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FLUIDITY OF AUTHORITY IN LUIGI PIRANDELLO'S *SIX*
CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR* AND PETER SHAFFER'S *THE
GIFT OF THE GORGON

M.A. Thesis

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ABSTRACT

FLUIDITY OF AUTHORITY IN LUIGI PIRANDELLO'S *SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR* AND PETER SHAFFER'S *THE GIFT OF THE GORGON*

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This thesis explores the function of the authorship and fluidity of the authority theme in Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and Peter Shaffer's *The Gift of the Gorgon*. In *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, giving meaning to the text is a characteristic generally attributed to the author according to the traditional point of view. In this context, while discussing to whom or what authority is attributed to in the absence of an author, other elements of the theatre such as manager, prompter, light, actor/actress and make-up are discussed. In the other play, *The Gift of the Gorgon*, Edward Damson, a famous playwright, states his willingness to try to manipulate the effect that the plays would have on the reader. At the same time, considering the possible reaction of the audience watching the play, his wife Helen's approaches are scrutinized as she has contributions to Edward's playwriting. Accordingly, a connection has been established with the perspectives of the audience watching the plays "Epic Theatre" and "The Theatre of Cruelty". The absence of an author in one of the plays, and the intense feeling of the writer's presence in the other, are also analysed from the standpoint of "The Death of the Author" put forward by Roland Barthes and the opinions emerging after it.

Keywords: Peter Shaffer, *The Gift of the Gorgon*, Luigi Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Authority, The Death of the Author



ÖZET

LUIGI PIRANDELLO’NUN *ALTI KİŞİ YAZARINI ARIYOR VE* PETER SHAFFER’ IN *GORGON’UN ARMAĞANI* OYUNLARINDA OTORİTENİN AKIŞKANLIĞI

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Bu tez Luigi Pirandello’nun *Altı Kişi Yazarını Arıyor* ve Peter Shaffer’in *Gorgon’un Armağanı* oyunlarındaki yazarlık temasının fonksiyonunu ve otoritenin akışkanlığı temasını inceler. *Altı Kişi Yazarını Arıyor* oyununda geleneksel olarak yazara atfedilmiş bir özellik olan metnin anlamını ortaya çıkarmak açısından otoritenin, bir yazarın yokluğunda kime ya da neye geçeceği tartışılırken yönetmen, suflör, ışıkçı, aktör ve makyaj gibi tiyatronun diğer elementleri incelenir. Diğer oyun olan *Gorgon’un Armağanı* oyununda ise bir oyun yazarı olan Edward Damson’un oyunlarını yazma aşamasında oyunların okur üzerinde yaratacağı etkiyi yönlendirme isteği ve seyircinin olası tepkisini düşünerek tüm bunlara müdahale eden Helen’in yaklaşımları incelenmiş “Epik Tiyatro” ve “Vahşet Tiyatrosu”ndaki seyirciyi odağa alan bakış açıları ile bağlantı kurulmuştur. Oyunlardan birinde yazarın olmaması, diğerinde ise yazarın varlığının yoğun şekilde hissedilmesi de Roland Barthes’in kaleme aldığı “Yazarın Ölümü” metni ve sonrasında ortaya çıkan görüşler açısından irdelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Peter Shaffer, *Gorgon'un Armađanı*, Luigi Pirandello, *Altı Kiři*
Yazarını Arıyor, Otorite, Yazarın Ölümü



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INTRODUCTION

This thesis concentrates upon two plays by two different playwrights belonging to two different nations, cultures and epochs; *Six Characters in Search of an Author* by Luigi Pirandello and *The Gift of the Gorgon* by Peter Shaffer. As both plays problematize the concept of authorship, I explore them in terms of the notion of “author-ity”¹ which entails questions on the power dynamics of interpretation. Traditionally, it is considered that the creator of a work has a certain authority in shaping how the work is received, but this approach is repeatedly challenged in the history of literary studies. Theatre poses an additional problem; the theatrical performance is interpreted by many, such as the manager, actor, prompter, and light technician before it is available for the audience. Both of these plays display the play-within-the-play technique; thus, the plays within these two plays explicate the creation process of a performance. While sorting out the differences and the similarities between the text and the performance as explored in the play not the performance of these two plays, I will be elaborating on the power dynamics which can be analysed through different elements of production in terms of author-ity. As there are interpretations from different approaches to the ongoing production process, the significance of the reader is also to be emphasised. All of the interpreters contributing to the performance can be considered as “readers,” as the spectators read the signs related to staging. In this sense, I will be analysing different layers of production and reception. These plays provide ample material for such an analysis, as each centres on different elements of the theatre, and include varying approaches to authorship as well as readership. While *The Gift of the Gorgon* concentrates upon the author and reader in terms of authority, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*

¹ This version of the word author-ity is chosen in order to show the author’s authority by combining the two words “author” and “authority.”

deals with nearly all the other elements of the theatre except for the author. In this section, I overview some influential approaches to authorship and readership, starting with the ancient times and ranging to more contemporary inquiries.

The concept of authorship is discussed through a wide range of approaches at different times in literary theory, and each approach puts a particular concern to the centre. These theories arise from many questions like “What is meaning?”, “Could there be one meaning or a multiplicity of meanings?”, “What is an author?”, “What is the reading process?”, “Who is the speaker in a text?”, “Who is the subject ‘I’?”, “How are these texts related to circumstances in which they are written?” In answering these questions, each approach focuses on a multiplicity of concerns.

The origin of the word “author” is semantically related to authority. In *A Dictionary of English Etymology*, this word comes from the Latin word “auctor” which means “originator, maker” (32). “Authority” originates from the word “author”, and an etymological connection can be established between the concept of authorship and authority. An originator can be linked with a father’s privileged place in a patriarchal order² as he is the figure of author-ity, which is an exploration of an author’s authority over the text.

Plato has two theories related to authorship: imitation and inspiration theory. Imitation theory treats poets as imitators, and Plato claims that everything in the existing world is an imitation of the forms in the world of ideas. The artwork is a second-removed imitation of the objects produced by the craftsman, who imitates for use value, and the craftsman also imitates the idea, “the One.” According to this theory, what the poet claims to have created is only a copy of a copy. In his work *The Republic*, he suggests the term “natural author” (234) referring to the creator of the original forms. Plato banishes poetry since the artist copies not the natural author’s object but the carpenter’s, which means that the artist is a liar. When Plato’s claims are adapted to literary creation, the author known as the creator is only the one who copies the appearances of this world. An author then does not have any authority over his works since he is an imitator.

² Most theorists who are interested in gender studies mention how patriarchal the historical process of writing is. For a long time, women had a difficulty writing or printing their work unlike men. Women used nicknames because of the patriarchal system.

Plato's inspiration theory deals with the creation process of the poet. From the perspective of this theory, the poet creates his poems without basing it upon any prior knowledge or art, as he is in an ecstatic mood. Unconscious while writing his poems, what he says is actually inspired by divine power. Plato's *Ion*, which is composed of dialogues between Socrates and Ion, a rhapsode, discusses whether rhapsodes recite through conscious reasoning, or through divine power. Rhapsodes are people who travelled across cities at that time, reading the poems of famous poets to different communities. Ion, who specializes in Homeric recitations, is considered to be the most famous rhapsode of his time. At the end of the dialogue, Socrates convinces Ion that rhapsodes do this work not with knowledge and expertise in different arts, but with inspiration. They form the chain's third link of inspiration after God and the poet and act as a final messenger:

That's why the god takes their intellect away from them when he uses them as his servants, as he does prophets and godly diviners, so that we who hear should know that they are not the ones who speak those verses that are of such high value, for their intellect is not in them: the god himself is the one who speaks, and he gives voice through them to us. (Plato, *Ion* 942d)

In his conversations with Ion, Socrates also questions the possibility of knowing the intention of the poet: "I mean, no one would ever get to be a good rhapsode if he didn't understand what is meant by the poet. A rhapsode must come to present the poet's thought to his audience; and he can't do that beautifully unless he knows what the poet means" (938c). In fact, Socrates's attitude corresponds to the questioning of possible changes in meaning, while being transferred from the god, to the carpenter, then to the artist, to the rhapsode and to the audience. As the rhapsode's performance is a third-removed copy, it is far from the original, essence or idea which is in the world of ideas.

In Plato's thinking, authorship is reduced to imitation, and the author is claimed to be a copyist. On the other hand, the author is glorified through an attribution of divine inspiration. Unlike Plato's arguments, which place the author in these positions, expressive theory focuses on the author's expression of feelings and

imagination in the formation of a text. According to the romantics, nature triggered their mind and through their imagination they transformed nature. William Wordsworth claims that a poet is excited by what he observes; his mind is always active and ready for re-creation. In the Preface of *Lyrical Ballads*, the poet is defined as:

The true poet, therefore, must not only study nature, and know the reality of things; but must also possess fancy, to invent additional decorations; judgement, to direct him in the choice of such as accord with verisimilitude; and sensibility, to enter with ardent emotions into every part of his subject, so as to transfuse into his work a pathos and energy sufficient to raise corresponding emotions in the reader. (496)

Although Wordsworth argues that the poet should use the language of ordinary men, he believes that the poet should be a genius above the level of ordinary man. Like Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge defends the same ideas about the poet as a genius as he changes the objects in his mind through imagination. The point he differs from Wordsworth is that the form of language should be different from everyday life and should be “poetic.” On the other hand, even though another romantic, Percy Bysshe Shelley supports these previous poets about the poet’s genius³ and importance of the imagination, he thinks that the poet and poetic language limits the imagination of the reader with his emotions. These romantic poets, then, underline the poet’s expression of feelings through imagination and focus on the creator’s mind while the reader is passive.

The emphasis shifted from the author to the text and the reader in the twentieth century. Roman Ingarden is one of the philosophers who defends the significance of reader’s active participation. According to him, the formal characteristics of a text like its genre or the author are not enough to grasp it entirely; the reader needs to fill out other gaps like the meaning concerning the figures of speech depending upon the reader’s consciousness to make the meaning concrete.

³ Genius is a talent that is not based on any rule, he has this capacity by nature and he was born with those ideas in his mind. Only the artist has genius and a fine art is only produced by him. Anything that is created by a genius will serve as some kind of an example for others to imitate.

This kind of criticism is against a unified meaning in a text; multiplicities of possible meanings are supported.

The emphasis shifted from the author to the text and the reader in the twentieth century. In 1967, Roland Barthes specified an approach in his essay “What is an Author” and analysed the concept of the author throughout history, claiming that the concept of the author in the twentieth-century is replaced by another concept: the scriptor. According to Barthes “the modern scriptor is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written here and now” (145). The scriptor’s creations are based on the creations of others before him, so “a text is a tissue of quotations” (146) and also a collection of signs or traces from different sources; thus, it has never been original. In addition to these, it is clearly seen that the emotions of the scriptor are not mentioned since what the reader focuses on, in this case, is not the scriptor but the text.

According to Barthes, searching for the intention of the author limits the possible interpretations of a text. The reader relates one sign to the other and what he does at this moment is metaphorically killing not only the author but also his authority. The text’s role is to transform the reader into an “author” because in these circumstances, it is the reader who rewrites and creates the text. Barthes finishes his essay by emphasizing the role of the reader saying “The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (149). With this move, Barthes frees the reader and illustrates that any originator has to die metaphorically not only the one who types the text but also each receiver as they become creators at each reading.

Umberto Eco is one of the thinkers who contributed to the discussions of authorship with his views in his book *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*. He, also, points out the significance of the reader in producing the text: “Every text, after all, is a lazy machine asking the reader to do some of its work. What a problem it would be if a text were to say everything the receiver is to understand it would never end” (3). As can be seen, the text remains constant and is rewritten at each reading. This is the birth of the reader, as Barthes specified. It is not possible that the same reader

will find the same meaning in different readings. The text can take any form according to the reader's perspective.

Michel Foucault's essay "What is an Author?" is considered as a response to the arguments of Barthes about the concept of authorship. The title, which may be intentionally chosen as "What is an Author" rather than "who is an author" gives the impression that the arguments in this essay do not focus on the individual character but the function. According to Foucault, the arguments specified in "The Death of the Author" are insufficient for solving the problems that come from the absence of an author. Getting rid of the author is problematic because of the several functions of the author; not his proper name or physical body but the function of his name. As Roland Barthes demonstrates, the author is dead metaphorically, yet what will happen to the space left from it? There are certain functions related to this absence of the author and Foucault names four functions of the author.

The first function is the author's legal function; the writer may be judged because of the ideas in his book. One needs to know whose ideas they are. Foucault demonstrates the necessity of a name for the legal responsibilities.

The second function suggests that it is necessary for the copyrights to prevent plagiarism as the text is seen as a property in Western societies. A text that does not have an owner is condemned to be continuously seized by someone else and transformed into different texts. Many religious books have changed, and different versions have emerged. For example, while there are four new testaments adopted by the church, there are many that have not been accepted. To minimize the disadvantages caused by this anonymity, an owner's name is required for a work.

The third function is about the reader's reception regarding whether someone who writes something should be called an author. Generally, the reader does not embrace authors; as soon as their works are published. It is the reader who attributes that role to an individual. The author publishes his work, but the reader judges whether he has the competence to be an author or not. The criterion in evaluating a text varies from society to society and century to century depending upon the dominant ideology, as Foucault puts it "All these operations vary according to periods and types of discourse. We do not construct a 'philosophical author' as we

do a 'poet,' just as, in the eighteenth century, one did not construct a novelist as we do today. Still, we can find through the ages certain constants in the rules of author construction" (110). The reader's views about an author keep changing, and in line with this, the notion of the author is constructed in time.

The fourth and last author function deals with the multiple selves of an author. The same person has different selves and identities, and it is impossible to talk about a single concept of a writer. When various texts of the same author are analysed, recognizing differences in his writing is most probable. It is possible to talk about how his writing has evolved and changed in time. To talk about his writing in general, we need the name of the author. Foucault summarises these four functions of the author as:

They can be summarised in the following manner: the 'author-function' is tied to the legal and institutional systems that circumscribe, determine, and articulate the realm of discourses; it does not operate in a uniform manner in all discourses, at all times, and in any given culture; it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a text to its creator, but through a series of precise and complex procedures; it does not refer, purely and simply, to an actual individual insofar as it simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy. (113)

After mentioning a brief historical development of some of the approaches related to the position of an author, evaluating the author's metaphorical death in terms of a theatre performance is critical for the plays to be analysed in this thesis. There is a slight difference between studying a dramatic text and other literary text in terms of authority. In the case of a performance, the authority does not pass directly to the reader after the author's absence. There are considerable differences between being an author and a playwright in terms of authority and control; thus, the slogan "the death of the author" needs to be changed into "the death of the playwright" in the modern period of reading a dramatic performance. How "the metaphorical death" attributed to the author can be handled in a dramatic performance should be analysed as there are several elements demanding authority in the absence of the playwright, such as the Manager, actors/actresses, prompter, light, make-up, costumes and sounds. According to Terry Eagleton "dramatic production does not 'express',

‘reflect’ or ‘reproduce’ the dramatic text on which it is based; it ‘produces’ the text, transforming it into a unique and irreducible entity” (64). There is a chain of possible births after “the death of the playwright”; the birth of the Manager, actors, prompter, light and sound technicians. Only one feature is common among these elements: all these births have an end which eventually gives birth to the reader and the audience.

In understanding the difference between a dramatic text and performance, the etymology of the words will be helpful to explicate their function and difference. Mark Fortier summarises this issue:

The word ‘drama’ comes from a word related to the Greek verb ‘to do’; ‘theatre’, on the other hand, comes from a word related to the verb ‘to see’. Theatre, of necessity, involves both doing and seeing, practice and contemplation. Who wants to see a performance with no thought behind it? Moreover, the word ‘theory’ comes from the same root as ‘theatre’. Theatre and theory are both contemplative pursuits, although theatre has a practical and sensuous side which contemplation should not be allowed to overwhelm. (5)

In line with this definition, the main and the most straightforward distinction between the drama and theatre is their place: the former is on the page, but the latter is on stage. Both deal with language, but theatre has other elements like actors, actresses, audience, playwright, producer, Manager, costumes, décor and so on. Moreover, at each production, all these elements change, and the performance changes too. Because it focuses on verbal language, the scrutinization of a dramatic text is different from that of a performance. Theatrical elements embody non-verbal language like gestures, jests, and nonverbal sounds. Richard Schechner, a performance theorist, clarifies this point of distinction “The drama is what the writer writes; the script is the interior map of a particular production; the theatre is the specific set of gestures performed by the performers in any given performance; the performance is the whole event, including audience and performers (technicians, too, anyone who is there)” (85). The dramatic text guides the dramatic performance, which is modified through its production, and the other elements introduced above. The dramatic text and its performance are interrelated; even if the production and performance may be different, at least the plot is the same. Also, as Adrian Page

states, "In drama, text and the performance belong to different signifying systems" (2); thus, the dramatic text is simply a part of the theatre, like its other elements.

Another distinction between a dramatic text and its performance is the actors and the characters. While it is just a character in a dramatic text, in a performance, an actor steps into the scene and adds different meanings to the text with his acting voice and gestures, which makes him the authority at certain moments. Although the character has striking features in the written text, it is shaped according to the reader's interpretation. On the other hand, the actor can change the reader's perspective with his acting. Thus, different interpretations may come into existence depending on the actor. Adrian Page points out the power of the actor in *The Death of the Playwright*:

A performer can show that they have been persuaded in a number of ways, none of which need be implied in the written text. It is also possible that a performer can substitute his or her own signs for those in the script and still achieve the same overall effect. In this example it is possible to see how the performers of drama have freedom to adopt a range of sign systems which are chosen without reference to an explicit intention on the part of the playwright, yet which are nonetheless governed to some extent by the nature of the text (9).

The effect of an actor who manages to cry during the play and the one who reflects pain only with his gestures or tone of voice will not have the same effect on the audience. The actor, who turns into an author during the staging of the play, is expected to kill the author inside him metaphorically at this point.

If an author or a playwright is considered an organizing principle of a text, the multiplicity of meaning becomes limited. Annulling the author as the ultimate principle to which characteristics about the text can be attributed decentres it, and the lack of a centre allows a play of infinite meanings. Moreover, in a dramatic performance, the play can continue through a chain of interpreters: the Manager, the actors, or the critics who are all readers at first. Thus, Adrian Page points to the fact that the playwright has been "dead" for some time before Roland Barthes' approach on the death of the author (1). Page also indicates the freedom which theatrical productions illustrate vividly in the interpretation of dramatic texts. While reading a

literary text, the reader cannot be directed about how to read. Because there is not only one form of reading, the meaning of the words and sentences keep changing, and one meaning supplements the other, and playing with this lack of centre and origin points out the reader-oriented readings.

In a text and performance, the process is different in terms of decentring. In a text, dramatic or not, the centre the reader needs to get rid of is the author; in a performance respectively the playwright, Manager, actors, characters, light, sound and so on. Page refers to Erika Fischer-Lichte's argument upon the dramatic production being "both a text of its own and, at the same time, a transformation of the script" (2). Consequently, there are infinite meanings that appear as supplements in both genres. Page comments on Martin Esslin's ideas about decentring the authority in a text:

Esslin acknowledges the 'death' of absolute authorial control, in other words, and in the absence of a playwright who can dictate exactly how the text should be treated, he asserts that drama is a 'blueprint for mimetic action' which presents us with a 'simulacrum' of reality. The audience are therefore free to interpret theatrical signs as they choose because they are presented with a spectacle which is as open to interpretation as the world around us. Whilst this preserves the freedom of the audience, it raises the question of whether the playwright has any degree of control over the reception of the text at all. (3)

The text goes through the interpretation of many factors and there will not be an original meaning in a performance. While the performance, which progresses with the Manager's comments in different contexts, continues with the interpretation of the actor who has an entirely different context, the meaning may be fixed in the context of the audience only for that performance that includes certain elements. If the same audience views the same play in different contexts, with different actors or Managers, different meanings may emerge.

In my thesis, although *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and *The Gift of the Gorgon* are written as dramatic texts, while analysing the-play-within-the-play technique, I concentrate upon what kind of processes the plays go through during the performance phase within the plays that are discussed and I also demonstrate how the issues of authority and authorship are positioned in these two different texts by

handling the performance of a play and the text together. Moreover, I touch upon the duality between reality and fiction in the small performances inside the-play-within-the-play. Texts such as “The Death of the Author” by Roland Barthes and “What is an Author” by Michel Foucault are referred to elaborate on the problem of the author.

The first chapter deals with the authority and the “author” in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, and explores to whom the authority passes after the metaphorical death of the playwright and what happens in this. I trace how the process of authority that passes to the reader in the absence of an author occurs in a dramatic text after the playwright vanishes, how the authority is still there in this absence through some elements, how the Manager copes with this situation, and how effective the existence of these elements not visible to the audience are analysed by including the differences between the text and performance. While dealing with the stages a play goes through in terms of authority, I discuss how a play that does not have an author can be received differently from a play that has an author. *Six Characters in Search of an Author* is part of a trilogy and the other two plays, *Tonight We Improvise* and *Each on His Own Way* are also mentioned in terms of theatrical elements. The reason why the other two plays are included in this thesis is that the elements of the theatre focused on each play are different, but all three plays complement each other.

The second play, *The Gift of the Gorgon* is, again, analysed in terms of authority, by specifically focusing on the notion of catharsis, and it is discussed with respect to the presence of the author in the play-within-the-play, and to the audience rather than the other elements of the theatre. This play, which is explored in three different frameworks, focuses on mythological identifications and demonstrates the writing phase of a play, while reflecting what factors are effective, and includes connections with Antonin Artaud’s “The Theatre of Cruelty” and Bertold Brecht’s “Epic Theatre.” The topic of authority is also briefly discussed in the feminist context, on the basis of one of the main characters, and later, with the scene she writes, a woman’s voice is associated with the main argument: authority.

Though *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and *The Gift of the Gorgon* seem to have no common point with each other and belong to different periods and origins, in this thesis they are chosen because of their contribution to the concept of authorship from two different aspects. *The Gift of the Gorgon*, demonstrates the presence of the author, which does not exist in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, in terms of how intense a writer can make his presence by aiming to pass his intentions to the audience, and what situations he faces during the writing process of his plays. *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, on the other hand, shows what will be witnessed in the absence of an author, while processing the request of a well-known author to have his name deleted from the play he writes. How to fill the authority gap formed in the absence of an author with other elements of the theatre such as Manager, actor, character, light, make-up, costume and the authority flow in this process are examined. The two plays complement the elements that do not exist in each other and analysing these two plays at the same time allows us to see the important function of each element.

CHAPTER I
SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR

This chapter aims to analyse a three-act Italian play, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, written by Luigi Pirandello in 1921. The play, which is written with the play-within-the-play technique, opens into an empty stage and a few minutes before the rehearsal of Pirandello's play *Mixing It Up* has started. There is minimal décor on stage, a few tables with chairs and a prompter box. Some of the actors are waiting for the Manager. With his arrival, the spectator hears several terms concerning the theatre like light and costumes coming from the stage directions created by an author called Pirandello. At that moment, six people who call themselves as characters from the audience enter the hall claiming that their author left them by refusing to write the text of the play thus, they are looking for an author. Clarifying the situation they are in, the father tells the Manager how their author refused to stage them and that is the reason why they are looking for a new one. The characters are addressed in this play with their roles in the family rather than their particular names as father, mother, step-daughter, son, a young boy and a child, and they introduce themselves with these roles. After this introduction to the play, six characters start to narrate their own story in fragments, and I will discuss this in terms of authority related to narration as well as the characters' authoritative roles at specific moments. Apart from the authority that changes between the characters, the authority that comes and goes between the elements of the theatre, Manager, actor, prompter, and lighting technician, will also be discussed one by one.

Analysing the characters who interrupt the rehearsal and clarifying the complicated relation between them will be the first step of this chapter. In this play-within-the-play, there are four children, three of whom are from a different father.

The details of this situation reveal the confusion concerning the presence of the Father character who is also the husband of the Mother character being a widow. That is, this widow already has a husband, and this case requires an explanation for the Manager. According to the Mother's clarification, the Father gave her to another man; on the other hand, the Father claims that he released the woman and helped their relationship to start. One of the main problems, in this case, is the feelings of the Son character more than the complex bilateral relations because he thinks that he was abandoned by his mother when he was a year old. Even though the Father admits that this is his fault, the Son cannot put an end to his anger towards his mother and defines himself with the expression "unrealized character" (233) and he states that his presence in this play/play like thing cannot be in question because he finds the insistence of the other characters unnecessary in completing this play, which is already rejected by its author. Without a name and other theatre elements he feels incomplete.

On the other hand, another puzzle is brought to light between the Stepdaughter and the Father with the Mother's and the new character Madame Pace's participation, who is not introduced as a seventh character but has a proper name unlike the others. Because of the poverty they are facing, the Mother mends garments for Madame Pace, who has "girls" under a Boutique name. The Stepdaughter delivers these garments to Madame, but since these clothes are not repaired well by the Mother, the Stepdaughter becomes one of Madame's "girls" in return, and one day these two characters -the Father and the Stepdaughter- meet when the Father goes to that house for sexual services. The Father has been following the Stepdaughter since her childhood and claims to have done this for benevolent purposes; however, according to the Mother and the Stepdaughter, he is not sufficiently convincing; the Stepdaughter blames him for gazing at her. The plot creates a stir among the listeners, especially the Manager, and he leaves the scene to discuss the details of this new play with the Father by interrupting another play's rehearsal, and the second act begins.

While the first act focuses upon the narration of events, the second one deals with the Manager, who thinks that he has taken over the authority by accepting to be

the author of the play. Besides, the argument of being real and fictional points out another authority issue between the characters and the actors. This struggle appears more obvious after the Manager puts across the actors that they are suspending the play being rehearsed and starting this new one brought by the six characters. He remarks on the details of how the new play will be staged as there is no available text; actors watching the performance of the characters will enact the same scene. Meanwhile, it is decided that the prompter would write down the speeches during the performance. Although the plan seems quite functional in this way, the characters' attempts for solving the problems among themselves, their objections on not being reflected well enough by the actors, the actors' perception of these characters as illusions and the Manager's support for this idea will prevent the rehearsal from taking place as planned.

Act III starts with a different scenery, which displays trees and a fountain. Throughout the rehearsal of this scene, which is essential for the Child, Boy and Son trio, the Manager is overwhelmed by the Father's long and philosophical monologues about the independence and truth of the concept of character. Quite unexpectedly, the drowning of the Child in the fountain and the Boy's shot are heard simultaneously. The play closes with the presumptions about the Boy who might be literally dead or merely acting.

This section will review the notion of authority, being adapted many times until the text turns into performance and reaches the audience which is not the situation in this play. Rather, the opposite is available here; they are trying to adapt a text for the ready performance. Each element of the theatre deals with control at some point, and other elements anyhow follow it. Moreover, the authority seen profoundly in this play occurs between the actor and the character, which cannot maintain its impartiality due to the Manager's intervention. Another argument is that the definition of the author concept specifically for this play can be addressed in different ways. Meanings of the author according to different approaches in this play can be classified as follows in this play: an author who declines to stage these characters does not have a name as Foucault means in his work "What is an Author?"; the Father appoints the Manager as an author whose function is organizing the

performance process in place of creation; the author is just a scriptor who types the text suggested by Barthes that indicates the Prompter. In a play, authority goes through many stages until it reaches the reader in a dramatic text while the authority directly passes to the reader in genres such as novels and poems. Thus, what is discussed here is the metaphorical death of the Manager, prompter, actor, character, light, voices, make-up and many more elements in addition to the death of the author. There is an absence created by the lack of an author in this play. If this play had an author, or rather the name of an author, what would change? Does it matter who owns the play, while there are already many authorities? Isn't the author ineffective, except for stage directions? Another possibility is that the inside plays is actually *Six Characters in Search of an Author* since the absent author is Pirandello, and both plays are incomplete. Considering that he is the author of *Mixing it Up*, this does not seem improbable. Another argument is that the prompter who is often instructed to perform the typing action in the play may also be Pirandello. The play is not tied to a definite end, and until then, the prompter has written only the scenes that have been played. That is, if it is considered as the process of constructing a text, the reader would not be reading this play if the prompter has not typed it.

Another approach may be to relate the concept of the author; to the reader, as Roland Barthes suggests in his essay "The Death of the Author". According to him, the metaphorical death of the author means the birth of the reader, and here too, the author's absence may mean the birth of new and various readings. In this play, the Manager, prompter, actors, characters, each element of the theatre are at first readers and each of them rewrites the text and each element is looking for different possibilities because of their perspectives special to their occupations. As a result, the author's name is effaced, substituting numerous readings and possibilities. Moreover, according to the historical development of the concept of author and the point of view of the readers, the word "author" has several meanings like authority, birth of a reader in each reading, an individual taking legal responsibilities or god and the meaning of the play's title may change according to the approaches towards the concept of author in different periods. A precise understanding restricts its meaning and probabilities. The word "character" in the title can also be associated with the

meaning of “individual” before reading the play; it can be acknowledged as characters/individuals who have an idea and are not capable of dramatization. Although the meaning of the title indicates at first glance that it is a literary work, to a traditional reader, a text without an author will seem meaningless and one will concentrate on the possibility that this is perhaps a metaphorical quest. Another possibility is that the reader who does not have any opinion on the subject might want to read the work thanks to this intriguing title. On the other hand, the spectator who aims to watch the performance of this play may think about the discrimination between the concepts of the actor and character.

The last approach this play suggests is the Metaphysics of Presence. Because, this concept refers to a privileged and hierarchical position of one concept over the other and in this play, the absence over presence or the presence over the absence can be a topic of a discussion. This suggestion is about not only the absence of an author but also that of a text, which points out writing. The author designs the text, composes the story, determines the characters, and even prepares the play but does not write it. This suggests the privilege of speech over writing in Western Philosophy and the reason why he insistently refuses to write the text can be evaluated with this Western thought. Ferdinand de Saussure mentions this privilege “language does have a definite and stable oral tradition that is independent of writing, but the influence of the written form prevents our seeing this” (24). Although this claim of Saussure reminds of the absence of a written text, considering some of his works, especially the absent author in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Pirandello seems to oppose this classical way of thinking about the theatre. Thus, in this play, Pirandello’s condition as an author is closer to Jacques Derrida’s arguments about logocentric view rather than the Western thought and he clarifies this in *Of Grammatology*, stating “it is a supplement, a derivative, a mere signifier of a spoken signifier rather than something that has a direct relation to thought” (53). Presence refers to a direct access to the meaning; for example in this play, with the presence of an author, the reader could have obtained a quick meaning through a biographical reading. But with the author’s absence, infinite possibilities may appear depending upon different readings. Jo-Ann Canon deals with this “on the rhetorical level there

seems to be an attempt on Pirandello's part to exceed the theatrical space. Is this transgression motivated by a desire to bring together the represented and real worlds?" (48). The represented and illusionary displayed by the characters in this play suggest absence, and the reality shown by the actors refers to presence according to the "metaphysics of presence". The title of the play states the absence of the author, but the reader still concentrates upon this absent author, which intensely points out a presence. In sum, Elinor Fuchs adapts this absence to the theatre "A theatre of absence, by contrast, disperses the centre, displaces the Subject, destabilizes meaning. A particular threat to the ideal of Presence..." (165). Thus, at the beginning of the play, the centres are shattered with the play's title, the absence of the author.

Luigi Pirandello added a preface to the publication of this work in 1925, four years after the play's first performance. In this text, he tries to clarify why he wrote this play and his thoughts about the writing styles and the creative process. He identifies his own writing process with a fetus's process of falling into the womb, its development and birth, and the word "impregnated" is used in one of the preface translations. Being a seed inside the author's mind is significant in terms of being an author who adds spirituality to his writing. This kind of romanticism points out autobiographical writing; however, he also refers to the author's effacement in some parts of his preface.

Moreover, he clarifies the play's emergence and what roles and meanings he wants to give to the characters. However, when he utters all these ideas, he also implies that the author should not have much authority and what he writes continues in its own way. "Creatures of my spirit, these six were already living a life which was their own and not mine any more, a life which it was not in my power any more to deny them (365). He first perceives the characters as part of himself, but then the characters complete the formation process and turn into independent beings. At this point, the author does not impose his own power and control on his characters, which problematizes the authority of the author and suggests the freedom of the characters. He says:

They are detached from me; live on their own; have acquired voice and movement; have by themselves—in this struggle for existence that they have had to wage with me—become dramatic characters, characters that can move and talk on their own initiative; already see themselves as such; have learned to defend themselves against me; will even know how to defend themselves against others. And so, let them go where dramatic characters do go to have life: on a stage. And let us see what will happen. (*Naked Masks* 366)

These Pirandellian statements sound both like a challenge to and a sincere curiosity about the characters' freedom. On the one hand, he seems to say, "let's see what you can do without my control and power," on the other, it is as if he releases them in a naive tone. Whatever the reason is, in this play, the author refuses to create a text and sets his characters free, but the characters insist on their desire to have an author.

In this preface, he also mentions the background of this play's process of creation. His maidservant Fantasy brings cranky and vexed people to Pirandello's house so as to provide him with various stories for his works and this occupation entertains her. Her name's meaning is also suggestive in terms of the context of the play since it includes supernatural characters who appear as alive people on stage. Martin Esslin also deals with the creative process of drama in his book *The Field of Drama*, "In drama, fiction is created by using 'real' human beings, 'real' objects to evoke the illusion of a fictional world. But these real elements can be combined with any imaginable means to create illusion" (29). Reality and illusion which are significant concepts in this play become obvious through the expectations about the similarity between a real character and its performer.

Pirandello also talks about how as an author he rejected to write these characters, "Now, however much I sought, I did not succeed in uncovering this meaning in the six characters. And I concluded therefore that it was no use making them live" (365). As a result of this, he gives the opportunity to put those characters in a text to someone else and the identity of the creator will be analysed in detail immediately after giving a brief explanation about play-within-the-play technique as there are three plays in question under one title: *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, *Mixing It Up*, and the play that has not yet been completed.

The first concept related to the-play-within-the-play is metatheatre, is a drama about drama; a play talking about the creation process. The author makes his

audience aware that they are watching another play inside the play they intend to watch. Patrice Pavis specifies this term as “Theatre which is centred around theatre and therefore “speaks” about itself, “represents” itself” (210) and he claims, “All that is required is that the represented reality appears to be one that is already theatrical, as in plays in which the main theme is life as theatre” (210). According to him, there is a line between reality and theatre, and metatheatre destroys this line. This concept is also handled by Davide Giovanzana and he connects the play-within-the-play technique with the notion “Theatrum Mundi” (26), “theatre of the world.” It is coined by John of Salisbury who is a theologian in ancient times. John Gillies mentions this approach “The core of the idea is that ‘the life of man in earth is a comedy, where each forgetting his own plays another’s role.’ This implies both that ‘almost all the world is playing a part’, and that ‘the world is the stage on which this endless, marvellous, incomparable tragedy... can be played” (76). With regard to this view, the world and the stage are identical and the performers in a play can be considered as real human beings. In the Renaissance, the theatre had profound connections with everyday life because the ethos of the Renaissance points out the similarity between the life of human beings and a theatre play; they play their roles without knowing and choosing what they live. An emblem of Hercules holding the globe aloft was the symbol of the Globe playhouse, where many of Shakespeare’s plays were first performed. A Latin motto, *Totus mundus agit histrionem*, was engraved on it: ‘All the world is a stage.’ William Shakespeare used this slogan as a metaphor for several plays, and all it explores is not only the relationship between life and art, but also the relationship between the world of everyday life and theatre. Afterwards, it became widespread in the baroque theatre and the same notions of “Theatrum Mundi” were reflected on stage; it regarded the world as a play directed by God and performed by human beings.

Another issue known with its contribution to the concept of play-within-the-play is “mise-en-abyme.” It is a French word that originated from heraldry. Its English translation is “placed in the abyss”, and it suggests something placed in the middle of infinity, a copy of an image. In heraldry dialect, abyme is the coat of arms’ centre; in literature, “mise-en-abyme” is a play of signifiers within a text. Thus,

multiple layers of meaning and perspective are created in a specific work. Emery Jacob expresses this concept as “the supratextual real life or ungraspable phantom of life” (344). This ungraspable state can be explained by its infinity and rebirth of an object from another; the constant motion or looping of an existing ‘thing’. Björn Quiring mentions the notion of “Mise-en-abyme”:

Hence the concept quickly opens onto a horizon of infinite regress, a mise-en-abyme of mimesis, inducing allegorical vertigo: the theatre is imagined as a cosmos, which in turn is thought of as a theatre. By blurring the boundaries between the registers of the literal and the metaphorical, between reality and its symbolic representation, the trope produces its own evidence. (2)

This statement has connections with *Six Characters in Search of an Author* in terms of the blurring of the lines between reality and fiction and reminds of the notions of “Theatrum Mundi” by identifying the cosmos with the theatre. More than one play-within-the-play creates vertigo because of the difficulty of following all the elements and plots of inside plays, which represent the main play. There are more than one plot, group of characters, actors and productions depending upon the creation process and content of other plays within the main play.

All these concepts; play-within-the-play, mise-en-abyme, Theatrum Mundi and metatheatre can be considered as a whole and the question that arises from these double structures is what happens when a second play is added to the first play. One of Giovanzana’s suggestions is the power of this concept “In fact I want to suggest that the play-within-the-play can be a tool that intrudes into the authoritarian discourse from within the authoritarian discourse. It is therefore a means that disrupts power from within” (16). Having a play-within-the-play also means having more than one authority, multiple authors, multiple Managers, multiple actors, and the flow and transition of authority taking place at different longitudes. This can be interpreted as a sharing of authority. From a different point of view, one of the plays may be resisting the other play’s authority while completing that play on the other hand:

The inside story is then a counterweight resisting the authoritarian discourse. In relation to Spencer-Brown’s concept of the re-entry, the inside play shows

what is left out by the main discourse: it shows the discourse of the power (the marked) and what it has left out (the unmarked). More than that, it is an act of emancipation in regard to the limits imposed by the main story. (Giovanzana 208)

While designating the missing point, it holds authority and power and attests that it is more than a complementary element in the main play. There were debates about which play is more critical when looking at the historical development of the-play-within-the-play technique. According to the modern approach, inside and outside plays have the same effect, and any feature of these plays is not appraised as distinctive. These plays direct the audience towards several possibilities; some are realistic while others are illusionary. In the Renaissance, there were some notions related to the philosophy of the play-within-the-play structure, which are the characteristics of that period. One of them is the “microcosm” and “macrocosm” duo that refers to the survival of a smaller structure within a larger structure. Just like the “macrocosm” and “microcosm” a larger structure includes the smaller one in “play-within-the-play” and these two concepts can be judged in terms of each other’s existence. The subplot can be identified with the inside play and the whole plot is the main play. William Shakespeare practised this style, and the most prominent example in his plays is *Hamlet*, where the characters become the audience. Until the realist period, the-play-within-the-play was favored; however, the blurry line between reality and fiction is not preferred in the realist period. Another statement Giovanzana puts forward is about the audience; “It is probably related to the mystery of not showing everything and letting the imagination of the audience fill the gaps. In doing so, the audience becomes active and participates in the creative process, enjoying a kind of pleasure in seeing what is not there” (18). From time to time, the audience can be the actor of the main play in this structure, and being the audience of the other play gives chance to see their ideas about both plays and interpret them in their own way. As Roman Ingarden states, the audience fills the gaps in a text or in a performance, and this gives them an active role, the authority to reinterpret the text. With the participation of the audience, the play turns out to be open-ended.

At the opening of the first act of *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, in the stage directions, there is an implication about the performance to be achieved

without the text's authority. "It will be half dark, and empty, so that from the beginning, the public may have the impression of an impromptu performance" (211-212). Even though there is a text, an impromptu performance carries no exterior authority; it depends on the actors' authority. This reference above refers to the play *Mixing It Up* that is rehearsed at the beginning of the main play; however, it may also point out the other play that will be rehearsed by the characters without belonging to a text and author. It is solely an impromptu, and the scene is also available for this unforeseeable play. Because of its empty presentation, the stage gives the impression that the play has not been concluded yet, and this is another indication pointing out the incoming play. That is, the text equips the reader for what will happen next. Furthermore, there is an explanation located under the title "a comedy in the making" (211), which means something is under construction and has not been completed yet. Besides, the audience is faced with a raised curtain when they enter the hall, and the fact that a curtain is already open can give the audience the sentiment that they are missing something, and this may lead to an inference as well as a missing interpretation of the audience, who will find a meaning after watching the play.

The staging of a play under what conditions it is transformed into a performance, what kind of modifications occur, the differences between the adaptation and the original are scrutinized, and in this play, a text whose creation process takes place during the performance is narrated through the characters. There is already a story and characters, but the author resists to create the written text of this play. At this point, characters who struggle between existence and non-existence look for actors who will make them real and an author who will regulate this process. There are definite points: why is there a demand for a written version although there is already a story and characterization and someone has already created it? Why do the characters ask directly from the Manager to be their own author rather than staging this all-ready play? Can it be an authority and control mechanism under the name of an author or their inability to go beyond a certain point of view by getting rid of classical approaches? One of the critical questions is what meanings the characters attribute to the concept of authorship. Considering that there is a story, but

it has not been recorded yet, the only thing expected from the author is the act of typing. Nevertheless, rather than asking anyone to translate the play into a written text or writing the play themselves, they want an individual to be their author; this means they are chasing a “name”. These arguments lead the reader to the ideas put forward by Michel Foucault in “What is an Author” and Roland Barthes in “The Death of the Author”, whose notions are discussed in the first section. Necessitating an individual who is only expected to type the text could be related to Barthes’ notion of a scriptor; to insist on requesting this from a particular person points to Foucault’s notion of the author’s function. While trying to persuade the Manager, the Father character says, “We bring you drama, sir” (216). This means that every detail is ready but an author is needed for the writing activity. On the other hand, the Manager does not seem to believe in the function of an author; on the contrary, he humiliates them saying “... playwrights give us stupid comedies to play and puppets to represent instead of men, remember we are proud to have given life to immortal works here on these very boards!” (216). Here, the Manager also refers to the distinction between fact and illusion. While he complains that the characters do not look like humans, he also thinks they should reflect reality.

In one of the book chapters named “Characters and Authors in Luigi Pirandello,” Ann Hallamore Caesar writes upon the concept of storytelling, which can be considered the first version of authorship. Moreover, in this play, what the characters do is actually telling stories and she uses the same reference to the anecdote with Michel Foucault about Scheherazade of *The Arabian Nights* in order to specify the effects of storytelling. Scheherazade stays alive by telling stories. Thus, telling a story is a form of survival and in this play, it is another possibility that these characters try to exist and survive by telling their stories. They insist on being written by Pirandello, which is understood from the preface of the text and Caesar clarifies this “the battle of the characters wage for a literary existence has hardened them not only in their resolve, but also in confirming their autonomy” (12). According to Pirandello, the characters who get rid of their author become free, and this distinguishes them from the other characters. Pirandello rejects the characters’ stories but accepts the characters as real beings; thus, they try to persuade the Manager and

the actors about their authenticity, and the reason why they tell their stories is to prevent the perception of being fictional. This argument suggests a new discussion: Is there any difference between a character in a text and an actor on stage? Caesar clarifies this point:

...paradoxical assumption that a character can exist without an author and, even more aggravatingly, without a text, emerges only with the play. Pirandello seems to suggest that the autonomy of characters on the stage is more marked than that of characters in narrative texts. As the author has declined to represent the characters' drama, it is the Father within the play who takes over the work of the Author. (13)

The masked author in this play possibly claims that the reason he rejects writing a text is emphasizing the existence of the characters on stage. According to Caesar, Pirandello declares in the preface that giving freedom to the characters makes the play original and puts it in a unique place far from the others that are related to their author. However, this argument exposes a new discussion: The character on stage is generally identified with the actor, and the audience rarely thinks about the character because of the actor's powerful features like voice, gestures, and acting. This is what the Manager defends about the actors' superiority when the Father enunciates that the characters are more real than the actors. In her text, Caesar touches upon this discussion saying "...the literary characters need an authorial figure to organize them to avert a descent into chaos. So writing becomes the art of controlling the potentially uncontrollable" (15). By refusing to write this text, the author keeps sustaining the notion of uncontrollability. Although the characters insist on seeking an authority, there is no superior side because of the factors that prevent the stability of the authority: different possibilities arise with the author's withdrawal, the Manager's inability to take authority alone, the Step-daughter character's resistance against the Father's desire to become the only narrator of their story. There occurs the fluidity of the authority in the narration. As a result, the text is still in its formation process, and the performance becomes uncontrollable.

The first element to be analysed in terms of its function and authority in the play is the Prompter. In the first page of the play, the prompter is specified in stage directions "The Prompter who has the "book" under his arm, is waiting for the

manager in order to begin the rehearsal” (212), and the book in quotations refers to a text used by the prompter as an equipment of his job. However, giving the word book in quotation marks means that there is or will be a particular case of this concept. It can also be interpreted as an implication that the existence of a book, a text, is an essential condition for staging a play. Since the Prompter is the one who fixes or reminds the dialogues at the time of acting, the actors have to obey his corrections without questioning. This makes the Prompter authoritative because he may change the text intentionally or mistakenly with his voice, stress, or mimics. His body language may change the meaning, and the performance of the actors will be grasped in that way by the audience. Like the author, the Prompter cannot be seen by the audience. When it is connected with authority at the creation process, his authority is similar to that of god as both are invisible. However, when the Prompter is analysed specific to this play, he has different roles: His first difference from the other prompters is he writes the text instead of reminding the written words of any author. Although the Father character seems to convince the Manager in order to make him their author, he points to the Prompter at the very beginning when it comes to turning it into a book, that is, a text. “Just because there is no “book” [Pointing to the Prompter’s box.] which contains us, you refuse to believe...” (218). He acts as if he had previously designed the Prompter to do this writing activity. Furthermore, this typing performance suggests the arguments of Roland Barthes’s “The Death of the Author.” According to him, the author is the one who types a text, and it is the reader who gives meaning; at this point, the Prompter is the one who types the text, and this makes him the author searched by the six characters. He has authority as any misuse of the spelling and dictation rules change the meaning, and he is the one who may create those possible changes because of his job:

THE MANAGER [to PROMPTER]. Take your seat. Look here: this is the outline of the scenes, act by act. [Hands him some sheets of paper.] And now I’m going to ask you to do something out of the ordinary.
PROMPTER. Take it down in shorthand? (241)

In the first place, it seems like the Manager guides the Prompter, but then it is obvious that typing and organizing the text are entirely at the Prompter's hands. After the play starts, nobody sees him, but he watches everybody from his box, which again points out his godlike property; despite being out of sight, he sees everything and has the authority. Since the Prompter only has to follow all the elements contributing to the play, his responsibilities fall into a broader framework. "The Manager [to Prompter]. You follow the scenes as we play them, and try and get the points down, at any rate the most important ones" (242). Although the Manager is the person who provides the guidance, the Prompter has the decisive role, and the written text will be shaped according to his perspective.

Another element to be associated with authority is the Manager. After listening to the stories of the six characters, the decision to suspend the current rehearsal and start a new one. Moreover, organizing the writing process of that story is a very significant point about the extent of his authority. Actors naturally consult the Manager before doing anything. Although the invisible power is the Prompter, the person taking the responsibility is known as the Manager; however, even though the Manager claims to be the authority in many parts of the work, he does not completely ignore the author's or any other source's authority. At the rehearsal of *Mixing it up*, before the arrival of the six characters, the Manager and the leading man discuss:

LEADING MAN [To MANAGER]. Excuse me, but must I absolutely wear a cook's cap?

THE MANAGER [annoyed]. I imagine so. It says so there anyway. [Pointing to the "book."] (213)

The "book" is again put into the quotations, which points to the idea that a different meaning may be attributed to it. According to this quotation the Manager's imagination is shaped by the text or by the author depending upon the various approaches. Even though the Manager is the last decision-making mechanism, there are elements he adheres to. If he had answered the actor's request as "I organized it this way," the Manager might have full control, but he does not reply in that way and prefers to stick to the text in his hand. The actor sees the right to make some changes

regarding his role, as he does not directly submit what is demanded from him and asks for another alternative. Although this does not give the actor an authoritarian power, it gives an authoritarian attitude.

On the other hand, so as to persuade the Manager for being their author, the Father provokes him by asking “Isn’t that your mission, gentlemen: to give life to fantastic characters on the stage?” (216). A positive answer will give him a feature and responsibility he does not have; a negative answer will cause others to question his authority and power. Although he is very aware that he has the authority, he is also conscious that the mission mentioned by the Father is different from what he has. The character makes a request from the Manager about giving his name to this play and acknowledging his responsibilities, yet his task is to shape an already existing text. In addition to this, according to him the profession of being a playwright is not that pleasant: “We’ll have the rehearsals by ourselves, afterwards, in the ordinary way. I never could stand rehearsing with the author present. He’s never satisfied! (257). He sees authorship as an obstacle to the creative staging of the play. Because the Manager puts on stage with his imagination; the author’s intention may not be the same, and many authors may insist that the play should be staged in line with how they write. With the Manager taking the position of the author, the two-part authority in theatre ends. The authoritative manners of the Father and the Manager can be discussed simultaneously because the narration is generally made by the Father to the Manager, who needs to know the plot so as to carry out the writing process of the play. The first entrance of the six characters into the hall begins with the Father being in the front and other characters following him. This can be interpreted from a patriarchal viewpoint or merely a coincidence. Because after witnessing the following parts of the play, it becomes clear that the Stepdaughter character is as comfortable and willing to describe the story as the Father character does. Without further ado, he states what he needs directly “as a matter of fact... we have come here in search of an author...” (215). What should be emphasised here is that these characters, who are looking for an author, attribute meaning to authorship. When they announce to perform a ready drama, it seems they are ready-made characters, and no creative process is required.

Nevertheless, since each person who will write, read or stage the text will do it individually, whatever the expectations of the characters, something separate from the current play will emerge. This is seen in the “but we are not like that” reactions of the characters to the actors and Manager who portray them. Later, the Father reveals what has happened to them and what they are looking for, trying to make them believe that they are not mad. After the negotiations among the characters, the Father wants to narrate the story from his perspective and while doing this, he maintains that the authority belongs to the Manager and wants him to make everyone listen to his narration with his authority “I would ask you, sir, to exercise your authority a little here...” (223). Although other characters intervene and take over the narrative and authority from time to time, this is short-lived and the person addressed by the Manager is mostly the Father and often the Step-daughter. “[The Father enters from the office, all excited from his world. The MANAGER follows him]” (239). Although this explanation in the stage directions mentions a physical act of following, it may imply that the communication between the Father and the Manager is more intense in terms of following and learning the plot. The Father asks the Manager to stage this play that will keep them alive forever. According to him, as in *Don Quixote*, there is a factor, a power that keeps the characters alive forever, and this is possible by the writer who physically writes and lets them reach the reader. “Make them live for ever” (218). They want to live and it is only possible through someone to put them on paper and then the readers can give life to these characters. “The man, the writer, the instrument of the creation will die, but his creation does not die” (218). As can be seen in the quotation, he sees the author as a tool to live and uses the expression “writer”. To suggest that through a writing procedure they reach the reader. Therefore, any name attached to the text is enough for them. The work created by the author will continue to live even if the author dies because it will be read and recreated by a countless number of people. The dialogue between the Manager and the Father shows this concern for an author:

THE MANAGER. Well, well, that will do. But you see, without an author...
I could give you the address of an author if you like...
THE FATHER. No, no. Look here! You must be the author.

THE MANAGER. I? What are you talking about?

THE FATHER. Yes, you, you! Why not?

THE MANAGER. Because I have never been an author: that's why.

THE FATHER. Then why not turn author now? Everybody does it. You don't want any special qualities. Your task is made much easier by the fact that we are all here alive before you... (235)

The transformation of the Manager into an author in this dialogue evokes the idea that every reader is born as a writer, as Roland Barthes says in his article "The Death of the Author." The Manager's first mission is being a reader and as a result, what is expected from the Manager is a kind of reading and reflecting the narrative of the text according to his perception. And his role as a writer will be eased by the characters, which means that the author is not a creative person but someone who is guided by fictional beings.

At some point, the Manager sees the Father as an illusion that is unreal and does not mind despising him when he feels that he has lost the control "A man who calls himself a character comes and asks me who I am!" (265). Since they contradict the Father in terms of actor and character discrimination and cannot agree at any point, the Manager emphasises his power a little more and implies that this play cannot be staged without him.

The Manager's frequent frictions with the Step-daughter are also noteworthy. Although the Step-daughter seems to stand out with her feminine features; her appearance and the profession she is introduced to the reader, she is the only character who mostly interferes with and takes over the narration from the father. While the Father tries to persuade the Manager, the Step-daughter intervenes and makes sure that after dancing and singing she keeps everybody's attention, and touches on the characters one by one, giving clues as to why their stories might be interesting. Although the person who makes the story of the six characters interesting and is the bridge between different families is the Step-daughter, the narration is generally made by the Father. However, since she is a strong character, she takes control at specific points and tries to contribute to the staging of the play:

THE STEP-DAUGHTER [to the FATHER]. Now you make your entry. No, you needn't go over here. Come here. Let's suppose you've already come in. Like that, yes! I'm here with bowed head, modest like. Come on! Out with your voice! Say "Good morning, Miss" in that peculiar tone, that special tone . . .

THE MANAGER Excuse me, but are you the Manager, or am I? [To the FATHER, who looks undecided and perplexed.] Get on with it, man! Go down there to the back of the stage. You needn't go off. Then come right forward here. (251)

In this dialogue, the Step-daughter's way of organizing a scene is very professional like a manager. On the other hand, the Manager reminds the Step-daughter that she is only a character and has no right to interfere. In fact, since the person who knows the subject better than the Manager is the Step-daughter, the Manager is expected to stop seeing this as a power struggle and focuses on staging the play in the best possible way. On the contrary, the Manager intervenes in the places narrated by the Step-daughter to make the play easy to follow and directs the Prompter who performs the writing process about what to do:

THE STEP-DAUGHTER [forcing herself to conquer her indignation and nausea] Stop! Stop! It's I who must thank you. There's no need for you to feel mortified or specially sorry. Don't think any more of what I've said. [Tries to smile.] I must forget that I am dressed so...

THE MANAGER [interrupting and turning to the PROMPTER]. Stop a minute! Stop! Don't write that down. Cut out that last bit. (253)

These lines spoken by the character are revealed by an author even though they are not written, exactly, this line shows that a play is largely based on the method of the Manager, whether it has an author or not. According to the Manager, not everything in a dramatic text can be shown to the audience during the staging. Therefore, the Manager can intervene in everything written by the writer. Tensions rise between the Manager and the Stepdaughter as the Manager does not want to show the audience the dressing scene of the Stepdaughter and the Father in the brothel. As this is a significant stage for the Stepdaughter, since the decision-maker is not her, the control remains with the Manager.

After introducing the main elements that are predominant in the direction of the play, "light" can be regarded as an element that is non-alive but has a very

significant position in order to avoid confusion between the actors and characters. A distinction is created with different uses of light for these six people who call themselves the characters of a play having performance, and those who are rehearsing before their arrival. In the play, the light issue is also handled in the stage directions while the first entrance scene of the six characters is narrated “A tenuous light surrounds them, almost as if irradiated by them—the faint breath of their fantastic reality. This light will disappear when they come forward towards the actors” (214). Throughout the play, the readers witness serious debates about the distinction between the characters and the actors. The concept of freedom given to the characters by their authors, or abandonment as they call it seems to be largely not taken for granted by the characters. When the Manager and actors try to stick to the characters’ descriptions and try to create a play, the characters are entirely far from any change that comes from the other’s interpretation. They reject the actor’s enactment, claiming that when they see a mimic, gesture, or physical feature other than those they are created for, it does not reflect themselves. Seth Baumrin touches upon this issue stating “one play’s character, in a new performance of her own making, is conscious of the actor’s paradoxical position of character-within-actor-within-individual-person” (180). But in this play, the characters reject to see other possibilities and instead of being present according to the readers’ or Managers’ interpretation, they prefer to remain the way the author has created them. Because at that moment, the actors and the Manager are the readers of the characters’ storytelling and their simultaneous performance. While the characters talk about the importance of their own existence, the Manager argues that the concept of a character would be meaningless without the actors. The “tenuous light” used in stage directions mentioned above at the time of the characters’ entrance to the stage can also be interpreted as supporting the idea of the Manager. It is possible to support their presence by using a stronger light, but in order to support the Manager’s notions, the “dream lightness” (214) expression is attributed to them in the rest of the stage directions. Elinor Fuchs deals with the function of light in her book *The Death of Character*:

In the theater of difference, each signifying element — lights, visual design, music, etc., as well as plot and character elements — stands to some degree as an independent actor. It is as if all the Aristotelian elements of theater had survived, but had slipped the organizing structure of their former hierarchy. (17)

The points Fuchs has expressed demonstrate that theatre elements do not need to be alive in order to have a significant function in the play. No matter how well actors do their part, all success will be invisible unless the actor and character distinction is maintained. Light is used in general for such distinctions.

A phrase in one of the stage directions “the essential reality of their forms and expressions” (214) about the discrimination between the actor and the character suggests Plato’s Theory of Forms. Plato argued that everything in this world is a copy of what is in the World of Ideas. In this context, character and actor concepts can be judged in two ways: According to the Manager, characters are bound to remain in a text without actors and they exist when portrayed by an actor, thus the character is fictional, the actor is actual. According to the characters, the actor is a copy who mimics the character. Thus, the character is the real one in the World of Ideas, and the actor is a copy of him in this physical world. From a more concrete perspective, both are elements that complement each other. A dialogue by the Father in the following stages of the play also refers to this subject “to living beings more alive than those who breathe and wear clothes: beings less real perhaps, but truer!” (216- 217). While he admits that actors are physically more real, he argues that the characters are more accurate, which suggests Plato’s World of Ideas. David McDonald also questions the discrimination between the actors and characters:

The presence of the Characters is fantastic; they represent the presence of a world that does and does not exist, the world of an unfinished story. Their presence... is a “hesitation” between the real and the unreal. We are never certain, even at the end, whether they exist or not. Their existence is fictional or imaginary. In his revised text, Pirandello stresses that the identity of the Characters “should not be presented as ghosts but as created realities, unchanging constructs of the imagination...” Toward this end he suggests that the Characters wear masks that “will help to give the impression of figures constructed by art...” (425)

Especially in this play, the hesitation mentioned above is available as the reader witnesses a different form of character: they are physically seen rather than being written by an author. The Father character is conscious of this difference and insists on their reality, however, the Manager and the Actors prefer to remain in the way of thinking that denies the specific situation of these characters.

Although it is not reasonably practical in this play, another non-alive element is make-up. When the Father states that the actors cannot reflect the characters well, the Manager suggests make-up as a solution “Good heavens! The make-up will remedy all that, man, the make-up” (244). Transforming a person into another person, in other words, recreating somebody, adds a godlike feature which is attributed to make-up this time. Martin Esslin brings a different perspective to this issue “Costume and make-up were traditionally left to the actor himself. In more recent times they have increasingly been decided by the designers of dramatic productions” (71). Leaving such subjects to the actor indicates that each actor who portrays the character will bring a different interpretation. Since wearing make-up will differ from person to person, like making a painting, the control of make-up is in the actor’s monopoly on makeup.

The elements that have been mentioned so far are beneficial, although they do not have a direct concern about authority. Apart from these, some characters are relatively passive or remain passive by their own choice. The Mother has no request for the staging of her roles or an attempt to explain what has happened. Regardless of everyone and everything, she has no function other than being able to interact with the Son she abandoned and react to the Step-daughter’s unethical encounter with the Father. The only moment that she is not passive and harshly reacts to the Step-daughter is about making the Son believe that she has not abandoned him voluntarily. This woman, having only the characteristic of being a mother, comes into existence mostly through the description of her by the Father. She admits this by responding “you know how to talk, and I don’t” (224). She can be considered as a confidante who consolidates the dominance of other characters.

It is the Son, who prefers to remain passive, which is understood via the narration “He looks as if he had come on the stage against his will” (215). While

every character has an effort to express themselves and make a place in the gamification of their stories, except for the two children who never speak, the Son tries to act in isolation from the others. Pirandello states this in the preface of this play:

In short, he is the only one who lives solely as “a character in search of an author”-inasmuch as the author he seeks is not a dramatic author. Even this could not be otherwise. The character’s attitude is an organic product of my conception, and it is logical that in the situation it should produce greater confusion and disorder and another element of romantic contrast. (374)

This character has very few words until the end of the third act, and in these lines, he generally pronounces that this play should not be performed thus, the characters’ efforts seem misplaced, even as the author refused to put them on stage “And I stand for the will of our author in this. He didn’t want to put us on the stage” (275). The Son, abandoned by his mother, may also be identified with this play abandoned by its author. This character, who finds any move or closeness to be useless by his mother, may find the writing and staging of this play futile for the same reasons. He is an unrealized character, and this play should remain unrealized, as well. “Believe me, Mr. Manager, I am an “unrealized” character, dramatically speaking; and I find myself not at all at ease in their company. Leave me out of it, I beg you” (233). Although the play is not generally depicted by the Son, most of his silence on stage can be seen as an attributional expression. If this story becomes a text it will be permanent that refers to immortalization of his abandonment and unrealized character. This text will serve as a mirror for him, and he will know how he looks in the eyes of others, and whenever he sees that text, he will remember the memories that he experienced and were not satisfied at all. In addition to all this, there is an immortal bond with these people, whom he generally sees evil and does not want to be with.

The Son’s silence and indifference to his mother may also allude to William Shakespeare’s character with the same name of the play *Hamlet*. These characters have similar aspects in terms of not forgiving their mother. Another common feature of these characters, who are alone when their mothers go to other men and cannot

alleviate this loneliness with someone else, is their inaction. Since Hamlet's mother married the man who killed his father, he regards his mother as an accomplice and does not find this marriage ethical. Hamlet, who spent a long time questioning himself about revenge and could not take action, resembles the Son who watches the creation process of the play from behind.

The Son calls the Father's insistence on staging this play as "demon of experiment" (222) and reacts to the Father's explanations as "phrases! Phrases"⁴ (222). This statement, phrase, points to fictionality. Since the person exposed to these expressions is the Father, it may indicate that he is the creator of all these experiences. Because, according to the Mother's claims, it is the Father who forcibly sent her to another man, and indirectly, the mother's abandonment of the Son is also due to him. In other words, although the person who writes this play is not the Father, he can be seen as the creator.

Another example is that the Father followed the Step-daughter when she was younger and waited in front of her school. While the Step-daughter and the Mother interpret this behavior as a malicious move, the Father argues that he was curious about their state, and that is why he was there. The reaction of the Son to the whole story and each narration is similar to the above: "Literature, literature". As is seen, there may be various outlooks on the same event, whose narrative is made by different frames. The situation will not be different when these narratives turn into a text. It will be a collection of phrases regardless of their reality and will turn into literature, a fiction, by each reader as the Son specifies.

As a result, the fact that the six characters cannot find their proper reflection in the actors during the play's staging, their way of animating themselves, and their physical characteristics are the second act's main subjects. This shows that each person reading this text or watching this performance will find a different meaning when a writer or playwright writes a character or a theme. Even the writer watching the performance adapted from the text finds different meanings. The characters are so strict in their interpretation and want to be staged precisely because they think it is

⁴ Another resemblance between Hamlet and the Son character is Hamlet's lines "words, words, words." (*Hamlet* 214)

equivalent to reading a text according to the author's intention. The conflicts between the Manager and the characters and between the actors and the characters emerge precisely for this reason. The Manager guides the actors by adding his own perspective to the story that is told by the characters. The actors also interpret the role assigned to them from their own perspective and leave it to the audience's reception. In the final stage, the audience produces new and numerous meanings. The characters want to intervene in certain stages in this cycle, but even if the actors appear precisely as the characters' wish, it will not be possible to interfere with the audience's perception. The Father says, "something that is... that is theirs—and no longer ours" (257). The characters expect a mirror for making the actors their doubles, which makes the staging of the play extremely difficult. Since there is no writer, the characters who transfer the story become the author of the play, then the Manager who organized the staging of this story, the prompter who transcribes the play, and finally the actors who portray the characters become writers. If the play could be staged, the audience who made sense of this would be the author. These six characters looking for an author could have more than one author, but they wanted a single meaning and form from the point of view attributed to the author. Martin Esslin, in his book *A Field of Drama*, demonstrates the importance of the period and conditions while analysing a text:

In the live theatre, of course, the written portion of the play is merely a small part of the total 'text' or 'context' of the performance; here the Manager, the designers of set, costume, lighting, the musician and choreographer and the actors each contribute their individual signifiers. And their contributions will be different, and adapted to the taste, social and cultural, as well as technological conditions of their time, if and when the same text is staged in different countries and at different periods. (170)

The Manager complains entirely about the playwright's existence at the rehearsals just because of his interventions. Hence, why these characters are looking for an author varies from person to person and from period to period, just like the different meanings attributed to the concept of the author in each period.

The play ends with the diverse inferences of the characters, actors and Manager as the child character lies on the ground after a gunshot. When the Manager

asks the actors if the child were dead, the answers are also various; some of them declares that he is dead, the others deduce that it is a performance, and the Father character reacts as “Pretence? Reality, secret, reality!” (276), which suggests that each witness watching an event may have a different interpretation. The Father, who tries to convince the Manager who sees characters as fictions at the beginning of the play, also declares his opinion once more by saying “Reality” at the closing of the play. Since there is no explanation of what happened afterwards, what might have happened is left to the reader again.

The theme of the play-within-the-play and the change of authority from the author to the other elements of the theatre, which is analysed in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, is a common theme in Pirandello’s plays. *Six Characters in Search of an Author* is the second play of a trilogy and the other two plays are also in play-within-the-play technique dealing with the elements of the theatre and each of these plays concentrates upon different elements and its relationship with the other elements. In this trilogy, the interaction between the actors and spectators puts an end to the fourth wall⁵ and this infraction is seen several times, particularly in the last play of the trilogy *Tonight We Improvise*.

The first play *Each on His Own Way* first performed in 1924, deals with the production of a play and the life of a real person who is enacted by an actress in that play. The audiences may watch the play to understand whether this story is based on real events. Thus, this refers to a subjective reading of the play, which limits the other possibilities. The audiences talk about the character’s self, her real-life regardless of how it is performed by the actress. This play also points out the interpretations of the audience having different contexts by naming them: five dramatic critics, old author, young author, literary man, good-natured spectator, bad-humored spectator, a man who understands, a man who never understands, one or two supporters of Pirandello, an army of antagonists, spectator from the social set, ladies and gentlemen. As can be deduced from the diversity of nomenclature here,

⁵ The Fourth wall is an imaginary wall that separates the audience from the play. Furthermore, this wall collapses when there is any interaction between the actor and audience, or the actors speak out of his character in the play.

there can be various interpretations of those people, and none points to a particular result; each person deciphers according to his/her viewpoint in this play. In the chapter “theatre-in-the-theatre,” Susan Bassnet-McGuire touches upon this argument “These changes of mood are also carefully contrived, to avoid the possibility of the play being defined in any single way” (54). There are numerous dialogues about the truth, and its being a convention, and all these various observations appear as different possibilities of the play. In this play, the real being, Delia Moreno, is also among the audience, and this will contribute to the play. A spectator from the social set declares, “This comedy is based on the Moreno affair! Almost word for word! The author has taken it from real life” (322). It is known that this plot is taken from real life; however, regardless of what the author plans, each spectator may have different ideas.

In the second act, in terms of the theatre elements and their connections to each other, the interludes are more significant since they not only serve for the plot but also the notions behind the plot. In the second interlude, various voices belong to the spectators, actors, stage manager, author and so on. Later, Delia Moreno’s objection to be enacted by Delia Morello, determines the course of the play:

STAGE MANAGER. But you know very well that neither the author nor the leading lady have ever met you! They don’t know you at all!

SIGNORA MORENO. She mimicked my voice! She used my manner-all my gestures! She was imitating me! I recognized myself!

STAGE MANAGER. But why should you believe it was you?

SIGNORA MORENO. No! No! That isn’t so! It was so terrible to see myself there on the stage acting that way! (359)

A similar dialogue takes place between the Step-daughter and the leading lady who plays her role in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. There, too, the character of the Step-daughter displays her dissatisfaction with the actress’s incompetence in portraying her adequately. Pirandello puts these kinds of dialogues into the play and blurs the line between reality and illusion by matching characters and actors. In addition to this, the name resemblance of the actress Delia Morello and the real being of Delia Moreno is probably chosen intentionally in order to demonstrate the similarities and slight differences between the real being/character and the actress.

Pirandello trilogy, *Tonight We Improvise*, touches on all the elements of the theatre, while making the structure of the-play-within-the-play more distinctive by including small performances. This play was first performed in 1929 and the original text of this play develops from Pirandello's short story *Leonora, Addio*. The play starts with a narrative about the critics' reactions towards the play, and what provokes them is the absence of the author's identity. Since this restricts them from judging the play differently from their previous commentaries, such a judgment limits the free and open-minded viewpoints. Nonetheless, it is intriguing that the term "writer" is kept rather than the "author." Therefore, more than one deduction can be made from this section; the writer is seen as a scribe who types the text just like Roland Barthes claims or is only a coincidence since the critics are looking for the intention of an author. However, the last possibility is related to the intention of the Manager, Doctor Hinkfuss. He uses the title "writer" before declaring the creator of the play; however, he uses "author" after declaring Pirandello's name "the only reason I'm here is to prepare you for the unusual things you'll see tonight. Surely I deserve your attention. You wanted to know who the author of this little story is?" (35). That is, "writer" is utilized when he is anonymous; the "author" is applied when acknowledged.

Doctor Hinkfuss insistently stresses the significance of his presence and role by abusing the audience, who obliquely questions his authority. Afterwards, he starts to explain that Pirandello makes the audience sure about his right of being the controller of this improvisation:

DOCTOR HINKFUSS ... First he sent one of them six lost characters looking for an author: they turned the stage upside-down and drove everyone crazy; then another time, some people in the audience recognized themselves in the characters on stage: the audience was all up in arms and the performance was ruined. — Well there is no danger that he'll put one over on me this time. Don't worry: I've eliminated him. His name doesn't appear in the posters. In any case, it wouldn't be right to hold him responsible for tonight's performance — no, not even for a small part of it. The only one responsible is me. (35)

The Manager does not mention any division of authority and responsibility in this statement. On the contrary, he declares himself the sole authority, leaving the author of the text entirely out; he uses reasonably sharp expressions like his dismissal of the author. He maintains his speech with the same notions suggested for the first time in Roland Barthes's essay "The Death of the Author." The Manager defines the responsibilities of an author that requires him to quit his responsibilities:

...he is the only theatre writer I know who has shown some understanding of the fact that the work of a writer ends the moment he puts his last word down on paper. He has his audience — the readers, the literary critics — and he'll answer to them for what he has written. As for those who sit here in the theatre and judge — the spectators, the drama critics — he cannot answer to them, nor he is obliged to. (35)

This discourse is ultimately what Roland Barthes refers to about the absence of the author and presence of the reader. Moreover, In *Tonight We Improvise*, the Manager neglects the presence and significance of the actors and spectators. According to him, authority changes its place, from the author to the Manager. He demonstrates this by uttering, "The work of the writer? Here it is. What do I do with it? I take it as the raw material for my theatrical work; I use it, just as I use the skills of the actors, I've chosen to act the parts according to my interpretation" (36). He ignores the other elements of the theatre and puts his interpretation to the centre. Therefore, not only the actors but also the spectator is always in conflict with him.

On the other hand, the same attitude of Hinkfuss points out the freedom of the text "If a work of art survives it is only because we can still free it from the fixity of its form" (37). The most mandatory condition providing the freedom of a text is removing all the authorities from the text and performance. Each element should do its part, and ultimately everyone should perceive it accordingly. The person who reads or watches gives life to the work.

After this kind of emphasis upon the self in the Manager's discourse, the reader witnesses his discussions with the actors. Wearing the costumes of the character he will enact, the actor warns the Manager not to call him in front of the audience with his real name, but the Manager remains to call him in that way, which illustrates the blurring line between fiction and reality. The actor wants to stay in

fiction; on the other hand, the Manager prefers to stay at a point where reality and fiction intertwine. Likewise, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* highlights the difference and connection between the real name of the actress and the character name. This time the Manager wants to use a different name far from the original one “But that is the real name of your wife. We don’t want to call her by her real name” (243). The identical point is emphasised by the contrasting approaches of the two Managers: fact and fiction. The Manager in *Tonight We Improvise* realizes that such dialogues with the actors in front of the audience have shaken his authority. To prevent this, he states that the dialogue is part of the performance and is planned among themselves. He wants to fix his authority and disregards the presence and necessity of all other theatre elements as if a play is possible without those elements. In her article “Three by Pirandello” Irma Brandeis questions the role of the Manager:

One begins to wonder who he really is, this verbose, tyrannical, scenographer-scenarist-stage-managing Manager. God? With that tiny body under its lion head, those ugly little hands, all that theorizing about creation? And that name? No, the Manager is surely not God; but he may very well be (yes, I suspect he is) the great Opponent, fallen into power... The Manager is the devil, then. (78)

Brandeis is also not sure enough whether the Manager has a godlike trait, and what she wants to emphasise in this quotation is that any certain judgement is impossible about his role. He has power but how does he use that power? There does not seem to be any difference between a reading that is made only by associating it with the life of the author without giving any chance to any other possibilities during that reading, and ignoring all the other elements in a performance and conducting the play in his own way.

Analysing *Six Characters in Search of an Author* in the scope of theatre elements and their authorities makes the function of the author clear. Since there is no author in this work, it has been very useful to discuss the author’s function in terms of his absence, to see how effective the other elements are. The concept of authorship has specific functions in different periods. These functions are related to the meaning of the text by the intention of the author, typing of the text without any intention, and ignoring the self of the author but making use of the specific name of

the author according to Foucault. In this play, the absence of the author is filled by other elements in the sense of authority. Each of the elements gives meaning to the text. Authority shifts from one element to another, from the reader to the prompter, from the light element to the Manager, than to the distinction of the character and the actor on stage at different moments during the performance of the play. Moreover, what is interesting is the date of *Six Characters in Search of an Author* that is recorded thirty-eight years earlier of Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author." Pirandello has already dealt with the absence of the author in his works which are similar to the ideas of Barthes. The ideas concerning the authority of the author seen in this trilogy are all beyond its time.



CHAPTER II

THE GIFT OF THE GORGON

Peter Shaffer's *The Gift of the Gorgon*, published in 1992, is a modernist play that reflects the influence of Brecht's "Epic Theatre" and of Antonin Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty." The play opens with a scene showing Edward Damson's coffin, accompanied by the news announcer's explanations about the playwright's death. Afterward, Helen Damson, Edward's wife, is noticed on stage while reading some letters that came at different times from Edward's legitimate but neglected son Philip Damson, a professor of Modern Drama who works in the United States. Philip has never seen his father and tries to have a connection with him, albeit posthumously. He wants to visit Helen and ask for her consent about writing Edward's biography. Regardless of Helen's opposition, he arrives in Greece to uncover something about his father through secondary sources. The following day, Helen starts her narration about Edward's life after asking Philip's promise to write his father's biography at Edward's desk. She also warns him that he may be disappointed after learning the reality, which makes Philip more curious and eager about the story. In fact, she refers to Edward's suicide, which is known as an accident, and how it happened is revealed at the end of the play.

Helen's narrative about Edward is composed of three different narrative frames. The first frame entails the narration conferred by Helen Damson to Philip Damson about writing his father's biography, including the other two frames. This frame's main characters are Helen, Philip, and Helen's housekeeper Katina, the only witness of their sessions. The second frame, which is composed of flashbacks, includes the events starting from Helen and Edward's first encounter up to Edward's death and proceeds as a performance within the first frame of Helen's narration. This

frame deals with how Edward writes his three plays and the conflicts that appear after Helen's involvement in his writing process. These conflicts stem from the differences in the two characters' approaches to theatre and the dramatic text, as well as the impact of the play on the audience. While experiencing these conflicts, they write scenes to each other as a way of communication by identifying their story with the myth of Athena and Perseus⁶, which is the subject of the third frame. Third frame emerges as a "play-within-the-play" that functions as "dramatic projections" (Macmurrough 146) of Edward and Helen. These scenes have never been played in front of the audience. As a third person, only Philip reads the texts of these plays, while the plays are performed simultaneously by the actors wearing masks, and are vocalized by Edward and Helen. They write scenes about their lives so as to illustrate the effects of their relationship, their disappointments and expectations, rather than communicating these issues directly. In addition to these three frames, the play includes a "lower strata" (Macmurrough 146) in which Helen and Edward's conflicts are explained through an intertextual frame with Clytemnestra's revenge from her husband Agamemnon in Aeschylus's *Oresteia*. Agamemnon and Clytemnestra's relationship does not appear as a fourth frame but as a lower strata of the play, which is the starting point of the play's central theme: the morality of revenge.

The play's outer frame takes place in the hall of a villa on a Greek island. There are six clear chairs downstage away from Edward's desk. The floor is designed in a distinctive white color, probably due to the fact that it depicts a scene in Edward's mind. The playwright's manuscripts, unique papers and ink, drinks, and a mat knife are picked when necessary for the scenes, from his desk's drawers. The stage is divided into two at one point, and the upstage, which has a terrace with a panorama of the sea and Lava Rocks. The same space is used at the scenes of Cambridge, Kilburn, Chelsea, and Mycenae, besides the settings of Edward's plays. As a result, all the frames utilize the same space but the use of different shades of light indicates different periods of time. The representation of time is very significant

⁶ Perseus' grandfather, Akrisios, learns from a prophet that his daughter Danae will have a son and this child will kill him. Frightened and afraid of the prophecy's fulfilment, Akrisios imprisons his daughter, thereby building a bronze chamber under the ground. Zeus seeps inside disguising himself as golden drops of rain through a slit in the ceiling of the bronze room and from this relationship, Perseus is born.

in terms of transition between the frames; in the play, the present and the past tenses are intertwined. For example, while Helen narrates an event belonging to the second frame, she suddenly turns to Philip, who could only exist in the first frame, and utters something. Explanations about the use of light on stage directions and masks prevent the possible confusions regarding these time transitions.

This chapter traces two sets of associations regarding the characters' approach to drama and theatre: first, between Epic Theatre and Helen Damson's approach to theatrical performance and the dramatic text; second, "Theatre of Cruelty" and Edward Damson's approach to the same issues. Moreover, the two characters, Edward and Philip, who could never come together in life, are seen together in the text and on stage, partly due to the frames. Helen focuses on a textual reading and puts the audience in a place where they have the chance to evaluate the play without the condensation of emotions. On the other hand, Edward insists on the political function of his authorial intentions and wants to transfer his views to the audience. His approach seems to be closer to Antonin Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" in that he focuses on the cathartic function of the theatre, and insists on the political function of his authorial intentions. With the perspective of an academician, Helen approaches Edward's theatrical endeavour textually and opposes his extremist tendencies regarding a politically coded demonstration of violence on stage. Edward Damson aims to destroy the conventional rules of the theatre. However, in his third play *I.R.E.*, Edward is finally free to reflect his authorial intentions and he is not restricted by his wife Helen. But quite interestingly, the audience upon which Edward intends to create a cathartic experience feels a sense of alienation because of the distance created by its critical thinking. He faces an audience whose reaction to his play can be explained through the elements of "Epic Theatre" created by Bertolt Brecht, which prevents the audience from identifying with the characters and events in the play, a school closer to Helen's approach. More specifically, this attitude rejects catharsis. Instead of reacting to suggest approval or support to his ideological intentions, the audience protests against the actress. At this point, he loses his critic, Helen, his fame, and his audience. In the end, as a playwright who sees the theatre as a religion, losing all of these unique elements of his life leads him to commit suicide.

This chain of events can be seen as an allegory of the ambiguity regarding the playwright's position between the theatre's socio-political functions and approaches to the textuality of dramatic text in literary studies. Edward's suicide, "the suicide of the playwright," can be analysed within the framework of the famous Barthesian approach, "The Death of the Author," and this section explores Edward's position in between the socio-political functions of the theatre and approaches to textuality in studies on literary authorship and their links with authority.

Act one starts with the announcement of the Commentator's voice about why and how the playwright Edward Damson died, and at the very beginning, the reader witnesses what Michel Foucault points out regarding the significance of the author's name. While mentioning his plays and personality, the announcer uses the playwright's name together with his works. Just as Foucault said, it is necessary to accept the author's existence for reasons under the title of the author function, not in the context of imposing his intention on the work.

The scene continues with Philip's request for permission from Helen about writing Edward's biography. The act of asking for permission and the expressions used in doing so "I have request, which I offer very much in fear and trembling" (2) make Helen not only a figure of authority but also a difficult obstacle to overcome. Philip, who has never seen his father before and knows nothing about him, plans to write his life story according to his stepmother's narrations, whom he has never seen and is not sure of her reliability. If this book comes out, will it belong to Philip or Helen? Who will be the recipient of the possibility that "the truth will not be known to third parties"? What will happen if the author's intention and authority are in question or if the author is ignored according to the Barthesian approach?

In her letter, which does not include any reply to Philip's request to write his father's biography, Helen refuses Philip's visit to the island, but he comes to the island ignoring Helen's rejection which in turn seems to be a rebellious course of action against Helen's authority. He expresses his disregard as "If you really want to punish me for disobedience, in the time-honoured way of stepmothers in fairy-tales, you have only to send me back to Illinois without seeing me" (3). This first frame is

evident from these submissive expressions that the narrator and the authoritative figure are Helen.

Philip's request is accepted after his strong expression about how important it is for him to write this book and provokes Helen by questioning whether Helen is the reason for his upbringing without a father. Helen has two conditions: the first one is the location of this writing process, Edward's desk on which his plays are written. This desk is claimed to be Rasputin's. He was a healer in Russia in the 1800s, became a respectable person in the palace and is famous for saving the Tsar's son from death. Later, he was discredited for causing the wrong decisions about the war and was sentenced to death. Edward and Rasputin are similar in their early success and their inability to sustain them. Edward also achieves extreme success in his first plays, losing everything he gains with the method he uses in his last play. Helen's second condition is about the play's title; she wants it to be "The Gift of the Gorgon."

The Gorgons in Greek mythology are fearsome monsters who dwell on an island. There are three Gorgon sisters among whom Medusa is the most famous and the only mortal one. They are known to have wings, hair of snakes, and scary faces. The word "Gorgon" comes from the Greek word "*gorgos*", which means "terrifying". Thus, it is believed that the Gorgon's gaze is fatal, and causes people to become stone or to be petrified. According to the etymology of "gift," different origins are encountered and some are positive in terms of meaning, while some are interestingly negative. The well-known meaning of the gift in Oxford Dictionary is "a thing given willingly without payment" (498); the others are poison, natural talent, inspiration, and marriage gift. All of its meanings can be connected to the play and its characters. There are several possibilities; if Helen is identified with the Gorgon, the gift will be a poison because, without Helen, Edward becomes a stone and without the inspiration, which is claimed to come from Helen, Edward is like a stone and unable to write plays. He says: "This room is just like the Gorgon's home: an island of Immobility. All my scenes lying about it like stones" (35). If the gift is identified with his plays given by Gorgon, his last play makes him unsuccessful and puts an end not only to his fame but also to his relationship with his wife, his

inspiration, self-confidence, and at last, his life. If the title's meaning is explained via Philip, the book can be Helen's revenge on Edward. Helen, who has given up her family and profession in order to help Edward to achieve his goals as a playwright, is disregarded by Edward despite her contributions to his success. Actually, Philip combines all these possibilities and reaches a conclusion regarding Athena and the Gorgon, which also points out the meaning of the title:

PHILIP: I guess he was telling you something very important, wasn't he? Making you his personal Athena to help him conquer his personal Gorgon: paralysis through excess.

HELEN: Very good.

PHILIP: He will give you the monster's head—the actual source of paralysis—and you will keep it powerless in your shield. (Pause) Which, I guess, meant your love. (39)

According to Sam Abel, "...[T]his play asks more questions than it answers," (550) and this refers to the mysterious meaning of the gift and way of Edward Damson's death. Abel connects these with Shaffer's life and relates them with his "whodunit" detective stories. Helen is not reliable because nobody except her can know the events. Thus, if she tells anything unreal about their story, nobody can claim its opposite. She has a chance to humiliate Edward by telling them anything and making him worse in his spectator's eyes. In this first frame between Helen and Philip, she is the decision-maker and the only one who knows the whole event; consequently, unquestionably the only authority, and so as to reach his father, Philip has no chance but Helen's narration.

The following day's meeting starts with Helen's warnings about the realities Philip is going to face. Then, Helen gives Edward's letter to Philip, which is similar to the scene of a play including Athena and Perseus figures, being Edward and Helen's dramatic projections. By being born from the head of Zeus, Athena represents logic and wisdom just like Helen, while Perseus, who is identified with Edward is known for his need for Athena in the Gorgon tale. The juxtaposition of these two mythological characters can also be connected to Apollonian and Dionysian conflict in Friedrich Nietzsche's work *The Birth of the Tragedy*. Helen

represents the Apollonian approach of reason, while Edward is closer to Dionysian passion and freedom. Nietzsche claims:

So far we have considered the Apolline and its opposite, the Dionysiac, as artistic powers which erupt from nature itself, without the mediation of any human artist, and in which nature's artistic drives attain their first, immediate satisfaction: on the one hand as the image-world of dream, the perfection of which is not linked to an individual's intellectual level or artistic formation (*Bildung*); and on the other hand as intoxicated reality, which has just as little regard for the individual, even seeking to annihilate, redeem, and release him by imparting a mystical sense of oneness. (19)

The letters written by Helen and Edward to each other form the other frame of the play, and a different light is used for showing the change of frames. While Philip is reading the letter, two actors appear, and one starts to enact with Edward's voice asking for Athena's help, which represents Edward's demand for help from Helen for completing a play and swears for doing this. Both actors have masks and costumes suitable for the concept of mythological characters, which prevents the confusion between the frames. Perseus wants to destroy Medusa and knows that this is impossible without Athena's help, who calls him the "extreme Perseus." Athena accepts to help Perseus by giving him the Shield of Showing, the Shoes of Swiftiness, and the Cap of Darkness or invisibility. In mythology the shield is given by Pallas Athena, the shoes by Hermes, the cap is given by Hades, the god of the underworld. However, in the play why Shaffer attributes all those gifts to Pallas Athena may be glorifying Helen through Athena because of their identification in the third frame. It is obvious from Edward's statements that he was unable to write plays before Helen. She is not only an instructor for him, but also a muse, a yokefellow, a mentor and each of these characteristics may symbolize the gifts. Helen's influence on Edward might not be strong enough if Shaffer had attributed each gift to a different god.

With this equipment, Perseus, who would be exposed to Medusa's gaze, is able to fulfil his oath thanks to Athena. Perseus has a vow, and so does Edward; one to Athena, the other to Helen. Philip also questions whether there is any meaning of Gorgon for Edward, yet Helen wants to tell her story in order and does not want to be interrupted.

After enacting the Athena & Perseus scene, in the first frame, Helen starts to tell how she met Edward; the second frame starts acted by Helen and Edward. The complexity caused by the transitions between the frames is prevented via the light element. Moreover, another possible complexity in this dramatic text is the names that appear as if the characters, Edward and Philip, were at the same place and time, called overlaps. However, these overlaps are not felt in the scene as the changes of light make the audience understand two different time sequences because of this, in stage directions, “the light” is the most commonly used element. Although the below quotation does not include the stage direction of light, it is understood that there are intertwined frames:

HELEN: (to Edward) I don't believe this. I don't believe this, Edward.
EDWARD: It'll be tremendous!
HELEN: It'll be childish.
PHILIP: You can say that again.
EDWARD: Yes--- And profound. Both. (50)

This dialogue is an example of the first and second frames' overlap. It is not functionally possible for Philip and Edward to be in the same place because Edward dies before Philip's visit, and they have never met before his death. However, in the text, their names are one under the other, which gives the impression that the dialogue takes place between three characters. There is only one stage direction in Helen's first line, but no explanatory stage direction for Philip's involvement in the conversation, creating chaos in these dialogues. As a result, this kind of complexity may be prevented not by the stage directions but with the Manager's interpretation in a performance free from the text. Another example of such overlap appears between the first and third frames, but this time a stage direction, including the light, prevents the dysfunction of the overlap:

ATHENA: Well then —seek your triumph! I will await.
The Music fades. The cliffs and shutters close. The lights change.
PHILIP: Well that's certainly a weird version of the Perseus legend. I don't remember the Furies ever being in it.
HELEN: They aren't.

Some stage directions include deterministic sound and light elements, while it is not known whether it is accidental or deliberate in the other stage directions. However, this may show the difference between performance and text because any Manager or actors' intervention can prevent this possible confusion during the performance.

In Shaffer's *Equus* both the main characters, Alan and Dr. Dysart, become the play's narrators and actors. Dr. Dysart tells the story of his patient Alan and appears to be the narrator of his relationship with Alan. Likewise, Alan plays the role of the narrator of his psyche. In Shaffer's plays, the characters tell their stories and then enter the story and become characters. Moreover, the plays are episodically partitioned, and the causal link between these episodes is kept as loose as possible. In her narration, Helen divides her narration into frames and uses different tenses in different frames except for the first frame as it includes the other two frames. The scenes from Athena and Perseus and Agamemnon and Clytemnestra are examples of these mythologizing elements. Moreover, through the usage of these past and present tenses on the same stage, the characters who have never been in the same place have a chance to stay beside each other. After Helen's narration, she takes the role of an actress presenting Helen's youth and performs her past experience with Edward, and in that scene, Philip stays there together with the two as an audience that might be an impossible scene in real life.

If the reader goes back to the first frame, Helen points out that her father, Jarvis, is an eminent professor of Greek, whose notions are followed by Helen. He is a role model for her and an authority figure in her life that limits her own perspective. Edward also knows him not as a role-model but in a critical way. It seems that Helen supports her father's thoughts without questioning, unlike Edward. Edward and Jarvis had a serious discussion in one of Jarvis's lectures about Agamemnon⁷'s death. Edward supports Clytemnestra for killing Agamemnon when

⁷ "During the Trojan War, Agamemnon had killed a stag, sacred to Artemis (also known as Diana, Goddess of the moon and of hunting) and had dared to suggest that he could out-hunt Artemis herself. In revenge, Artemis inflicted on Agamemnon and his men a string of misfortunes which caused the King to attempt to appease the angry Goddess by offering as a sacrifice to her his daughter, Iphigenia. Lying to his wife, he instructed her to bring their daughter to Aulis so that she could be married to Achilles: Clytemnestra arrived only to find that their daughter was to be slaughtered instead. Artemis, however, satisfied that Agamemnon's desire to appease her was honest, substituted a goat for Iphigenia and carried the Princess off to a cloud where she thereafter took charge of Artemis' temple.

he is helpless at the bath, whereas Helen finds this cruel. This conflict between Helen and Edward is incredibly significant in terms of their relationship, and it is a strong indication that demonstrates how discordant they are. Helen's approach to Agamemnon's form of death is logical and ethical, while Edward's is sensational. It is precisely the same reason why Athena and Perseus represent these characters; Athena is presented by Helen representing logic and Perseus by Edward standing for extremism and passion.

After learning that Helen and Edward know each other, Helen's father states in a polite but authoritative manner that he does not approve of her meetings with Edward and asks her not to continue seeing him. She tries to follow his directions by ignoring her feelings. Presented as a character crushed under an absolute authority at the beginning of the play, Helen goes to Greece with Edward and makes her first revolt against authority. Although it is controversial whether she is under another authority after she is freed from her father's and whether the ideas she defends are her own ideas or ideas that settled in her mind under her father's influence, Helen somehow finds her voice. French feminist writers like Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, and Hélène Cixous emphasise that women should find their own voice and discourse to talk about their bodies and rights. They also defy the phallus as the symbol of authority. In her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa," Hélène Cixous points out the importance of women's discourse and their act of writing: "And why don't you write? Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it. I know why you haven't written. (And why I didn't write before the age of twenty-seven.) Because writing is at once too high, too great for you, it's reserved for the great—that is for 'great men'" (310). The act of writing was a right given to men and for centuries male writers wrote about women. As can be seen from the quotation above, women started to resist this, and in this play, too, Helen is initially shown as Edward's muse, leaving her place where she lived, her father, her academic studies, and the book she is writing so that her husband could complete his plays. She does not even realize that her husband has ignored Helen for these plays that could not go

But Clytemnestra could never forgive her husband for what he had been prepared to do and set about planning her revenge upon him." (MacMurrough-Kavanagh147,148)

beyond the climax, and after a failure just because of disregarding Helen's directions, the third play, Edward starts to see other women and the beginning of Helen's writing process actually coincides with this period; the scenes of Athena and Perseus in the third frame. Expressing her feelings with these letter-like plays and only being exposed to them, Helen starts to write a letter and put an end to the concept of "great men".

Edward wants Helen to come with him to Greece, as he wants to start the play-writing process there, because, according to Edward, Helen is the only one who can limit his extremism. In response to Edward's question, Helen says she cannot afford this journey, instead of making an excuse expected from her regarding her career or family. Instead of the question of "why will we go," she asks "when" that shows her eagerness about going with him. She wants this option because of Edward's words about his need for her "Only you can cure me" (26). She is impressed by Edward's need as she has not needed before. Masoumeh Torkamani et al suggest Lacan's notions of the Other in their article⁸, there is an argument about Edward's alienation. "An alienated individual has not even a true religion and faith; in this regard, according to the nature of his humanity, he seeks to worship a supreme power" (643). In order to find his identity, he announces theatre as his religion, his need for Helen, and the necessity of going to Greece for writing plays. He always needs an additional factor for completing his goals. Towards the end of the play, as Edward no longer needs Helen's directions and her being, she cannot stand this, which may be one reason she wants revenge on Edward. Since this is the pleasure of being needed, and when Edward writes, it gives Helen some power and authority to direct, restrict, and make him write in the light of her ideas. "That was the wonder, you see. His need. I have never been needed. Depended on, yes—not needed" (27). The contradictions in the plays' writing process, Edward's extremism, and Helen's attempts to restrain him continue in the same way until Edward's last play.

Act one's second frame ends with Edward's portrayal of Clytemnestra's dance named Clytemnestra's stamp performed before killing Agamemnon. Edward's dancing performance is another play-within-the-play scene in which Helen is the

⁸ For a detailed Lacanian discussion of the play, see Torkamani et al.

audience while Edward is the actor. Edward asks Helen to cleanse him with the soap he gives, performs this dance, initially with slow steps and then accelerating and violently, and this rhythm can also be a foreshadowing of Edward's plays. While the first two plays were written in collaboration with Helen in accordance with the general understanding of theatre, the last play contains violence like the last moments of the dance. Moreover, the first frame ends with Helen's leaving the room after her narration about their journey to Greece and her feelings about the dance scene, which may remind of the second bath scene immediately before Edward's suicide.

The second act starts with the couple's return to England and their marriage. In this act, Edward's attempts to write plays begin. Although there is no discussion or mutual decision about their living expenditures, Helen takes responsibility and starts working at a travel agency, a profession far from hers, to support Edward for writing his plays. Edward does not support her initiative and says that she should continue her studies on Athena that has started before their relationship, yet he does nothing to make money. Meanwhile, Edward continues to write countless climactic scenes with no beginning and end, and Helen remarkably reacts to his failure to complete these plays by saying: "Oh confrontations. Denunciations. Scenes of retributions and revenge and extravagant atonement! All of them violent and some absolutely out of control. But all of them also – totally theatrical... And of course, by themselves completely useless" (34). According to Helen, the reason for his behavior is because of the fear that the audience and critics do not appreciate, judge and admire his plays "... [I]f you don't finish anything, you can't be, can you?" (34). After this accusation, he connects the authority and power that he could not gain by writing with the masculine authority in marriage by adopting a sexist attitude and says "(Grabbing his testicles) Just cut them off, why don't you?" (34). He associates being unsuccessful as a playwright with losing his masculinity, which refers to power in patriarchal societies. This authoritarian attitude can also be recognized in his approach to reactions after completing his plays. While he is in a perfect mood after his responsive play, he begins to behave aggressively to everyone, including himself, in his last play, which has an extremely adverse reaction from the audience.

He wants the audience to grasp the play from his own perspective, and he gets resentful when his intentions are ignored. The notion of “the birth of the reader” in the “The Death of the Author” article never applies to Edward. Helen’s criticism about his “scenes” and “intention” entirely reflects the current mood of Edward and she says “I’ve read some of those scenes—behind your back. They are much too—excessive, half the time. Really! Really! Just so violent... They’ll simply repel people when you most want to persuade them” (35). Helen’s previous observation, the problem of Edward’s fear of not being approved of, and his attempts to persuade the audience emerge from quite successful observations. Edward wants to reflect on the audience his ideas and inferences and impose them at some point. The idea that they can produce a meaning with respect to their context does not even cross his mind. Luke McDonagh points out Edward’s desire “One established playwright I interviewed stated that he felt the first production of a play ought to be in accordance with the strict intentions of the playwright – but subsequent productions ought to be allowed more flexibility with respect to radical interpretations of the text” (559). This example is what Helen discovers about Edward’s fears about reflecting his notions so as to be sure of being approved. Furthermore, that is where Helen steps in and tells Edward that he “needs to be restricted,” which is, in fact, also Edward’s demand from Helen at the beginning.

After analysing Edward’s attitudes and incomplete plays, he promises Helen to finish his first play in a year and mentions the draft of it: *Icons*. Having an academic background and point of view, Helen focuses on the dramatic text, while Edward focuses on the effects of performance upon the audience. It seems that he does not write these plays to be read but to be performed. He wants to reflect his ideology in his plays through excessive scenes, which he thinks would be cathartic for the audience, yet Helen tries to limit him, knowing that Edward is not the one who decides on the audience’s judgment. He stages violence and cruelty in his first play, *Icons*, by writing a role for Empress Irene in which she blinds her son by carving out his eyes. This loss of sight is aimed to be presented to the audience without any limitation of violent scenes before Helen’s intervention. She shows an excessive reaction and reveals her academic approach: “Write a speech for her

instead, addressing the assembled people. Explaining to them exactly why she has done this unspeakable thing. It's so dreadful it has to be excused anyway" (42). During the plays' writing process, Helen is the audience, critic, actress, reader, briefly in the position of the person leading the play. The text of the play with violent elements and the staged version are quite different. Edward considers Helen the one who destroyed the play, although he obeys Helen's directions with his own will and removes the play's visual elements of violence. Because he wants to transform the play into a text which reflects his emotions, and although he has achieved much success, he cannot feel it as a play of his own due to Helen's interventions and Helen says "That play was my child by him" (44). Both agree that it belongs to Helen. This acceptance can be interpreted as the authority. Although the person who plotted and named the text and has written it is Edward, another invisible authority is Helen. Moreover, this makes it controversial to whom the text belongs. As can be seen from the audience's reactions to the last play, the reason why the first two plays are successful is Helen's interventions to the violent elements. Thus, does this achievement belong to Helen or Edward? Who is the author of the play? Does Helen impose her own intention on Edward while trying to prevent Edward from imposing his intention on the audience?

In addition to all these discussions, the concept of violence and some of Edward's notions that contain passion, which are present in his plays and protested by Helen, can also be explained by "The Theatre of Cruelty." Antonin Artaud, developed a theatrical aesthetics compatible with the understanding of eliminating the distinction between life and art. According to him, theatre is not a play, but a real life for both the actor and the audience and a way of knowing themselves. Artaud believes in theatre's power to change the society, and presents a new theatre project to make the theatre functional. According to him, the real function of theatre should be sought in its healing effect on society. He argues that with the interactions he gained from the Eastern and the Balinese theatre, the theatre should be restored to its qualities in primitive magical ceremonies and its power of influence. The return to this magical and ritualistic quality of the theatre aims to reveal and heal the

suppressed desires, passions and excitement by provoking the subconscious of the audience. Artaud clarifies this:

To persist in making characters converse about feelings, emotions, desires and impulses of a strictly psychological order, when one word is substituted for untold mimesis (since we are dealing with precision), such obstinacy caused theatre to lose any true reason for existing, and we have come to long for silence, in which we could listen more closely to life. Western psychology is expressed in dialogue, and an obsession with clearly defined words that say everything ends in words drying up. (85)

The effects of Balinese theatre and its ritualistic difference from the Western theatre on the dramatic language comprised of incantations and other communication methods like gestures and dance refer to a kind of purification similar to the aim of cleansing the soul from passions by awakening feelings of fear and pity as seen in Aristotle's concept of "Catharsis". But Artaud, unlike Aristotle, substitutes violence and terror for the feelings of fear and pity. Thus, in the ancient tragedy tradition, the exemplary lesson that the audience will take with the feelings of pity and fear from what is happening on stage turns into the purification of the audience in Artaud's theatre by revealing the feelings that he suppresses. According to Artaud, a true theatre play should hypnotize the audience; it must free the repressed subconscious by shaking the stillness of the senses. The cruelty in question compels the audience to confront themselves in a moral and spiritual sense, not physical:

Theatre will never be itself again, that is to say will never be able to form truly illusive means, unless it provides the audience with truthful distillations of dreams where its taste for crime, its erotic obsessions, its savageness, its fantasies, its utopian sense of life and objects, even its cannibalism, do not gush out on an illusionary make-believe but on an inner level (Artaud 65).

This is what Edward tries to illustrate about the theatre, and all of his plays support this notion. However, he also has suspicions about the reaction of the audience. The reason why he writes only the climactic points in his plays and does not want to complete them may be his observation about the attitude of the audience. He makes a comparison between the audience before and after, saying "They came away astounded. Scared. Exalted. Seeing themselves for the first time, and their world---

which they'd always thought ordinary—lit with the fire of transformation! ... What is now? Rows of seats for people to sit with folded arms. People who have forgotten their needs” (22). The savagery mentioned here is not physical, but moral and spiritual violence that forces the audience to confront themselves which is close to Artaud's theatre of cruelty. It aims to pull people off their masks by pushing them to see themselves as they are, and to discover lies, impertinence, meanness, nastiness, hypocrisy. Artaud, who defends that this confrontation cannot be realized through consciousness, wants to attack directly the nervous system of the audience and break their resistance by deactivating the control of the mind. According to Artaud, the audience first thinks with their emotions, not with their mind, and therefore it is necessary to turn directly to the feelings of the audience. What Edward expects from an audience clearly illustrates his obsession with catharsis. Because of his awareness of the reaction of the audience, he accepts Helen's limitations. However, in his final play, by rejecting Helen's restrictions on his dramatic art, he symbolically commits suicide before the real one.

Artaud aims to put the audience in a state of trance by creating a hallucination on stage via distortion of reality. According to Artaud, it is necessary to leave the audience breathless with excitement, not leave an opportunity to think, and identify with the show stage by stage. “I mean deep drama, mystery deeper than souls, the lacerating conflict between souls where gesture is merely a course” (103). As Edward knows that the enthusiasm and passion in his soul are not just enough to hold in himself, he wants these overblown emotions to turn into a ritual that includes the audience. At this point, he ignores any social restrictions and writes plays that reflect only the feeling he wants to share, and this enthusiasm prevents him from thinking about the response of the audience that reflects Artaud's ideas:

I am not of the opinion that civilization must change so theatre can change, but I do believe theatre used in the highest and most difficult sense has the power to affect the appearance and structure of things. And bringing two impassioned revelations together on stage, two living fires, two nervous magnetisms, is just as complete, as true, even as decisive as bringing together two bodies in short-lived debauchery is in life.
For this reason, I suggest a Theatre of Cruelty. (56)

In Edward's situation, the last play he wrote fails because the passion that should have been two-sided remains one-sided. The characteristics of the audience and their critical evaluation of the play remind of another school: Bertolt Brecht's "Epic Theatre" which Brecht calls "the theatre of the scientific age." It opposes all forms of theatre that are based on the illusionary and the surrealistic, and have nothing to do with reality under its name. Brecht argued that such theatres, which follow a traditional and static line, do not address the crucial problems of humanity, that art, which has a great role in changing history, does not fulfill its duty in these theatres, therefore, the necessity of the existence of a new theatre that can respond to the needs of the age and show the changeability of the world. Oscar Büdel mentions the role of the audience in epic theatre:

We go to the theatre not to see reenacted a scene from life, not to see reenacted an experience we may have had in our own lives, but rather to see this experience reenacted in such a way that we may become aware of its essence, of what it presents on the scale of human values. [...] In other words, art should 'illuminate life, not reflect it'. (281)

Edward has comments on real life events and he reflects his emotions on his plays and believes in the cathartic effect of his authorial intentions; however, Helen's perspective is different from Aristotle's catharsis; it is closer to Bertolt Brecht's "Epic Theatre" which sheds light on the controversy between Helen and Edward. According to Aristotle's definition, the members of the audience identify with the actor on stage and isolate themselves from real life and enter the actor's world. It is the release of the audience's feelings, and a kind of relief appears. On the other hand, in "Epic Theatre," Brecht reverses all these notions of Aristotle's definition of catharsis "through pity and fear affecting the proper purgation of these emotions" (23) by denying the involvement of the audience. They are estranged from the emotions, which is what Helen represents by changing Edward's methods of reflecting his intentions to his plays to create catharsis. This aspect of "Epic Theatre" is related to Helen's representation of Epic Theatre's rules about the catharsis which aims not to arouse emotions in the audience but to make them evaluate critically by using their intellect. Brecht points out these views:

The essential point of the epic theatre is perhaps that it appeals less to the feelings than to the spectator's reason. Instead of sharing an experience the spectator must come to grips with things. At the same time, it would be quite wrong to try and deny emotion to this kind of theatre. It would be much the same thing as trying to deny emotion to modern science. (22)

Unlike dramatic theatre, creating interaction and speech with the audience, known as "breaking the fourth wall," is not what Epic Theatre does; on the contrary, the audience's activity is stimulated, and the audience is kept as observers. The way of interaction can also be provided via the signs that are used by the actors. That is to say, Edward's plays are technically epic; however, the content always asks for a catharsis. The Epic Theatre criticizes capitalism and class; the plays negate the existing system and invite the audience to consider other alternatives, through the use of a variety of tools. Brecht clarifies this social aspect of Epic Theatre:

If we ensure that our characters on the stage are moved by social impulses and that these differ according to the period, then we make it harder for our spectator to identify himself with them. He cannot simply feel: that's how I would act, but at most can say: if I had lived under those circumstances. And if we play works dealing with our own time as though they were historical, then perhaps the circumstances under which he himself acts will strike him as equally odd; and this is where the critical attitude begins. (190)

The critical attitude creates an alienation effect, which is a well-known Brechtian element, and with this effect, it is intended to remind the audience of the fact that the scene is just a play. In this way, the audience will be prevented from engaging in the play and leaving their emotionally critical mindset. There is a slight distinction between what Edward expects and what Helen directs him to do; reaching catharsis with feelings and evaluating the situation with logic, which is also the distinction between the "Theatre of Cruelty" and Epic Theatre. This feature of the Epic Theatre is what Edward did not include in his plays, but precisely what Helen expected from Edward. To create an alienation effect, the audience's integration with the play is prevented by using as little decor as possible. In some plays, the light is not turned off at the time of changing the decor, and with this, it is emphasised that what the audience watches is a play. Helen keeps her feelings and thoughts away from this

context. Helen is the first audience of Edward's plays before they are performed in front of the real audience.

After matching two schools with Helen and Edward's approaches to the theatre, the play points out another critical point: The-play-within-the-plays in *The Gift of the Gorgon* is the formation process of the plays, the moment of emergence and its after; the playwright's difficulty in completing a play, the interventions on the violence he is obsessed with, and finally the success of finishing the play. In all of these, the readers are confronted by the critics' positive reactions and, eventually, the audience's confirmation and the rise of the author's self-confidence. Other elements of the theatre are not mentioned at all. After this writing process, in which the playwright's intentions and passions are so much in the foreground, the Manager, who expected to have almost the same authority as the author, is never mentioned. Edward's reconciliation process with a Manager does not seem to go smoothly, but it is not shown to the reader. Again, the presence of actors who can significantly influence the course of the play is not one of the issues mentioned, affirmed, or problematized. It is as if Edward wrote a novel rather than a play, and the reader read the novel and reacted to it. From this point of view, Edward's sharing of authority can be evaluated not with other theatre elements but only through Helen's ideas and a theatrical perspective. After the success of the first play, and although these plays belong to Helen, the success of the plays is considered to be precisely Edward's.

Meanwhile, Helen does not concentrate on how significant changes occur in Edward. With peace about being a muse and being needed, she ignores what could happen with Edward's wrong-headed self-confidence. The news of the second play-child comes, and in this process, both sides are still happy. Edward, who gives birth to his own child like a seahorse, once again shares his ideas of extremely violent scenes with Helen. In this play, again, violent scenes are intended to be used as a moral. In his second play, *Prerogative*, Edward chooses Oliver Cromwell's England as his subject, and he writes a revenge scene against Cromwell, as he closes the theatres. Edward protests against him by saying, "I want my audience to rejoice in the man's death! And this is how to do. Use his head" (50). Cromwell's head is put on a pole and is shown to the audience; Edward's intention about the destruction of

Puritanism is presented by cutting the head into pieces and throwing it to the audience. He tries to create an interaction with the audience and reflect his own political views to them. However, Helen forces him to give up this notion as Cromwell is always a significant figure and cannot be evaluated just from this perspective. Moreover, the reader learns what kind of a technique is used in that play by Helen's narration "He put into Cromwell's mouth instead, to end the play, a remarkable speech of defeated idealism. The one that is there now. Everyone loved it" (52). Edward is the only one who does not like this ending as the limitation of his extremeness and prevention of his method make him depressive, even though he is the one who asks this from Helen.

The violent elements in the first play, his discussions about the play's violent elements were much less than those in the second. Having gained self-confidence after his success in the first play and believing that he is now a playwright, Edward enters into much more in-depth discussions about violence and revenge with Helen having contradictory arguments. Especially in their discussions about shocking the audience and revenge, Helen expresses her opinions by keeping her feelings and thoughts away from the play's text, while Edward reflects the passion and fire of what he defends in every word. Although Edward seems not to be unfair in terms of what he did, his approach is valid only in a daily conversation when the reader's position is not ignored. As a playwright and more a human, Edward's protests about Cromwell are quite familiar, however expecting this from the audience with the same intensity of emotion makes Edward's approach problematic. He says, "It is the playwright's duty to appal. Tear an audience out of moral catalepsy" (51). As it can be understood from his ideas, he does not allow the audience to make a judgment in their own right but aims to present a ready judgment with the elements he adds.

Edward's creation of his last play, *I.R.E.*, is also based on a real-life event and his reaction to it. This severe and violent play is written as a reaction to the government, Helen and her "moral" and "fair" approaches. After an explosion in a crowd of Remembrance Day Service, eight people are killed: "Among the dead is Marie Wilson, a twenty-year-old nurse. Her father has said that he forgives the terrorists responsible. 'I bear them no ill will,' he said. 'I bear them no grudge'" (53).

Edward finds this attitude of the father incredibly terrible while Helen appreciates it as glorious. He accuses Helen for unnecessarily supporting injustice by saying, “It’s our job here to make justice—not God’s. Because without it we have no meaning” (53). He is searching for justice as “there is a deep thirst for right” (53), and he wants to do this again as a playwright. He immediately creates his third play in his mind and tells it to Helen as a significant reaction against her calm:

EDWARD: ... I am going to write a new play. I see it with absolute clarity: clear and clean. An I.R.A. bomb explosion in the toy department of a large London store. Mothers and children blown to pieces: dolls and teddy bears spattered with blood and brains. Among the victims, the little daughter of a Lady Member of Parliament... She resigns her job and dedicates her life to tracking down the ringleader in Belfast, luring him to a hired room and making him her captive.

HELEN: (tight) Yes? And?

EDWARD: She achieves justice. For the man and herself.

HELEN: How?

EDWARD: Executing him—ritually— before the eyes of the audience. Not sadistically, but in the sanitive way of gaining peace. The hallowed, health-giving peace of Clytemnestra, slaughtering her husband in that bath. Setting at rest the spirit of her screaming daughter ... As the killer finally expires in that sordid little room, that room— a mild, decent humanitarian woman— will dance before him, in release. (53-54)

He is insistent about including his response to political and social issues in his plays. He has no limits about showing excessive scenes, particularly bloody ones, and at this point, Helen is unable to stop him. As Jacques Derrida suggests in *Writing and Difference* “The theatre of cruelty is not a representation. It is life itself, to the extent to which life is unrepresentable. Life is the nonrepresentable origin of representation. I have, therefore said ‘cruelty’ as I might have said ‘life’” (234). Edward does not position his plays differently from real life, based on a reality that has already been experienced in real life. He is eager to show injustice differently, not with a speech like the previous ones but by showing every detail. He chooses the most striking way of shaking the audience; with the performance, he aims to construct a bridge between reality and his message. In each step of his new play, he continues with his excessive depictions. “At the end of my play, the actress will show an ordinary lady, sane but transfigured. She will stand and look at the people sitting in their rows. Her hands

will be wet with the blood of the man who blew her little daughter into pieces” (55). The audience does not evaluate the play in line with his expectations. Helen has already warned him after hearing the draft of the play about the audiences’ possible rejection, yet Edward is so sure that he defends himself by saying, “I have my audience--- and they trust my voice” (54). However, as mentioned above, he is aware of the audience’s reaction, and he has already criticized them for being indifferent. It is evident that his audience is not ready to watch these scenes that entail Edward’s understanding of the theatre’s function. Hearing works differently but seeing blood with the idea of revenge makes them feel that they are not secure in that atmosphere. Thus, Edward’s intention as a playwright presenting the “Theatre of Cruelty” unconsciously creates an effect on the audience closer to what the Epic Theatre expects from the audience. While the Epic Theatre asks for a critical evaluation from the audience, the “Theatre of Cruelty” expects a catharsis, an emotional tension, and a release. The attitude of Edward points out the birth of the reader in Barthes’ “The Death of the Author.”

The reader is the very space in which are inscribed, without any being lost, all the citations a writing consists of; the unity of a text is not in its origin, it is in its destination; but this destination can no longer be personal: the reader is a man without history, without biography, without psychology; he is only that someone who holds gathered into a single field all the paths of which the text is constituted. This is why it is absurd to hear the new writing condemned in the name of a humanism which hypocritically appoints itself the champion of the reader’s rights. (148)

Regardless of any context, significant daily events, remarkable cases in history, the audience perceives the play in his current mood. In the third act, Helen gives Edward’s last letter about the Perseus scene to Philip, and simultaneously with his reading the third frame starts again. In this scene, Edward writes a different interpretation of Athena and Perseus myth that reflects Edward’s feelings regarding his current relationship with Helen. Athena asks Perseus to release Medusa and renounces his vow about killing her. Athena limits violence like Helen and infers that manhood cannot be gained through violence and this time, the Gorgon symbolizes the audience. “To conquer the Gorgon face to face—no weapon in your hand—

standing before her fully visible! Stare deep into her eyes, without one flicker of fear” (61). Before the last play, what Edward has to do to make the audience appreciate the play and conquer their hearts is to give up his weapon, the elements of violence. Although he keeps his promise to Helen not to do so - to complete a play - the audience does not like this play. Furthermore, the Gorgon, which once symbolized Edward’s inability to write plays, now symbolizes the audience he loses, and according to Athena, what he has to do in order to stand on stage towards the audience without fear is, as Helen said, being free from violence and revenge. However, Perseus’s response to her is not in line with what she expects; he refused to do what she orders by stating, “I am no puppet to be walked by strings of your instruction!” (61). In this scene, Edward’s obedience to everything that Helen utters before and his resistance in the last play is given once again through Athena and Perseus. Begging Helen to correct him and restrict his extremism, Edward suddenly blames her as if he were not the one who desires these. At the end of this scene, what Helen fears happens and Edward no longer needs her and reflects his decision through his dramatic projection of Perseus “From this moment I will be Perseus Unaided. And you—False Protectress, would-be destroyer of True Heroes—farewell! You are no longer my mentor or my guide. Into my own keeping I place this head. It shall be mine for all my life” (63). Immediately after releasing himself from Helen’s restrictions and free to reflect his authorial intentions, he starts to write this play by expecting the audience’s same reactions. However, the audience, far from having a cathartic experience, is entirely alienated. He faces an audience whose reaction to his play can be explained through the elements of “Epic Theatre” which prevents the audience from identifying with the characters and events in the play, a school closer to Helen’s approach. More specifically, this attitude rejects catharsis, which is expected by Edward during his writing process, also related to The Theatre of Cruelty. Instead of reacting, which suggests approval or support to his ideological intentions, the audience protests against the actress. In this way, it is understood that the audience does not respond to Edward’s intentions “But then, when she began her Dance of Rightful Stamping, the scene became very different from what Edward intended. It was not cleansing or cathartic, or any of the restorative things he wanted

Theatre to be. In the end the audience laughed... They *laughed!*" (64). When Edward is judged as an individual, it is perfectly acceptable for him to react to political issues and react to injustices he noticed. It is also quite agreeable for him to do all this as a playwright. Nevertheless, the tricky part is that he expects his audience and Helen to react in the same way. He perceives his audience not as an interpretive community but as a supporter. "I have my audience—and they trust my voice" (54). After this last play, the name of the playwright, Edward Damson, is used for the classification of his works which is explained by Michel Foucault under the title Author function "A name can group together a number of texts and thus differentiate them from others. A name also establishes different forms of relationships among texts" (304). Edward is known as a successful playwright once and turns into a creator of violence later when his plays are analysed as a whole. Their debate goes along this line by addressing every issue they disagree with, and Edward finishes his tirade that vengeance must be taken and pours a bottle of red wine down his head. Helen suddenly stops her narration, returns to the first frame, and gets angry at Philip for coming despite being told not to come and wants to end her narration here. The reason why she acts in this manner is because of Edward's words:

EDWARD: ... there are people who became literally unforgivable. There are such things as unforgivable acts—beyond the pale of pardon.

HELEN: (as gravely in return) I do not believe that. And I never will.

A long pause.

EDWARD: You have to. (Pause) I must make you. Or you will never finally learn life. (56)

Not wanting to be the person Edward desires her to be, Helen wants to end this narrative by intervening when she realizes that she has turned into that person. Perhaps she thinks so because she agrees with what Edward said about revenge. Two dominant male figures of influential and different ideas in her life leave her in-between positions. She can neither escape from her father's ethics nor Edward's passionate ideas. In addition to this, she cannot leave Edward despite his flirting with other girls in front of Helen. However, this time she confesses that the reason why she does not leave him is not her passion for him but because of her lack of experience: "I was scared Philip. All I'd ever known was his world or my father's"

(67). As she gives up all her profession just for the sake of Edward and his efforts for being a playwright, she feels helpless and endures his excessive behaviors. However, she has the power to cope with these, but when she learns of Philip's existence, Edward already having a son despite all his protests and excuses about having a child and making Helen replace it with the plays, she feels a kind of dilemma or crisis.

Nevertheless, Edward's thoughts about his son are not very pleasing for Philip. Edward goes to America on an excuse of some job to watch Philip's lecture about himself and feels the same feelings about Philip's speech as he felt in the third play debacle. Because, according to Edward, Philip, in a way, apologizes on his behalf and searches for excuses about Edward's style. Anyhow, according to Edward, Philip's speech is not popular with the audience at all. In this respect, Edward's last play's staging with great expectations and Philip's speech at the conference are similar in terms of their disappointment. Perhaps he thinks that this speech about his father would create a catharsis on the audience, and they would understand what his father is trying to do. However, according to Edward's assessment, the result was not at all like that. He suggests something familiar about the two, saying, "our images fused into one - the Dramatist and the Professor of Drama — both unneeded" (76). Moreover, he makes very sharp conclusions about the theatre, stating that the world no longer needs theatre. His reaction to an individual failure has turned into a complete generalization. When evaluated in the context of authorship, which is the subject of this thesis, Edward defends the period's approaches when the author is the authority and centre and opposed the later periods' by displaying an attitude against the genre he is a part of.

During the speeches in which Helen aims to reach Edward, who sees the theatre and his life as "wasted," writes a scene on Athena and Perseus just like Edward. Helen, who has been in the background by supporting his writing until now, becomes a writer rather than a listener and tries to make her voice heard. "Now his learned girl gave him a reply" (77). In this scene, Helen talks symbolically about everything she has done for Edward: she identifies with Edward's rise to fame after the first two plays, and Athena's ability to fly to Perseus, saving him from fears, not refusing his demand to help in killing Medusa, and the gift that will eventually be

given to her. She describes its return as a “void” saying “This was your gift to me, my Perseus Emptiness” (78). Athena tells Perseus that the Gorgon’s head gets stronger each time it is destroyed, and everything that the person holding the head will turn into stone: his hands cannot write, his mouth will not speak and will turn to stone and simultaneously Perseus’s hands are petrified on stage. When Helen says all this under Athena’s persona, it is somewhat unclear whether she aims to motivate Edward and forget what happened and make him write again to show that his belief in theatre can be alive again or to humiliate him, reminding him of his failures. According to Helen’s narrative, Edward’s complaints concerning his wasted life make Helen write this scene as a response.

This scene also involves revenge because Edward’s wasted life also includes plays written and edited by Helen. Hence, Helen’s narration is fiction for Philip and other readers as it is known only by her. Already later in the scene, the things told through Athena and Perseus begin to be told directly from Helen’s mouth and include verbally violent lines. She has personal reasons for desiring revenge from Edward: all the mistakes Edward has made to Helen so far; that he does not mention his son’s existence, gives her paper children instead of real ones and finally takes them away, and most importantly, he does not share his success with his wife, but has that success alone. Helen tries to make Philip involved in this revenge by showing Edward’s negligence of Philip. By breaking his heart, she wants Edward, who has already disappeared physically, to disappear as a playwright through a permanent work - the book that Philip would write. Because, according to Helen’s account, Edward is a father who has ignored his child, a husband who has disregarded his wife’s help and achieves his accomplishments on his own, a playwright who is extraordinarily violent and does not value the free judgment of his audience. However, at this point, Helen, like Edward, disregards the morals of the epic theatre and does not allow Edward’s audience, Philip, to read and evaluate him critically and freely, and she does a biographical reading of Edward with her sense of revenge. As a result, the audience or reader will evaluate Edward according to the book written by his son. In the first two plays, Edward has gained success because the audience evaluates him freely. If he were evaluated according to the intention

rather than the text or performance in his last play, he probably would not have received such a bad reaction. Helen does the same thing to Philip, who is her only audience and reader at that moment, and she achieves the same result as Edward's: she loses her audience, just as in Edward's last play. Following the scene, written by Helen, after learning that his father committed suicide, Philip understands Helen's purpose and gives up writing this book, and does not respond to Helen's intention. The scene written by Helen concludes with the words of Athena as a response to Edward "The art is not dead. It cannot die. Only the artist dies. Only the worshipper. The lover. The father. The husband. Only the man (81)", and these lines again suggest what Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault argue about a writer's self. The author's personality and authorship should be separated, and their writings should be evaluated independently of the individual. If Philip had written this book about Edward based on Helen's narration, it would remain an "art" forever.

Edward understands Helen's move and intentions before his death. She wants revenge, both Athena and Perseus scene written by her, and the book she is trying to make Philip write reminds of Clytemnestra's "dance of rightful stamping" after she kills Agamemnon; this time it's Helen's dance of revenge. Aspiring to assist Helen's revenge, Edward invites Helen to clean him for the last time, and by putting the blades into the soap, makes Helen take her revenge physically first. Following this bloody scene, he gives his message with his last Perseus scene, "...[T]his is my gift to you: the sacred gift of vengeance" (84), and commits suicide by throwing himself off the cliffs.

At the end of the play, Philip declares he will never write this book, and Helen is left with Edward's ghost, who repeats she should write that book and take her revenge. Helen finally announces that she will not write this book, and the life and voice of Edward freeze, just like the turn of Perseus' hands and mouth in Helen's written scene. Thus, by refusing to write this book and rejecting Edward's revenge, that is, by not succumbing to the feeling of revenge, she does not do what Edward wants and takes her revenge from him in this way. Writing the book would be a kind of revenge as it would turn him into a useless character in everyone's eyes, but not writing the book is also an act that serves a sense of revenge. Because by acting this

way, Helen shows that she denies revenge and does not realize that this is another form of revenge. The Gorgon becomes Edward at this point and leaves his sense of vengeance as a gift to Helen.

The play progresses and closes with a powerful theme of revenge. Even when the two meet for the first time, they send a message on the subject via *Oresteia Trilogy*. Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon for killing her daughter as a vow contributes to Edward's suicide at the end of the play. Edward states that he does not want to have a child by saying that the plays would be their children, and he ignores Helen's ideas and writes a play according to his approach, which causes the last play to be stillborn with the reaction of the audience and at the same time put an end to Edward's reputation. If the couple's ultimate play is considered their last child, Edward kills him, and Helen takes revenge on Edward, just like Clytemnestra. When Helen tells Edward that she will leave him, he first plans to experience physical pain and then commits suicide. This play, written by Helen and expecting a catharsis on its audience, is influential on Edward, and Edward, who is in the audience position, responds to her expectation, reaches the catharsis, and commits suicide.

The subject of authority in this play is different from the authority distribution explored in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. In *The Gift of the Gorgon*, the first authority element to mention is light, apart from a playwright and the other character, Helen, who helps him complete his plays. Since there are different versions of the same characters in three different frames, it is crucial to distinguish between frames, and this is provided by light and stage directions. Stage directions can also be read by the dilemma of the author's presence and absence mentioned in the first chapter. These directions, which can be called the shadow of the writer, are essential for this play, and although not in the context of imposing an idea on the reader, Shaffer's presence is significant in clarifying the existence of essential points, more precisely technical issues. After creating the plays, there is no remark about a director, which may mean that the playwright and the director do not share each other's authority with someone else. Some playwrights prefer to be the Manager of their plays. Although there is no hint about this in the play, the play may be staged under Edward's direction. Until the last play, the actors are not mentioned

either; only the actress who encountered the audience's reaction in the last play is cited to demonstrate how unsuccessful the play is. However, her failure is also overshadowed by Edward's failure; it seems that she does not add much to the play but she acts according to Edward's script. Unlike the others, the sound element also has an authoritative power over Helen. The sound of the knife Edward uses to cut his papers frequently scares Helen whenever she remembers that voice. The same blades are placed in his soap by him before his suicide, and, Helen unwittingly contributes to his body being shattered as she soaps it. Even talking about these blades' terrifies Helen, and sound has become an indispensable element in seeing the development of events more precisely.

In the first frame Helen tells Philip the whole story, and authority belongs to her until the end of the play because she is the only one who knows the story. Philip always affirms that the authority is Helen by asking her permission to write the book and giving her the dominance of narration. However, after discovering how Edward commits suicide at the end of the play, he refuses to serve Helen's intent, gains a short-term authority, refuses to write the book, and returns to America. The second frame covers how Edward and Helen meet, the writing process and staging of the plays, Helen's giving up everything in order to let Edward write his plays and Edward's choosing where to live shows Helen, her life and views less significant. However, when evaluated in terms of the plays' writing process, Edward always expresses his need for Helen and writes in the direction Helen wants in the first two plays. Helen imposes her intention on Edward, not the audience. The audience is the foremost authority and the final decision maker in all of the plays.

CONCLUSION

The two plays, belonging to two different periods and authors, provide a versatile perspective on the formation and progress of a play by addressing different elements of a dramatic text and its performance. Although *Six Characters in Search of an Author* is written before *The Gift of the Gorgon*, it takes a very modern approach and almost covers the second play's perspectives at the time it is written. *The Gift of the Gorgon* is a very enlightening play in terms of witnessing the process that a playwright goes through during the playwriting, what elements he includes in the play by taking into account specific issues, which subjects he gives up, and what factors could be influential in the course of the play. On the other hand, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* points out the refusal of creating a text and the absence of an author. In the intentional sense mentioned by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, it shows what kind of theatrical elements the reader will encounter instead of the author. The play, which emerges from the authority and intention of the author, reaches the audience, where it unearths the real meaning after the authority of elements such as the manager, actor, light, sound, and prompter. The readers of *The Gift of the Gorgon*, involve in the author's creation processes, however, they could not witness this process as there is no author in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. These two plays complement each other in that they discuss the process of a play from different perspectives.

There are similarities in two plays that demonstrate the reader the process of creating a complete play that includes both performance and text. Both plays deal with the process of converting a performance into a text; in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, the performance is ready and its text is attempted to be written; in *The Gift of the Gorgon*, Philip, following Edward and Helen's animations in the second

frame, plans to write those performances as a biographical book about his father, thus a text is planned to be created after the performance. At the end, textual creation of both plays is canceled. It can also be viewed from a point that forms the basis of *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, which is Philip's process of creating a work and giving up writing that work. At the end, there is a ready narration and draft of a book in *The Gift of the Gorgon* and its author is expected to be Philip. However, he refuses to write this book and the characters in this book do not have an author just like the ones *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. In both plays, the authors reject to write the text of ready-made works; one is a play, the other is a biography that includes several plays.

Both plays include characters who handle the main narrative —Helen in Shaffer's play, the Father character in Pirandello's play. However, while there is no second person to question the accuracy of what is told in *The Gift of the Gorgon*, other characters are included in the events and the narration in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. In the first play, the Step-daughter interrupts the Father's narration as she is part of events; on the other hand, there are no other characters to challenge Helen's narration in *The Gift of the Gorgon*. There is a similarity between Helen and the Manager character in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* in terms of turning the narration into a performance. Their interventions also take place with the same focus: the audience's reaction. Helen, who predicts the audience's reactions to violent scenes in Edward's plays, evaluates Edward's writing process in that direction and suggests him some changes, and the Manager, who removes the night scene when the Step-daughter and the Father spent at Madam Pace's house from the performance claimed that the audience would react to this scene.

There are resemblances regarding the characters of the two plays especially about the Son characters. In *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, the Son is narrated as "See how indifferent, how frigid he is, because he is the legitimate son" (220) reminds of Philip character in *The Gift of the Gorgon*. The Son character is legitimate but there is no indication about Philip's legitimacy. As his surname is not seen in the text, he may not be legitimate. However, they have common traits; Philip has never seen his father, which means desolation; the Son's mother abandons him.

While the son in *The Gift of the Gorgon* is very eager to participate in narration, the Son character in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* insistently avoids the narration and repeatedly states that he does not want to participate in this play. Despite being denied a visit for only two days, Philip wants to take his place in this narrative by actively writing a book. Apart from being the neglected sons: the first one by his mother and the other by his father, their only common trait is being legitimate. These two characters are quite different in terms of their reaction about being neglected and their presence in the play.

Moreover, the father characters in both plays have similarities in terms of their desire to exist through a play. Edward Damson wants to be a playwright and his public acceptance as a playwright is only possible via creating plays. On the other hand, the Father character in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* wants to exist by means of an author. Although their functions and roles are different, both father characters want to exist through a complete play. The mother characters in these two plays are also similar in their absence and passivity. Edward's, Philip's and Helen's mothers in *The Gift of the Gorgon* are all heard in some parts of the play, but there is no active participation on stage; an actress does not represent those women. Although there is no absence at the point of taking place in characters' lives, there is a physical absence of the mother characters in the scenes. In *Six Characters in Search of Author*, there is an absence, or rather passivity, of the mother who is seen physically in the life of people. For example, she is very influential in the Son character's life, but this effect is also caused by her absence. Her inability to work indirectly causes her daughter to be a prostitute, and perhaps the most significant fact is that she is a character sent by the Father character to her lover, not by her own choice. All of this turned her into an extremely passive character, whereas she's been on stage throughout the play. If Helen is considered as a mother because of her paper children –Edward's plays– she is the most devoted one to her children. Her efforts to make the plays be written objectively and to be perceived by the audience in a positive way, and her struggle with Edward on this issue demonstrate Helen's feelings towards the plays, which are put in place of a child although she could not

physically become a mother. She gives life to these play-children with her mental capacity, not by her physical body.

Another similarity between these two plays is the distinction between reality and fiction. For Philip, his father, whom Philip had never seen in his lifetime, is no different from a fictional character, since he knows his father as much as the characters he reads in any book. While asking Helen for permission to write this book, he states that if he writes his father's life, it will be real for him, and confirms that his father is a fiction in his mind. The same is valid in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*; the characters persistently believe in their existence, but that is not enough for them, and they want others to believe too. They think they need to have an author and only through a text they can achieve this. Another example of fact and fiction is Edward's perspective in the process of writing his plays. Edward, who is affected by daily events and problems, tries to keep his real-life reaction in fiction by reflecting his current thoughts and passions to his plays. In *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, the characters see themselves as real people and discuss this frequently with the Manager. They consider themselves relevant to real life, as if they were the character of an Edward Damson play.

A different similarity takes attention in addition to the resemblances above; the table emphasised in both plays is given as a virtual object for Edward Damson and the Stepdaughter character by stressing the significance attached to the objects. As it has already been mentioned in the second chapter, Edward's desk, which is said to belong to Rasputin, is highly regarded by Helen, and she makes Philip swear to write his book on this table, a symbol of negativity, violence, and the feeling of revenge. Having a healer's, Rasputin, table, Edward could not have a healing function. Moreover, in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, the mahogany table, in Madame Pace's house remains in the Step-daughter's mind as the table where the Father puts the money on exchange for sex with her. Both tables are similar in that they have negative effects on those associated with it and neither is mentioned as an ordinary table.

There is a different feature of the two plays: the scenery. In *The Gift of the Gorgon*, scenery is narrated in detail as each object is significant symbolically. For

this reason, the reader is aware of all the details of the scenes such as the desk and its drawers, the window, the blade, the papers. The purpose for which these objects are placed, the cities where the scenes pass and how the characters are included in this scene are explained in detail in the stage directions and the characters are affected from the memories of these objects, particularly Helen. The desk, which is used by Edward at the time of his play-writing, is significant and it is placed at the centre of the stage which reflects his presence even after his death. The most prominent feature of this is that Helen asked Philip to write this book on Edward's desk. Another symbolic object in the scenery is the blades which are placed to the drawers of the desk. Edward uses those blades for cutting his papers and this sound reminds of other functions; the moment they are put into the soap, Helen cuts Edward's body in the bath without knowing the presence of those sharp blades. The other significant object is the window and it symbolizes Edward's suicide. All these objects come together and turns Edward's absence into a presence and the function of these objects provide a convenient setting for her narration about the past events. The same scene is used for multiple cities, both past and present tenses, and light element has contributions for these objects. At this point, the stage layout is not shaped according to the reader's imagination; the objects have effects on the reader. On the other hand, in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, there is no mention of a clear stage arrangement at the beginning and ending of the play. In fact, while the semi-open curtain hides the phase of the play, the stage directions demonstrate that there are no significant items other than the prompter box. The fact that there are many actors and characters and the characters have no names is also very far from the clarity scene in the other play. In addition to all these details, the ending of the play is also open to the imagination of the reader as it is interpreted in different ways by the actors and characters. There are no symbolic objects for the characters on stage. For example, the table is incredibly significant for the Step-daughter character but it is not shown physically on stage, but, it is only mentioned. This makes the table symbolic only for the Step-daughter, not for the reader.

In my thesis, I analyse these two plays in terms of theatrical elements and explore them in terms of authority by taking "The Death of the Author" as a central

concern regarding authorial absences. For further study, I suggest that an ethico-political analysis of the author as a producer of ideas would be very relevant. In both Barthes's and Foucault's thinking, the author as a social entity is disregarded, and the emphasis is rather on the functional existence of "the author." However, an analysis of the author figures in plays that problematizes them as individuals with ethical and political responsibilities could be very interesting. For example, Edward Damson's political aims in impressing the audience with his ideas prove counter-productive in terms of creating political awareness, but what would its implications be for the authors, rather than the audience, when they are scrutinized as subjects with ethico-political responsibilities? Such research could expand and complement the scope of the issues this thesis explores.



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