

Roland Barthes has written “Death of the Author” to critique literary critics of his time. By building upon the deconstructionist viewpoint emerging throughout philosophers of the 1960’s, his rhetoric expresses a need for the absence of a firm, stated meaning. The “death” he is expressing, is directed at the author’s view of himself as a creative genius where his or her written text is expressing an inner vision. Instead, Barthes believes that literature is “the trap where all identity is lost.” He opposes the mainstream view that a writer is ever-present in his work so that it is consequently filled with expressions of the author’s distinct personality. While Barthes’s piece seems to imply an intended guilt to the author, he is casting the destruction of text at the literary critic. It is the critic who does literature injustice by seeking to uncover the true meaning lying behind an author’s work. The critic, not the author, brings the author and his deeper meaning into examination. By piecing and attaching so-called meaning the author attaches behind his work, the critic is “refusing the author,” and thus robbing the reader of the ability to develop his or her own literary judgments. The feelings, motives, and experiences that an author includes directly in his work can be claimed by the critic and assumed to be the true meaning. However, this only deflates the text and undermines the author’s purpose in writing. With this, Barthes believes that one must be absent from inspection: either the author or the text.

In allowing an author to enter his own death when his writing begins, the author is removed from the analysis the work. This opens up a world of deconstructionism because no privileged point remains. Without an author, the text lacks any “authoritative viewpoint,” and thus opens up all opinions and views without limits to a number of readers. A text no longer has just one meaning but is continuously being filled with multiple constructed views. There is limitless opportunity for commentary about a piece of literature. Roland Barthes piece “Death of