. If art is seen as the higher ideal, then the poet must perforce be relegated to a subsidiary position: "The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality" (762); and if art is an interactive continuum, then the poet must be the catalyst to effect such interaction.

At this point, Eliot's argument seems to arrive at a critical juncture; and he is so acutely and even belligerently aware of that (he later declares as much). Therefore, he wants to advance his argument for the depersonalization of the poet, which has been hitherto progressing on a purely polemic level, by giving it a scientific twist:

> There remains to define this process of depersonalization and its relation to the sense of the tradition. It is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approach the condition of science. I, therefore, invite you to consider, as a suggestive analogy, the action that takes place when a bit of finely filiated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulfur dioxide. (762)

With this invitation, Eliot concludes Section I of "Tradition and the Individual Talent." This structuring is important for understanding Eliot's scientific posturing, for in the very next breath (Section II) he is able to declare a posteriori that "Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation are directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry" (762). The analogy of the catalyst enables Eliot to regard the impersonal theory of poetry as a given rather than as a controversial issue, which it is; otherwise why is he struggling to prove it?

Eliot uses this convenient analogy to bring another controversial battle to a decisive conclusion: that of the relation of the poem to its author. Notice how Eliot easily settles the controversy by a fiat signified by an initial conjunction: "And I hinted, by an analogy, that the mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature one … by being a more finely perfected medium" (762-3). Now just as platinum causes the combination between oxygen and sulfur dioxide, the result of which is sulfurous acid according to Eliot's misrepresentation of the formulae, a poet is only the chamber containing the two gases. And just as the newly formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum itself is apparently unaffected, so should the mind be unaffected by the experiences of the poet.

Even though Eliot has just declared that "The mind of the poet is the shred of the platinum" (763), he now has to admit to himself, albeit uncomfortably, that the analogy of the catalyst lacks the theoretical finesse he was aiming for. Therefore, in order for his poetics to maintain its air of credibility, now evidently in question, Eliot has to resort to hairsplitting:

> It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material. (763)

However, Eliot now begins to realize that his analogy of the catalyst does not really serve his argument for the totally depersonalized poet. Sulfurous acid is sulfurous acid; it is neither perfect nor mediocre. But poetry is not exactly the product of chemical interaction. Poetry is a peculiarly human activity in which feelings, thoughts, impressions, and experience are mixed together. Therefore, it cannot be reduced to a chemical formula or a mechanical procedure.

Eliot's analogy of the catalyst was intended to bring art closer to "the condition of science, " but towards the end of Section II, he unyokes himself of this analogy and lapses into nonscientific, less cocky discourse:

> The point of view which I am struggling to attack is perhaps related to the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul: for my meaning is, that the poet has, not a "personality" to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. (Emphasis added, 763)

Perhaps? In peculiar and unexpected ways? Has Eliot given up his cocksure scientific posturing and lapsed into the soothing comfort of unempirical metaphysics? If the mind of the poet is the shred of the platinum according to Eliot, I wonder what will happen if one reverses Eliot's analogy: Will the piece of platinum be able to produce as great a poem as The Waste Land? No doubt, Eliot resorted to the analogy of the chemical catalyst as a sort of rhetorical "scaffolding" and to give his argument an air of scientific finality.

Proceed with Caution: Jung's "Lame Comparisons" Ahead

In Freud's opinion all artistic activity is motivated and governed by the pleasure principle, particularly sexual pleasure. Freud understands the essence of art as the rearrangement of raw material. He corroborates this understanding by evoking the "wisdom" of language (713), which kept this essential connection between childhood play and adult artistic creativity, in such words as spielen ("to play") and its agglutinative derivatives Lustspiel, Trauerspiel, and Schauspieler ("comedy, " "tragedy, " and "player" respectively). From here Freud proceeds to announce that creative activity is a continuation of, or a substitute for, the play of childhood. As all poetry consists essentially in the "play" of, or with, words, art in general consists in the rearrangement or camouflage of personal experience, particularly the artist's shameful experiences or repressed sexual desires. Since art is a continuation of the play of childhood, people never stop "(fore)playing;" they fantasize, and fantasy is an adjunct to playing and art. Freud also claims that a child plays out of a wish to be a grown-up, whereas the adult fantasizes in order to go back to the blissful past of childhood. Both activities, one can only conclude, are indicative of dissatisfaction with the present. Moreover, fantasies are fulfillments of wishes, either erotic wishes as in the case of young women or ambitious wishes as in the case of young men. When fantasies become "overluxuriant and powerful" they lead to neurosis. Similarly, the creative writer is a daydreamer whose writings are also wish-fulfillments. Even myths are "distorted vestiges of the wishful fantasies of whole nations, the secular dreams of youthful humanity" (715).

Jung, on the other hand, is well aware of the fact that what Freud perhaps intended only as a method amounted to a rigid doctrine whereby artistic creativity was reduced to neurosis or psychosis. Thus, he proclaims that psychology's concern is with the creative process not with "the innermost essence" of art (784). The implications of this statement are: first, art cannot and must not be reduced to psychology; second, art cannot and must not be mistaken for pathological phenomena such as neurosis or psychosis. Furthermore, Jung refutes Freud's claim that neurosis and psychosis originate in the repression of sexual desires or fantasies. Methodologically, this refutation further enables Jung to refute Freud's assumption that a work of art is a symptom of the author's psychosis or neurosis. Still, how can Jung deal a rhetorical coup de maître to his master's argument? Jung lights upon his eureka and suggests that a work of art be compared to a plant!

This analogy enables him to draw some interesting conclusions about the nature of the work of art as he, with the assistance of the analogy, conceives of it. Like the plant which is rooted in, and draws its nourishment from, the soil, a work of art has an intrinsic quality all its own. Moreover, as the analysis of the soil does not lead to identical conclusions about the plant, neither does the analysis of the work of art lead to knowledge about the psyche of the artist. The work itself is not a personality to be analyzed, but is something "supra-personal." Thus, the meaning and quality of a work do not inhere in its extrinsic determinants but within it. As the plant uses the soil for its own nourishment only to grow out of it, art by analogy can and should, therefore, subordinate the artist to its own uses. Art is autonomous—a smoothly reached conclusion that earned Jung his anti-Freudian kudos! Thus, Jung is able to claim that his focus, unlike Freud's, is on the creative-artistic process rather than on the artist as a (sick) person. (There is no question that Jung oversimplifies Freud's thesis and his approach is essentially reductive, but this is not the concern of this paper).

A careful analysis, however, of Jung's conception of where artistic creativity originates shows that he is somewhat ambivalent or vague about this issue. I believe this seeming ambivalence or vagueness is the result of Jung's ardent desire to refute Freud's formulations on the relationship between psychoanalysis and art on the one hand, and on the adequacy of psychology to do justice to the analysis of the origins of art, on the other hand. Hence, Jung's rather mysticist proclamation: "Since nobody can penetrate to the heart of nature, you will not expect psychology to do the impossible and offer a valid explanation of the secret of creativity" (emphasis added, 789). That is quite unlike Jung who two paragraphs later renounces all comparisons as lame and asks his audience for permission to "stick to the more precise terminology of science." It is quite unlike him to contradict himself by stating that the nascent work of art is "a psychic formation that remains subliminal until its energy-charge is sufficient to carry it over the threshold into consciousness" (789). I believe the contradiction lies in stating precisely where and how a work is born at the time he has just expressed doubts as to how or where the secret of creativity lies. This belief is further buttressed by Jung's groundbreaking theory of the collective unconscious (not personal unconscious as Freud would have it) as the source of what he calls the autonomous creative complex: "I am assuming that the work of art we propose to analyze, as well as being symbolic, has its source not in the personal unconscious of the poet, but in a sphere of unconscious mythology whose primordial images are the common heritage of mankind" (790).

It seems here that the contradiction is the result of Jung's desire to contradict Freud in the original sense of the word. Note the emphasis placed on the negation of the poet's personal unconscious. This contradiction is carried further when Jung sees in art neither

a substitution nor a wish-fulfillment but a reconstruction "of the age-old original of the primordial image" (790). Traveling the artistic path in Jung's sense is to discover what meets the unconscious needs of the artist's age. Art is to be understood not simply as an unconscious attempt on the part of a repressed and unsatisfied daydreamer to recapture the blissful past of childhood, as Freud asserts, but as a gleam of hope to help humanity endure "the longest night" and "a refuge from every peril." This highly poetic, highly mystical language only points to one fact: that while Jung disagrees with Freud on the origins of artistic creativity, he agrees with him on the practical uses of art for humanity. But while Freud sees art as the artist's unconscious attempt at wish-fulfillment, Jung sees it as the artist's unconscious panacea for whatever perils beset his age. This is a rather unhappy conclusion to Jung's thesis on the absolute autonomy of art. For if art is such a wonderful and timely panacea, how can it then be completely divorced from the human agent who concocted it, especially when this agent has such a huge collective responsibility? Moreover, nowhere is it clear how this autonomy is conceived or developed. This leads to conclude that the analogy that Jung employs to objectify the autonomous nature of art is superfluous, let alone useless. Apparently, when Jung's counter-argument seemed to be halting, a convenient analogy was invented to advance it and get it on the move. When it turns out to be a liability later on, Jung, again conveniently, shrugs it off and dismisses his own analogy on the grounds that all comparisons are lame. Alas, I cannot agree more.

The Lure of Barthesian Syllogism

Roland Barthes's pronouncement of the death of the author in 1968 comes as a logical corollary to his structuralist poetics laid down in his 1964 essay "The Structuralist Activity." In this latter essay, Barthes lays particular emphasis on functions rather than on substances, on the creative process rather than on the product of this process. "The Structuralist Activity" commences as a sort of aesthetic jeremiad in that Barthes, seeing the deplorable state of affairs of the notion of structure, bewails its vulgarization at the hands of social scientists. Barthes senses a conspiracy of terminological abuse whose chief end is "the camouflage of the old determinist schema of cause and product." Seen in this light, linguistics emerges as "the true science of structure." For one thing, the synchronic paradigm in structuralist linguistics "seems to imply a certain revision of the notion of history." For another, the diachronic paradigm "tends to represent the historical process as a pure succession of forms" (Barthes 1964, 1128). Thus divesting history of any psychological, human, economic, or ideological factors, it is no wonder that Barthes sees Marxism as the chief antithetical force that structuralism has to contend with.

The structuralist activity, according to Barthes, is to lay bare and articulate the rules by which an "object" (a work of art, for example) functions in order to render it intelligible. "Structure, " says Barthes, "is therefore actually a simulacrum of the object" (Barthes 1964, 1128). No work, says Barthes contrary to realist prejudice, deserves to be called a work of art unless it is amenable to structuralist reconstruction. In order to unearth this simulacrum, this parallel to the original work, structural man has to dissect and articulate. Dissecting is the process which "produces an initial dispersed state of the simulacrum." This is to be achieved by finding in the work "certain mobile fragments whose differential situation engenders a certain meaning." This is the syntax of creative art. Articulating, however, entails that "structural man must discover [for these mobile

fragments] certain rules of association" (Barthes 1964, 1128). This is the syntax of critical discourse.

Now, where does meaning come into play in this structuralist poetics? According to Barthes, meaning inheres not in any authorial intention or some other extrinsic determinant, but in the regular return/recurrence of those mobile fragments of the work and in the differential relationships binding them together. This is tantamount to declaring anything outside the work, including its author, off limits. Here is where Barthes starts to take practical steps to defrock the author.

At the beginning of his article "The Death of the Author, " Barthes rejects ontological criticism, i.e., that critical practice which tries to locate the meaning of the work in the personality of its author, and asserts instead that "writing is the destruction of every voice, every origin" (Barthes 1968, 1130). Barthes conceives of writing as an essentially depersonalizing process in which "all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes" (Barthes 1968, 1131).

Barthes counts Mallarmė, Valėry, Proust, Brecht and the Surrealists among those who helped "desacralize the image of the Author" (Barthes 1968, 1131). In order to maximize his rhetorical achievement, Barthes once again falls back on linguistics, a discipline whose characteristic distinction from literature has been incontrovertibly effaced by the postmodernist dismantlement of borders. Moreover, Barthes resorts to linguistics not only to show, by analogy, how literature functions, but because he regards it as the true domain of the structuralist activity:

Last, outside literature itself (in fact, such distinctions are becoming quite dated), linguistics furnishes the destruction of the Author with a precious analytical instrument, showing that the speech-act in its entirety is an "empty" process, which functions perfectly without its being necessary to "fill" with the person of the interlocutors… (Barthes 1968, 1131)

Now, if linguistics is the legitimate realm of structuralist activity, then why should literature, a separate field, be subjected to its jurisdiction, as it were? First, because Barthes does not seem to acknowledge the existence of such distinctions; second, because linguistics provides him with "a precious analytical instrument" to carry out his deportation of the author.

This convenient falling back on linguistics enables Barthes to focus on the performative rather than the representational nature of literary writing. This entails that a literary text must perforce be seen as a speech-act having "no other content (no other statement) than the act by which it is uttered" (Barthes 1968, 1132). An additional benefit accruing from this auto-referentiality or self-containment of the text is divesting it of the element of history or any other reference outside itself. And if Barthes manages to sever the text from its historical context, which, in addition to society and the psyche, forms the author's hypostases, he will be able to negate the existence of the author. That is why he insists that the modern scriptor, who succeeded and superseded the author, and his text are born simultaneously:

> [T]he modern scriptor is born at the same time as his text; he is not furnished with a being which precedes or exceeds his writing, he is not the subject of which his work would be the predicate; there is no time other than that of the speech-act, and every text is written eternally here and now. (Barthes 1968, 1132)

Following Sassure's dictum that language is a closed circle of self-referential system, Barthes proceeds to give what amounts to be a mechanical, not to say schizophrenic, account of the scriptor's activity: "for him, on the contrary, his hand, detached from any voice, borne by a pure gesture of inscription (and not of expression), traces a field without origin—or at least with no origin but language itself, i.e., the very thing which ceaselessly calls any origin into question" (Barthes 1968, 1132). Perhaps one needs to articulate this Barthesian syllogism as follows: Language is an auto-referential system (major premise); a literary text has no origin but language (minor premise); therefore, the literary text is an auto-referential system (conclusion).

Whether one agrees with Barthes concerning this account of writing or dismisses it as a preposterous and illogical conclusion, one cannot help noticing its rhetorical value for him. In the very next breath, Barthes builds upon it a massive argument initialed by the "We" of royalty:

> We know now that a text consists not of a line of words, releasing a single "theological" meaning (the "message" of the Author-God), but of a multi-dimensional space in which are married and contested several writings, none of which is original: the text is a fabric of quotations, resulting from a thousand sources of culture. (Barthes 1968, 1132)

Here Barthes performs a double-kick of sorts. First, he has now "established" the death of the author as a given; second, through the use of another analogy (comparing the text to a piece of fabric), he wants to establish the concept of "multiple writing." Barthes is baiting us to ask: If a text is a piece of texture made up of various threads, what will happen if we pull these threads apart? Nothing remains. Likewise, any attempt to pin down the meaning of a text is an exercise in futility. Then what should we do? Barthes pontificates thusly:

> In multiple writing, in effect, everything is to be disentangled, but nothing deciphered, structure can be followed, "threaded" (as we say of a run in a stocking) in all its reprises, all its stages, but there is no end to it, no bottom; the space of writing is to be traversed, not pierced; writing constantly posits meaning, but always in order to evaporate it: writing seeks a systematic exemption of meaning. (Barthes 1968, 1132)

We are back to square one: to the structuralist activity and the simulacrum, to the closed circle of language. It is important to remember another analogy Barthes has already used: that of the lexicon. Having concluded syllogistically that writing is an auto-referential system with no other origin than language, he is now ready and able to make another theoretical claim whose ultimate end is to reinforce his earlier premise. Claiming that a literary work is "no more than a ready-made lexicon, whose words can be explained only through other words, and this ad infinitum" (Barthes 1968, 1132), Barthes can feel certain now about the exemption of a central meaning from the literary text.

While castigating modernity for its "invention" of the author, Barthes claims that writing has always been premised upon the death of the author: "No doubt it has always been so: once a fact is recounted—for intransitive purposes, and no longer to act directly upon reality, i.e., exclusive of any function except that exercise of the symbol itself—this gap appears, the voice loses its origin, the author enters his own death, writing begins" (Barthes 1968, 1131).

But who determines that a fact is recounted for intransitive purposes? Who says that it has no direct bearing upon reality? Who decides that it has no goal other than the exercise of the symbol itself? Who has the audacity to sever an author from his work and portray him as a headless, writing body? Moreover, isn't Barthes guilty of the same ideological tyranny he decries throughout his essay? By what authority can Barthes make such pronouncements? Donald E. Pease sees the death of the author as a direct result of the post-Renaissance division of labor:

> This separation of the cultural from the political and economic realms produced an even more fundamental division within the cultural realm, separating the author from his work. The cultural figure who supervised this division was neither the genius, nor the author, but the literary critic. Produced out of this division of labor within the cultural realm, the literary critic supervised further differentiation within the cultural realm and policed the boundaries distinguishing what was literary from what was not. (111)

Conclusion

While Eliot, Jung, and Barthes each sees the valorization of the author in contemporary critical practice as a function of the modernist discourse on subjectivity, they forget that their own impersonal poetics is a function of certain discursive formations they either established or helped establish. For Eliot, who was provoked by the Romantic discourse in criticism, the impersonality of the poet is an absolute must for what he sees as the ideal order presumably inherent in the Western canon. For Jung, who rebelled against the Freudian discourse on libidinal poetics, the "supra-personal" nature (i.e., the absolute autonomy) of art is a function of his own discourse on the collective unconscious. While for Barthes, who was unnerved by the Realist and Marxist discourses on human history, which forms one of the author's hypostases, the death of the author is a function of the structuralist activity, which he regards as the only legitimate activity for the critic. Though Barthes was more radical than Eliot and Jung in his call for impersonal poetics, he was less radical in his choice of analogy: at least he relied not on natural sciences as Eliot and Jung did, but on structuralist linguistics—which he sees as a science, though not as a different science from writing.

In their attempt to shift the critical focus from the author to the work itself, Eliot, Jung, and Barthes resorted to analogies borrowed from various fields of science. This scientific posturing is intended to correct what they see as critical malpractices and to reinstate criticism within its "proper" epistemological sphere in order to distance it from the human sciences which have given birth to such malpractices in the first place. Because of the entrenchment of these "malpractices" and the modernist valorization of subjectivity, Eliot, Jung, and Barthes all feel embattled. This explains their desperate need for "a precious analytical instrument, " to use the phraseology of Barthes. While they see writing in such totalizing, essentializing terms as "writing has always been so, " their battle is directed against every other critic except themselves. Instead of pursuing their critical dispute a la wits, Eliot, Jung, and Barthes stoop to the demagogic tactic of analogizing in order to objectify the autonomy of art from the artist. They build their massive arguments on false analogies that appeal to the common reader who has no expertise in the field to which the analogy is applied or in the field from which the analogy is borrowed. That is why after the analogy is applied, they deal with the impersonality of the poet/writer as a given that needs no further proof. Yet, the crucial issue remains: If the method is questionable, then won't the conclusions reached with the help of that method be questionable as well?

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