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HACI BAYRAM VELİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ

LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ

**THE STRUGGLE OVER TEXTUAL MEANING:
(POST-)STRUCTURALIST ANALYSES OF TIM
CROUCH'S *THE AUTHOR*, DAVID IVES'S *VENUS IN
FUR*, AND ELLA HICKSON'S *THE WRITER***

Büşra KILINÇ

Supervisor

Doç. Dr. Yavuz ÇELİK

MASTER'S THESIS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Büşra KILINÇ

ANKARA HACI. BAYRAM VELİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ
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ÖZET

Bu tez, ilk olarak edebiyatta post-yapısalcı düşüncenin dayandığı temeller, teorinin öncüleri ve onların eserleri hakkında bilgi vererek, post-yapısalcı düşüncenin özellikle tiyatrodaki yansımalarını incelemeyi amaçlar. Bu incelemede çağdaş tiyatro eserlerinden olan David Ives'in *Venus in Fur*, Tim Crouch'ın *The Author*, ve Ella Hickson'ın *The Writer* adlı oyunlarının detaylı analizleriyle; bu eserlerdeki olay akışları, karakter yapılandırmaları ve kullanılan teknikler post-yapısalcı bakış açısıyla değerlendirilir ve örneklendirilir. Tezde sunulan post-yapısalcı çerçeveden yapılmış analizler sonucunda, "Metne anlamı veren kimdir?" sorusuna yanıt aranır. Yazar, yönetmen ve okuyucu/izleyici üçgeninde metnin anlamını yapılandırmada en büyük rolü kimin oynadığı sorusu üzerine detaylı bir şekilde tartışılır ve tiyatro eserlerinden verilen spesifik alıntılarla analizin örneklendirilmesi amaçlanır.

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M. A. Thesis

Büşra KILINÇ

ANKARA HACI BAYRAM VELİ UNIVERSITY
THE INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to examine the reflections of post-structuralist thought, especially in theatre, by first giving information about the foundations of post-structuralist thought in literature, the pioneers of the theory and their main works in the field. In this review, with detailed analyses of the contemporary theatre plays, which are *Venus in Fur*, Tim Crouch's *The Author*, and Ella Hickson's *The Writer*; the plot structures, character configurations and the literary techniques that are used in these works are evaluated and exemplified from a post-structuralist perspective. As a result of the analyses made from the post-structuralist framework presented in the thesis, the question of "Who gives meaning to the text?" is aimed to be answered. The question of who plays the biggest role in structuring the meaning of the text in the triangle of writer, director and reader/audience is discussed in detail, and the analysis is intended to be supported by specific quotes from the mentioned theatre plays.

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1. INTRODUCTION

*“Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space
where our subject slips away, the negative
where all identity is lost, starting with the
very identity of the body writing”*

R. Barthes

How text analysis should be done in literature and what or who determines the true meaning of the text are problems that have been ongoing for many years and have led to the production of various theories and the development of new criticism styles. Just as important as the writing and presentation process of the works, or perhaps even more so, is now what kind of an impact the text should create when it reaches the recipient, what kind of contribution the text should make to the art world, what kind of a gap it should fill, and what kind of a feeling it creates in the reader. The journey of the text after it is produced and the transformation it undergoes in the reader's mind has become more important than ever with new criticism styles. The versatility and ambiguity of language in conveying the meaning has naturally taken the focus from the text itself and the one who produced it, and brought it to the final destination of the text: the reader. This idea, which gained momentum with the post-structuralist approach, has given the reader greater power than ever before in structuring the meaning of the text. As suggested by the name, post-structuralist approach criticizes the structuralist approach which takes into account the structures within the text itself in meaning, and restores the place of the reader at the expense of “killing” the author of the text (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 148).

In order to better understand the principles of the post-structuralist theory, it is necessary to first understand the structuralist approach that sparked it. To speak of the basic principles and features of the structuralist approach in literature, first of all, the structuralist perspective aims to analyse the text within itself by isolating it from all external factors, namely its author, its reader, the sociocultural environment in which it was produced, since everything that is required to understand the meaning of the text already exists in the structure of the text as a system (Saussure, 1985, p. 178), and when this structure is separated from external factors and addressed separately, the

most accurate meaning of the text will emerge. In the reflection of this idea, which has its roots in 20th-century France, on literature, attention is drawn to the structures of the relationships between words and sentences in order to extract the meaning of the text, and it aims to find a “pattern” (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, p. 56) that can be found, and with this pattern spread throughout the text, it is possible to extract a meaning even from the smallest part of the text. An inductive meaning-making process can be applied to the total of the text from the smallest part of it since it is all a part of the same structure. According to the structuralist understanding, even the smallest element in the text is connected to the largest one through underlying structures. Ferdinand de Saussure, one of the leading names of structuralist theory in linguistics, treats language as a system of relations (Saussure, 1985, p. 80). He argues that the relationships within this system are established especially through “binary oppositions”. Structures and meanings in language always exist together with their opposites, and in order for a concept to become meaningful, there must be an opposite meaning that completes the deficiency within itself. Accordingly, according to structuralist theory, language and meaning can be handled within a system, with structural ties, making structuralism a holistic perspective; Language is a system that consists of relationships and connections and creates its meaning within its structures.

Structuralist theory, which attracted more detailed attention and gained popularity from academics after the Second World War, began to be applied to different fields by different academics over time. As the founder of structuralist theory in linguistics, Saussure provided a different perspective to both linguistics and, in the same way, to fields such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and literature. As mentioned before, in the application of the theory to literature, the meaning of the text is the most important issue that is handled. In the same way that Saussure applied the theory to the field of linguistics, texts in literature are considered and examined in a set of relationships that provide a systematic whole within themselves as well (1985, p. 78). Roland Barthes, who is considered one of the most important pioneers of structuralism in literature, made a significant contribution in terms of the adaptation of the structuralist approach to literature, although he would later be considered one of the most important figures of post-structuralism as well. Especially with his works *Mythologies* and “Death of the Author”, while in the first one he examines the structuralist systematics of communication tools in society (1957/1991, p. 82), the

latter emphasizes that a text should be handled separately within itself that is independent of its creator in the process of meaning-making (1967/1977, p. 144). In short, Barthes applies the structuralist approach both as a new style to literary criticism and used it to understand how the meaning of literary texts is produced.

In addition to Barthes, anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, in his work *Structural Anthropology*, examines the structures of myths with the perspective offered by structuralist theory and argues that not only the myths created by cultures and societies, but also literary works can be examined with the same method of the structuralist approach (1963, p. 228).

As a result, after the structuralist theory emerged in France with Saussure in the field of linguistics, it continued to be considered and applied as an important approach that gained great momentum and was adapted to many social sciences fields. However, the sharp and strict lines of structuralism have been subjected to many questions and criticisms, especially in literature, and have started to be perceived insufficient to be used to analyze the meaning of the text in a field such as literature that in its nature has no boundaries or has vague ones. With the idea that literary analysis should be freed from the sharp boundaries of structuralism, post-structuralist theory began to be discussed.

After a brief explanation of structuralism in general terms, it is possible to better understand the foundations of post-structuralist theory as the prefix “post-” is brought to the beginning of the word “structuralist” to point to the aftermath of structuralism. To start with, post-structuralist thought aims to get rid of the sharp boundaries drawn by structuralist thought, because according to post-structuralist theory, meaning is subjective and can depend on external factors (Derrida, 1967/1998) such as the socioeconomic situation of the recipient, their cultural background, the cultural environment they are in, their personal characteristics, thoughts and beliefs and it can and will change and shape according to such factors. For this reason, post-structuralism opposes the idea advocated by structuralism that “language contains a certain objective meaning in its own system”. Post-structuralism, which originated in France in the 20th-century, criticizes the objective and introverted handling of the structures in structuralism since the meaning depends on many variables and renews and changes itself in different situations of each recipient and even of the same

recipient with a renewed perspective. Hence, structuralism's "search for a fixed meaning" can be considered one of the biggest reason that triggered the emergence of post-structuralist thought.

In order to better understand how post-structuralist theory is applied to literature, it will be necessary to examine in which ways the meaning of the text is intended to be analysed from the post-structuralist perspective. First of all, the post-structuralist perspective, as mentioned before, considers the meaning of the text to be subjective and variable (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 146). Therefore, although the meaning of the text is discussed, it is not right to make a definitive conclusion because, according to post-structuralist thought, it is not possible to make definitive judgments about the meaning of the text. However, post-structuralist thought also argues that works are interconnected, similar to structuralist thought, but there is a big difference between the two ideas here: structuralist thought argues that the text is connected within itself with structural relationships, and therefore the whole and general meaning of the text can be understood even from the structure of its smallest element, whereas post-structuralist thought draws attention to the text's relationship with other texts. This intertextuality is not as sharp and objective as in structuralist theory, on the contrary, according to post-structuralist theory, it is a feature that further diversifies the meaning of the text and opens it more for interpretation (Kristeva, 1980). Because post-structuralism argues that "the text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 147), hence, even a work written centuries ago plays a role in structuring the meaning of a modern work, hence, this bond between different works from different geographies, dates and cultures undeniably enriches the sub-meaning of the text and makes it inevitably subjective for each reader.

Another point that post-structuralist theory criticizes in structuralism is the idea that the meaning of the text is created in a fixed place, a centre (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, p. 7). While structuralist theory argues that this meaning is embedded in the systematic structure of the text, post-structuralist theory insists that there is no single meaning structured and coded in the text waiting to be discovered. According to post-structuralist thought, meaning is in renewal at every moment (Derrida, 1967/1978, p.

121) and a text re-creates its own meaning every time it is read, because, as mentioned before, meaning is subjective, and it is not possible to fit into a mould.

One of the most important features of post-structuralist thought is its deconstructionist approach. This term, coined by Jacques Derrida, draws attention to the contradiction inherent in language and meaning. Because language is already an unreliable tool in itself in terms of transferring the meaning, it is open to many different interpretations, and this ambiguity of meaning makes it futile to look for a solid structure of meaning in the text (Derrida, 1967/1998, p. 71). In addition, the reliability of the “binary oppositions” that structuralist theory uses to explain how the meaning of language and structure of the text is completed is doomed to deconstruction because, according to the post-structuralist approach, these binary oppositions are far from presenting a perfect balance and structure that complements each other and creates meaning, since there is always a hierarchical relationship between the two concepts (Derrida, 1967/1978, p. 114). While it is not possible for them to complement each other, Derrida does not completely oppose to the idea that these concepts make each other easier to be comprehended; however, he argues that they do not clearly derive their meaning from each other’s oppositions. For example, although the concept of “long” becomes more understandable with its opposite “short”, it is not possible for these concepts to fully complement and define each other due to their relativity. Although there is an undeniable connection, this connection is not objective as the structuralist approach argues, and although there is an opposition, this opposition is not as sharp as the structuralist approach argues. Therefore, basing the meaning on the structure of binary oppositions will not be reliable, because the nature of binary oppositions is not as “opposite” or “complementary” as it is considered by structuralism, but is precarious and uncertain.

The biggest example of the application of the deconstructionist approach adopted by the post-structuralist view to literature is that it aims to disregard all factors that limit the multiplicity of the meaning in the text. To exemplify, it aims to ignore the author in the process determining the meaning of the text since accepting the existence of any authority on the meaning of the text is a limiting activity (Barthes, 1967/1977 p. 147). No matter with which perception and thought the author created the text, post-structuralist theory does not differentiate or prioritize the author from

any reader who derives subjective meaning from the text, he is too an interpreter, so the author's intention cannot be a determining factor on the meaning of the text. Furthermore, the variable nature of the meaning in the text will re-create itself in every reader and reading, independently of the author, hence, taking the author's intentions into consideration when making meaning will limit the richness of meanings the text has the potential to produce. Roland Barthes, one of the most important proponents of the theory, handles this in his work "The Death of the Author": In order for the text to reach its true semantic potential, the author must be removed from the equation, because an evaluation based on the author's intentions will turn into a one-way, limiting activity. However, when the author is removed from the equation, the text becomes multi-layered, and it opens to unlimited interpretations.

The conception of "Death of the Author", which forms the basis of post-structuralist thought, has also become one of the greatest building blocks of modern literary criticism. As the author's authority has begun to be questioned and the focus has been drawn to the text itself, texts have started to be analysed from many different aspects and layers, thus a different era in the field of literary criticism has been entered.

In light of all this, it can be understood that post-structuralist theory places the greatest responsibility on the reader in giving meaning to the text. According to the post-structuralist approach, the text is inherently open to different interpretations because every time the text is read by the reader, the meaning-making process is affected by the mental, physical, psychological or economic situation of the reader, thus, the intellectual knowledge the reader has, the mindset the reader is in at the moment, and even the effects of the instant experiences the reader has, will allow the reader to derive different meanings from the same text. In short, even the same reader's interpretation of the text will be different each time, and this is a factor that enriches the meaning according to the post-structuralist approach. Post-structuralist thought argues that in addition to the reader enriching the meaning by making different inferences within himself, the meaning of the text will be further enriched by the interpretations of different readers. While even the same reader can interpret the same text differently at different times and enrich the meaning of the text, it is an undeniable fact that different readers with completely different experiences and from different cultures and social structures will derive countless different meanings from the text.

While post-structuralist thought gives the reader the greatest power in terms of giving meaning to the text, it also places a great responsibility on the reader. The reader is no longer passive in the post-structuralist perspective, on the contrary, the reader is the one who plays the biggest role in structuring the meaning of the text. The reason of the previously mentioned “death of the author” is simply “to restore the place of the reader” (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 143). Therefore, this privilege given to the reader at the expense of the “killing” of the author must be compensated by the reader by taking the responsibility of playing an active role in structuring the meaning of the text.

The deconstructive feature of the theory also plays a leading role in the adaptation of the post-structuralist approach to theatre. In post-structuralist theatre, it is aimed to go beyond the traditional theatre structure (Brook, 1995, p. 68). This deconstruction can be most clearly examined in the structural features of the plays that are written with a post-structural approach. To give an instance, in such plays, it can be observed that the flow of events may appear dispersed and scattered rather than being presented chronologically. The principle that there cannot be a single absolute meaning in the text is demonstrated by the techniques used in the plays; characters are not good or bad, events are not black or white; both the characters, the plot, and the artistic techniques that are used are arranged in a way that will enrich the layers of meaning of the text and push the reader/viewer to question meaning within themselves in an atmosphere with blurred boundaries. In addition, just as the place of the author in written works is questioned by the post-structuralist approach, in theatre, it is not only the author who should be “killed”; the director, another authority figure, is also disregarded from the meaning-making process (Brook, 1995, 45). Just as in the meaning-making process of the written text the place of the reader is strengthened with the post-structuralist view, likewise, in theatre, the audience is also given the same importance and power next to the reader. As advocated by post-structuralist theory, active participation is expected from the audience (Boal, 1985, p. 108), and with an advantage not obtained by the reader of the written works, the audience in theatre can do their part of meaning-making and participate in the production visibly, directly in the creation process of the work of art. For this reason, special techniques can be used to ensure the active participation of the audience. In other words, these plays are written and staged in a way that creates a ground for the audience to make additions to the play, by way of planting the actors among the audience, asking direct questions to

the audience and forcing them to participate, breaking the fourth wall; the script allows for small improvisational changes during the staging, with the guidance of the audience.

In addition to all of these, the way the language that is used is often not very easily understandable and direct in post-structuralist drama, but is generally apt to be questioned and completed by the audience. Addedly, language is not only structurally adjusted to involve the audience in the process of meaning-making; but also through the manner of language in different contexts that is used between the characters, the audience is challenged to question the subjectivity of language, the way how it is on a slippery ground in terms of conveying meaning, what role language plays in the relationships between characters, and the fact that language is often not objective and secured in conveying meaning. In addition, the previously mentioned intertextual connections advocated by post-structuralist approach are also given through references and analogies to other texts in these plays, revealing the always-expanding nature of literature. On top of these, post-structuralism with its tendency to deconstruct traditional views and norms, deconstructs the customary characterization in theatre. Giving the same actors and actresses more than one different characters or portraying the same characters with different actors/actresses, the switching of the roles, which will be delved into in detail later in the text analysis chapter, is an example of one of these deconstructive techniques. In this way, the audience is forced to follow the play relatively more carefully, follow the character changes, and play a more active role in making sense of the play.

To point out some of the representative theatre works that are written with a post-structuralist approach or are suitable for an analysis from post-structuralist perspective are *The Author* by Tim Crouch, *Venus in Fur* by David Ives, and *The Writer* by Ella Hickson, which will be examined in detail later in this thesis. These works, with their unusual theatrical structures, characters that challenge social norms, different artistic experiences they offer to readers and spectators, the social problems they point out and which also are the subject of post-structuralist thought, involve the audience and the readers in the production of the theatre and prevent them from being passive spectators/readers. These works, which emphasize to their audiences and readers that they should also take responsibility in this production and meaning-

making process, prepare a very suitable basis to be analysed from a post-structuralist framework.

To start with, in *Venus in Fur*, Ives brings the production process and backstage of the theatre to the stage for the audience to see. He reveals the power struggles between the director and the actors, and what kind of communication and/or miscommunication occur between the writer, director and actors during the adaptation and staging process. In addition, he questions gender roles, which are often addressed by post-structuralist thought, and the situations in which these roles are deconstructed, and most importantly, what constitutes the meaning of the text as a result of all these issues. To continue with Crouch's *The Author*, it can be noticed easily how incredibly innovative, both with its structure and subject, the play is. Though since the day of its premiere it has been subject to a lot of harsh criticism, it has achieved what it set out to do; make the audience question. *The Author*, which does not show any element of violence on stage and shocks its audience and readers only through language, also has a structure that destroys traditional theatre staging techniques. Another reason that renders this work more suitable for examination from a post-structuralist perspective is that it contains direct references to the concept of "death of the author". Although it consists of a risky staging and theatrical structure, Crouch's work is very insistent on making the audience/reader an active part of the meaning-making process of the text. Finally, in Hickson's play *The Writer*, the writer-director conflict is presented very intensely. It is a play that poses a harsh criticism against the fact that the author's ideals are doomed to lose their importance in the art world where artistic concerns are replaced by financial concerns, that art has lost its power to change and develop society when financial concerns are meddled into it, and what gender roles, which are at the heart of the problems in the theatre industry, cause women and therefore society to lose. Hickson reflects the deconstructive structure of the post-structuralist approach through her angry and unapologetic character to all the social problems she deals with in her play.

As a result, this thesis aims to analyse three contemporary theatre works from a post-structuralist framework, in the light of structuralist and post-structuralist theories, the general information of which was given above. The thesis will discuss which post-structuralist features exist in the selected works and how these features

distinguish these works from traditional theatre works. As a result of these analyses, the thesis aims to find an answer to the question “Who gives meaning to the text?”, which has caused debates for many years and sparked the formation of many new criticism styles.

Therefore, the three contemporary plays *The Author* by Crouch, *Venus in Fur* by Ives, and *The Writer* by Hickson will be analysed from a post-structuralist perspective and in view of the analyses, the answer to the question that the thesis revolves around “Who gives meaning to the text” will be sought.



2. CHAPTER ONE: (POST-)STRUCTURALIST ANALYSIS OF *VENUS IN FUR* BY DAVID IVES

Venus in Fur is a play written by the American playwright David Ives and was first performed on January 13 January 2010 at the Classic Stage Company. Since then, it has gained wide popularity due to its provocative themes such as sexual power dynamics, authority, the power struggle between man and woman as well as the power struggle between the director and the actor. As a contemporary work, it is set in the present day and mostly reflects the social and cultural context of the present day. While the play incorporates some elements of a 19th-century novella within its storyline, it is a modern and contemporary work that explores universal and timeless themes.

2.1. Characters and Plot in *Venus in Fur*

To give a brief plot summary of the play, it primarily revolves around two characters, Thomas and Wanda, or Wanda as her real name. Thomas is a playwright and director in the process of adapting the 19th-century novella *Venus in Furs* by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch into a stage production. Wanda is an actress who arrives late for the audition. Though it is an early fault by her that may not be forgiven, she persuades Thomas to let her read for the role of the lead character with whom she shares almost the same name.

Even though on their first encounter Wanda seems to “embody every negative generalization Thomas has been complaining about” (Bromwich, 2014, p. 2), their relationship quickly takes a different shape. Wanda effortlessly piques Thomas’s interest (Kilford, 2021) and he agrees to play the character Kuchemski in the play during the audition. Starting to stage the play together, they manage to build a creative atmosphere and enrich the text while transferring it onto the stage. Meanwhile, they touch upon various sensitive yet powerful and provocative subjects, discovering the power dynamics between man and woman (Stewart, 2013, p. 318) and director and actress, socially constructed norms of genders and gender roles, the power of the language and the figure of authority. Not only do they read their parts, but in the complex atmosphere of the play, they also get in different characters from the novella that the play is based on, and occasionally switch their roles, a strategy which allows the reader to see the fluidity of human nature.

As the audition progresses, the power dynamic between Thomas and Wanda

shifts. When at the beginning of the play Thomas is the figure of authority, this starts to change when Wanda gets into the character of Vanda. In the play-within-the-play, Vanda is the authority figure and Kuchemski is the one who is more obedient. However, these dynamics start flowing into the reality. In the complexity of the play, questions about gender roles, sexual power dynamics, and complexity of human relationships are effectively raised and with all that is handled, it serves as a commentary both on the creative process in theatre, or in literature in general and on the relationship between playwrights, directors, and actors/actresses. It poses questions about who holds the power in shaping a narrative and giving meaning to it, and how that power can shift during the artistic process, whereby the play is open to interpretations both from structuralist and post-structuralist perspectives. The play engages with ideas that challenge traditional notions of meaning and authority, the power of language, the meaning behind the text and the deconstruction of social norms, which makes it a rich source for a post-structuralist analysis.

2.2. A General Outlook onto *Venus in Fur* from (Post-)Structuralist Approach

In the complexity of the play, questions about gender roles, sexual power dynamics, and complexity of human relationships are effectively raised and with all that is handled, it serves as a commentary both on the creative process in theatre, or in literature in general and on the relationship between playwrights, directors, and actors/actresses. It poses questions about who holds the power in shaping a narrative and giving meaning to it, and how that power can shift during the artistic process, whereby the play is open to interpretations both from structuralist and post-structuralist perspectives. The play engages with ideas that challenge traditional notions of meaning and authority, the power of language, the meaning behind the text and the deconstruction of social norms, which makes it a rich source for a post-structuralist analysis.

2.2.1. Question of the Meaning of the Text in *Venus in Fur*

In the play, it is frequently seen in the dialogues between Thomas and Wanda that the meaning of the text is a matter of discussion. Thomas, as the adaptor/writer and the director of the play, initially views himself as the source of meaning and behaves accordingly. However, as the play progresses, it is revealed that there is a

wide range of factors that determine the meaning of the text. Looking at this from a post-structuralist standpoint, to grasp the true meaning of the text, the underlying factors that produce and later shape the text must be studied. It is not sufficient to analyse the writing and to attempt to comprehend the author's intentions, but it is necessary to factor in the culture, the social structure, and the era where the text is produced. According to Derrida, the traditional systems of language imply that there is a secure ground, a centre of meaning, however, this belief is not more than a philosophical fiction (1966/1988, p. 110). Instead, as Derrida suggests, "language bears within itself the necessity of its own critique" (1966/1988, p. 94). The language structure alone is insufficient to analyse a text and its meaning, and it is necessary to study the language in detail while keeping in mind the factors that shape the language. Thomas's perception of meaning in the text clashes with this understanding of meaning in post-structuralism. As Barthes suggests, "the true meaning of the text is tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, which is what goes against post-structuralist thought" (1967/1977, p. 143). For Mallarmé, it is the language that speaks, not the author, hence, to understand the true meaning of the text, and accordingly, the author should be suppressed as much as possible (1897/2009, p. 208). At the beginning of the play, Thomas does not want to be suppressed, but instead, he wants to be the source of the meaning. He is closed to any type of outside interpretations; he is sure of what he implies in his work and how his text should be perceived. However, "a text is a multi-dimensional space where variety of other writings blend and clash" (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 146). As an example, Thomas's play is originally based on a 19th-century novella, which is based on innumerable centres of culture, which makes his play a product of a built-up culture and meaning. It is as well "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 146). Viewed from Barthes' perspective, it is meaningless to consider a play entirely original as it is inspired and influenced by a number of underlying factors the influence of which even the author might be unaware of.

In the play, it is witnessed that the more interpretations Thomas's play gets, the richer and more intense it develops, and whenever Thomas objects to Wanda's interpretations, it becomes inevitable that the artistic process is interrupted. The play does not gain its full potential unless the author is suppressed and the text is open to interpretations and fluidity. As suggested in the post-structuralist thought, to give the

text an author inevitably imposes a limit on the text, and it results in the “closing” of the text (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 147).

With all being said, what factor should be considered as the point where the meaning lies behind in the text? Is it possible to find a single point where the meaning can be derived from? From a post-structuralist perspective, it is not possible to find a centre of meaning, but is it possible to identify a factor that would be the most reliable to determine the meaning? These questions shall be the core interest of this chapter from now on.

2.2.2. Multiplicity of Meaning Based on the Reader

As previously mentioned, a text is a product of numerous other writings, affected by innumerable cultures and relationships, constructed by dialogues and parodies stemming from different contexts. Nevertheless, there is one place where this multiplicity is gathered upon, which is the reader, not as traditionally believed, the author (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 148). Even though in the play neither a typical reader nor an audience are presented to interpret the text, Wanda seems to take this role considering that she is the external perspective who reads and tries to understand the text. Accordingly, in her interpretations, the struggle of making sense of the writing can be seen, and the process in the reader/audience’s mind during interpretations of the text can be witnessed. As Roland Barthes suggests in his essay “Death of the Author”, the unity and the meaning of the text lie in its destination rather than its origin (p. 148); and the reader is the destination where the meaning is constructed. Hence it is important to realize that the more Wanda interprets, the more the play shifts in form and takes different turns in the plotline. As criticized by Derrida in his *Of Grammatology*, it is crucial to eliminate the logocentric bias that traditionally the meaning is based on a stable, unified identity, which creates the binary oppositions and favours one over another based on the human desire to posit a “central” presence (p. 23). Though Levi-Strauss explains in his *Structural Anthropology* that the meaning depends on its function to “break up the realm of meaning” and it is “a function of the presence of absence of other words denoting related meanings” (p. 93), Derrida considers it impossible to find a stable presence of meaning, since the text is “a product of ambiguity and play”, making it necessary for the text to be as open as possible to interpretation.

As Derrida suggests, language, and thus the meaning, is always in the process of becoming, and it will be “deferred and led elsewhere” (1972/1989, p. 160). It is never fully accomplished and fixed; hence, Thomas’s attempt to keep his work as he created it is a futile struggle, as it takes on a new meaning, drawing from the past, the present and the future every time it is read or acted. His play is already constructed with the traces of the earlier works and cultures, and a new meaning is created during the staging process by Wanda and him; likewise, it will construct countless new meanings when it is staged for different audiences, which is the true nature of literature and meaning. The meaning cannot exist in a stable presence, but rather it is constantly constructed at all times and from the perspective of every reader.

As far as *Venus in Fur* is concerned, what Wanda does to the play by Thomas through her interpretations and additions on every rehearsal serves to diminish the authority of Thomas as the author in line with Barthes’ post-structuralist view. The actress Wanda here stands for the reader and she feels free to change or add or remove some speeches or acts throughout the rehearsals. This strategy is indeed attributable to Bertolt Brecht, a 20th-century German playwright and director who develops his plays during the rehearsals through improvised acting and who is thus credited with having paved the way for the liberation of the dramatic works from the domineering effect of Aristotle. Wanda’s improvisatory contributions to Thomas’ play, though criticized and rejected by Thomas in the beginning, are however accepted by him in the end. This in a sense justifies Ives, the playwright of *Venus in Fur*, as a follower of Barthes in that the struggle between Thomas as the supporter of the author as the authority on the meaning of the text and Wanda as the supporter of the reader as the authority in the creation of the meaning of the text.

2.2.3. Multiplicity of Meaning Based on Social Circumstances

According to Foucault, the meaning of the words changes in their relation to “other propositions”, their condition of use and reinvestment, according to the field of experience and possible verifications (1972, p. 103). That is to say, the “principle of variation of the statement” (1972, p. 104) forces the meaning to be changed within different circumstances and times. The meaning of the product is shaped by the past, present and future in unison, but when analysing the text, it helps to consider the specific historical and cultural circumstances of both the time the work is produced in

and the conditions of when it is presented to the audience. This is because the social conditions have an impact on the norms and cultures of societies and the individuals, which accordingly affects the context of the text. According to Foucault, it is crucial to analyse the discourses, power structures and historical context of the era that the text is produced in, rather than concentrating solely on the text, since the text itself is not as self-evident as it may appear to be (1972, p. 135). However, while factoring in the social and cultural context of the era when evaluating the text, it is important to realize that this should not be a restrictive activity, but on the contrary, it should open the text for a wider range of interpretations. As an instance, instead of taking Thomas's play (play-within-the-play) as the sole product to analyse, an early examination of the era when the original novella was written gives way to the understanding of the characters so much more efficiently. In an era where the sexual norms are much stricter and more powerful over individuals, both Vanda and Kuchemski are characters who transgress the era's social conventions (Whitmore, 2023). When Thomas and Wanda consider this while performing the play on the stage, they can understand the true power of the characters and more successfully bring it to light. Likewise, considering the fact that in the modern era the gender norms begin to be questioned and the feminist viewpoint is much more prevalent, Wanda's interpretations on Thomas's play can be understood more clearly in the play. She questions the objectification of Vanda's character and is able to admire her authority over the male given that it is a form of protest against social norms. Similarly, albeit from a different angle, Thomas's first criterion in the actress he searches for to play Vanda is constructed by the "masculine" viewpoint of modern perspective. He expects his ideal actress to be literate, sophisticated, strong and talented, and he condemns modern women who do not read, who do not speak more elegantly, and who do not dress more appropriately. Though he considers himself as a superior mind, his ideas are inevitably constructed by the social setting that he is a part of.

With the above comment on the play as a work that can gain or lose or change its meaning based on the circumstances of the society and time in which it is written, transition of Vanda as a seemingly femme fatale that is created by a male author in the play and that acts more in accordance with the male expectations into Vanda as an authoritative woman figure who gradually dominates over Kuchemski through the rehearsals under Wanda can be taken as the reflection of the feminist tendencies of the

age. Wanda also, in her real life, turns Thomas into a diminished man in terms of his status in relation to women. This is also reflective of Barthes insistence on keeping the reader above the author in the creation of meaning in that the author writes with a focus on just a single meaning, whereas the reader creates a variety of meanings out of the text, depending on when and where he or she reads it, on the age at which he or she reads it, on his or her political or religious views, and on his or her intellectual capacity. Thus, the feminist struggle of the years from the mid-20th-century onward is also seen in the play in Wanda's treatment of her character Vanda at first and of Thomas then. It is in this sense that deconstructive approach of Barthes can also be applied to the play, especially in relation to the gender roles in traditional and modern senses.

2.2.4. Rethinking Gender Roles: A Deconstructive Approach

The representation and deconstruction of the gender roles in the play can be analysed from a post-structuralist perspective as the shifts between the gender roles and the fluidity of sexual norms are highlighted. As Judith Butler argues in her *Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity*, gender is a performative condition, and it is continuously enacted through repeated actions (p. 187). Both in the play and the play-within-the-play, it is evident that the roles of Thomas and Wanda, and Kuchemski and Vanda are constantly changing, challenging the norms of traditional gender roles. While typically in a patriarchal society, it is expected for man to be the dominant side in the relationship and woman to be more submissive, both Wanda and Thomas are able to switch these roles based on the context of the play-within-the-play and the dynamic of their relationship. Although at the beginning of the play Thomas is the dominant one, this swiftly changes when they start playing Vanda and Kuchemski, and this shift happens so smoothly and effortlessly that it supports the idea that gender roles are performative. Their shift of gender roles does not only happen within the staging process, but it also overflows into their real relationship. Their characters contravene the binary oppositions of man/woman and feminine/masculine, reflecting the fluidity of the human relationships, and this deconstruction starts to be reflected in their reality; a sharp change in Thomas's character is discovered; the authority figure who tries to keep every step of the production under his control becomes more submissive and open to change towards the end of the play. This fluidity finds its most striking manifestation in the language which plays an important role in

gender roles. Kristeva talks about this characteristic of language as follows; “(the function of language is) to express meaning in a communicable sentence between speakers. This function harbours coherence or, in other words, social identity” (1980, p. 131). That means that the role of language in determining social status or socially constructed norms is rather undeniable, to an extent where it can be a determinant of one’s social identity and where one stands in a social spectrum. Language the characters use creates strong effects on their relationship, it reinforces or deconstructs the social norms of gender and sexuality. When Thomas is the authority figure in the play, he is considerably more formal in his language and his arrogance can be sensed through his choice of words. However, later when the roles begin to shift, Thomas’s language becomes more obedient, and accordingly, Vanda’s and Wanda’s language become more authoritative, having a significant influence on the dynamic of their relationship.

2.2.5. The Endless Web: Intertextual Insights in *Venus in Fur*

The facts that Thomas adapts the novella *Venus in Furs* by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch to stage and that both Thomas and Wanda go back and forth from the adaptation to the original work exemplify the intertextual nature of meaning. As Derrida argues, there cannot be a self-contained and autonomous meaning within a single text (1967/1998, p. 121). In the play, similarly, neither the novella nor the play is self-contained and autonomous, but rather they are interconnected. Even though Thomas seems to perceive himself as the origin of the play, it becomes apparent that the meaning in the text is mostly determined by the relationship it has with the novella. Both Wanda and Thomas get into their characters more deeply when they contemplate the traits of the characters from the novella. They seem to understand more about the characters’ nature and the meaning of the text, which alters the staging process of the play to a great extent. This interconnection is not only between the novella and the play, but it also includes the characters’ backgrounds. It is when they begin to reflect their own desires and emotions onto the characters that the play gets more intense and realistic. The production that Thomas requests at the beginning of the play differs significantly from the play he ends up creating with Wanda in the end, because from Thomas’s perspective, the play should have been the product of his own mind. It, however, comes to be the product of the network of meanings between the texts as

well as the individual experience.

To sum up, the fact that the play consists of numbers of themes that post-structuralist idea works with makes the text a suitable piece of work to evaluate from a post-structuralist perspective regarding the constructing of the meaning.

2.3. Unravelling the Text: A Post-Structuralist Approach to *Venus in Fur*

To start with a more detailed analysis of the play, although Thomas, the director and the adapter of the play, comes across as the authority at the beginning of the play and appears to know exactly what he wants in his characters, he reflects his first hesitation about giving life and meaning to the character when Wanda proposes him to play the character Kushemski. However, when Wanda initially asks him why he chooses to direct his own play, he arrogantly says, “I’m only doing this because no director ever seems to get things exactly right. Having lived through one misguided production after another...” (p. 18). This is a strong claim from him in terms of his perception of the authority. Evidenced by this statement, he sees himself as the creator of the work and as the only one to reflect the true meaning of it on the stage, which is one of the main misconceptions challenged by post-structuralism. From a post-structuralist perspective, there cannot be an ultimate point of origin where the meaning is created (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 146), which is illustrated by the fact that as the adaptor or the writer of the play, Thomas mostly remains more recessive in the staging process while Wanda, as an outside perspective, shapes the play more drastically with her interpretations. As an example for this, especially after Thomas puts on the coat of Kushemski, he starts to have even more trouble giving life to the character. Even though he expects to be better at playing the character, he realizes the difficulty and says, “It’s just – it feels different, actually saying the words. Out loud. It’s not like tapping the words onto a screen at 2:02 am” (p. 20). He seems to confess that there is a barrier between the writer and the character even though he is the one that creates the character, since in the plotline characters gain their own personalities, and even the creator of them can get alienated from them. This can be explained in light of Barthes’s argument that the relationship between the writer and the text, and thus the characters in it, is and always will be dynamic, indefinite and blurred. Barthes uses Proust’s approach to the writer to explain this “hazardous activity” (1967/1977, p. 144). The text and the characters that the writer incubates are “incomplete” at best. Thus, even

and especially as the writer himself, Thomas has difficulty understanding the nature of his character and the text, since he tries to deal with an incomplete product that he naturally has a hazardous relationship with.

It turns out later in the play that Thomas is deeply enchanted by Wanda since he realizes that she and the character have remarkably similar characteristics. She is not only a good actress, but also unexpectedly adequate to play the role because she has strong resemblances with the character. Normally, since she embodies everything Thomas hates in an actress who can play Vanda, she is far from being the ideal actress for the play. But the essence she shares with the character erases all the criterion that Thomas had initially set for a “bad actress”. Looking at his fascination with Wanda from a post-structuralist perspective, Thomas’s feelings towards Wanda can be attributed to her breaking down the fixed categories Thomas had in his mind; she represents a new power dynamic, a fluid characterization and meaning. This can be explained with Kristeva’s “abjection”. Kristeva explains “abject” as a thing that is outside of fixed categories and normal; a thing that is both intimidating and fascinating. In abjection, one feels disgusted, intimidated, but also interestingly drawn to abject (Kristeva, 1982, p.1). It is disgusting and intimidating because it is not what one expects and is used to, but on the other hand, it is fascinating because it is different and mysterious. As Wanda challenges and transcends the boundaries of the expected, Thomas finds himself captivated by the transformative nature of this theatrical experience. Even though at the beginning he has very persistent ideas about how an actress should be to play the role, Wanda’s anomalous features seem to give the character a life that Thomas had not been expecting. Thomas’s initial dislike for the type of actress Vanda represents can be seen as rooted in preconceived notions and stereotypes, however, what Vanda brings to the character with her variability and unique nature allows Thomas to see her in a changing, fluid and original light. He initially sees the character as a show-off, and he talks about Vanda’s principles as “professed principles”, refusing to believe that she actually possesses them. Yet Vanda goes beyond her scripted character and re-creates herself.

When Thomas says “Aphrodite is the Greek version of Venus. The same person. The same goddess”, it is a recognition of the fluidity of meaning and the way symbols can take on different forms in various cultural and historical texts. As it is

argued by Barthes in his *S/Z*, a text is not an access to a model of writing, but instead, it is an “entrance into a network with a thousand entrances” (1970/1990, p. 12). Even while describing the meaning in one text, one is bound to refer to the others, since every single text has multiplicity in it in terms of its connections and entrances to the others. As Barthes argues, meaning is not inherent in words or symbols but is instead constructed through language and cultural context and the text is generated by various centres of culture (1967/1977, p. 146). Thomas’s statement reflects the relativity of meaning: although Aphrodite and Venus are different names for the same goddess, their significance may vary depending on the cultural and linguistic context. His comment highlights the intertextual nature of cultural and mythological references and suggests that meanings are not contained within individual texts, but are constructed through a network of references and relationships. During the play, there can be found numerous other references to other works and cultures, which is witnessed when Vanda refers to Kuchemski’s fascination with the painting “Venus with the Mirror” by Titian (p. 15). To understand more how the preceding works affect the succeeding ones and influence the author of the work, it can be claimed that this particular piece of painting is chosen to display the resemblance between Vanda and Venus, depicted in the painting; they are both in an empowered position (Bromwich, 2014, p.7). This equivocal perspective gives way to a constant interpretation and a non-stop becoming in the meaning; the meaning behind the text is continuous, and it is shaped based on past and future, by different contexts, different histories, different references and by different perceptions. Aker explains this intertextuality not in terms of the texts’ connections between each other, but with the “multiple meanings of the text, the transfer of meaning from one text to other texts due to multiple links, the text opening itself to other texts and, therefore, the continuation of the meaning” (2022, p. 338).

In the later parts of the play, when Thomas asks Wanda to stand next to the divan while reading the line to take a power position, she admits that it feels better to take the position that Thomas has already suggested though at first she objects to it, saying that she does not find it right to do so. Despite what has been implied before, on this part of the play, the role of the director in giving meaning to the text comes in sight. As an outside perspective, the director is able to notice what might strengthen the meaning behind the scenes that the actor/actress might not be able to realize. Thomas’s artistic choices as a director influence how the audience perceives and

interprets the play from an outside perspective. However, as Mullins argues in his work, there is a limit to how much the director is entitled to alter the play; “The director must act as the midwife to the birth of the piece. The director gets a say in how the play enters the world, but at the end of the day it does not belong to the director” (2018, p. 13). In the case where the director trespasses the boundaries of his area of responsibility, conflicts begin amongst the creative team as in the play. Taking his power from discovering that the director’s interpretations can effectively strengthen the meaning, Thomas once again finds himself attempting to hold the power in the play. Thomas and Wanda discuss Wanda’s personality and what she really wants (p. 28). One being the actress who gives life to the character and the other being the creator of the character, neither of them really knows her. Yet Thomas is still trying to hold the power by saying “from my perspective, Kuchemski’s perspective --” he is still of the belief that he knows what is in Kuchemski’s mind because he himself has created him. From a post-structuralist viewpoint, Thomas’s assertion that he knows Kuchemski’s perspective due to his identity and role as his creator is opposed to the idea that the fixed meanings and the stable identities in a text should be subject to deconstruction. The concept of the “death of the author,” as proposed by Roland Barthes, suggests that the author’s intentions and authority over the text should be ignored once the work is released to the audience (1967/1977, p. 148). Thomas’s claim to understand what is in Kuchemski’s mind may be seen as an attempt to exert control over the interpretation of the character; however, this assertion is challenged by the post-structuralist notion that the meaning is ultimately shaped by the reader or the audience (1967/1977, p. 148).

As mentioned before, post-structuralist thought argues that power does not depend on a centre, and that it is a dynamic force that fluidly works in society. Power is established through different agencies primarily such as knowledge, language and culturally structured beliefs and practices, so it is always subject to change (Darkins, 2017, p. 3). Accordingly, in post-structuralist drama, power dynamics are often portrayed as fluid, unstable, and subject to constant shifts. As an example of the shifting of the power dynamics, the roles of Wanda and Thomas begin to change (p. 31). Given that Wanda comes in charge to direct the play, it takes a completely different turn. The characters have changed, and now it is Wanda who wants Kuchemski, and Kuchemski swears that he will not bend to her. When the director as

Thomas is gradually and implicitly replaced by the director as Wanda, a process which signifies a change undergone by both, the directorial change affects the atmosphere of the play as well. Seen from a post-structuralist perspective, this can be considered as a strong example of the argument that there cannot be a fixed meaning in a single text. As Derrida suggests in his *Of Grammatology*, meaning in its nature is flexible. Accordingly, while inferring the meaning, one must break through, or deconstruct the rigid boundaries of meaning (1967/1998, p. 10). In a text, therefore, there is always room for more interpretations from different perspectives and in different contexts. Whether there is a change in the direction of the play or in the audience, it is possible, or almost inevitable, to find different meanings. Both Wanda and Thomas are directing the same play based on the same text. However, there is an obvious change in the tone when they switch their roles. The reversal of roles, with Wanda now adopting a more assertive and dominant position, subverts traditional gender and power dynamics. The fact that it is now Wanda who has the control over the play ultimately affects Thomas's sense of authority and thus the tone of the play. This shift creates a shared ownership in the play's plot by disturbing Thomas's place as the sole creator of the work. Even though the change of authority may present a challenge to Thomas's initial vision, it also stimulates creativity as the director is now faced with an unexpected change of vision and he is able to find innovative ways to integrate Wanda's contributions into the overall artistic vision. This new collaborative creativity between the director and the actress cannot necessarily be interpreted as a negative shift, but this interactive atmosphere can enhance the overall mood of the creative process. In addition to all these, how this alteration affects the overall tone of the play reveals that it would not be entirely accurate to assume that the author's intention in writing a play is the main element in determining the meaning. As argued by the post-structuralist thought, once the text is written, it detaches itself from any contingent circumstances (Totosy, 2003, p. 83). That is to say, the text recreates new meanings once it is released, and is not tied to what it was originally intended to present. Whether it is the reader, the audience, the actor/actress, or in this particular scene the director, an outside perspective has the power to change a great deal of what the writer might have attempted to reflect.

Barthes argues that "the image of literature to be found in ordinary culture is tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions" (1967/1977, p. 143). Similarly, in the play, Thomas and Wanda are depicted as

discussing whether the playwrights put themselves in their plays and if the texts are just the writers writing about themselves, their own personalities, desires, cultures, memories and backgrounds (p. 34). Even though they appear to be creating new and unique characters in their works, they might just be re-creating their own reflections. Hence, particularly for the playwrights themselves as the creators of the characters, it can be impossible to be impartial while reading the characters. Just as the incidents and the characters may evoke completely different emotions in different readers and audiences, they might awaken different emotions in the writer. The meaning rebuilds itself repeatedly from the beginning to the end (Derrida, 1967/1973, p. 58), depending on infinite experiences that the reader might have. The person who creates the work at the beginning can be a completely different person from the one who reads later what he himself created, since he has gained new experiences and consequently new perspectives since he created it.

In the play, when Wanda protests that the play makes Vanda look bad, Thomas loses his temper (p. 39). Upon a closer scrutiny, he seems worried to lose his control over the meaning of the play. Barthes argues, "Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away. The negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing" (1967/1977, p. 142). Based on this argument, it can be supported that Thomas is desperately trying to keep the subject from slipping away, since despite his original intentions, he starts to realize that his intended meaning in the play is getting changed or even lost during the staging process. He frantically wants to be the one who defines what the text really means, but when the meaning re-creates itself, he feels intimidated by the fact that the play seems to be getting out of the boundaries that he intended to set for it. The ideas that there can be found a fixed meaning in the underlying structures of a text and that there can be found an authority over the meaning (Barthes, 1964/1967, p. 14) are challenged not only by post-structuralism in real life but by Wanda in the play as well. The vivid example of how his intended meaning in the play can be interpreted completely different from another perspective makes him feel powerless over his own creation. He believes in his work so strongly that the thought of it changing its shape based on different observations seems to him as the deconstruction of its initial plotline and the play losing its meaning.

However, for the most part in the play Thomas argues that as the writer, or the adaptor, he does not reflect his own experiences and personality onto his characters. When Wanda implies it, however, he does not object to the assumption (p. 40). He starts to realize that his desires also have a big impact on his creativity during the production of the play. Despite his efforts, he cannot be impartial to Wanda when she gets into the character of Vanda. The characters that he has created seem to have gained their own personalities outside of his power, and they start to have a power on the creator himself, which is an example for the detachment of the text from the author or the author from the text. This argument gains more strength when Thomas accepts Wanda's dominance (p. 49). It becomes more apparent that he reflects his own desires in the play and the characters, and that he is not impartial towards the work. This might be the reason why he gets defensive when he perceives that he is losing control over the play, as well as his own self.

Based on the argument that Thomas cannot be accepted as the origin of the meaning in the work, it can be supported that to analyse the work only within its frameworks as it was created by Thomas could cause an unreliable understanding of the meaning, since he is knowingly or unknowingly influenced by his own background. Howells argues that there is no inherent, original intention or thought in one's consciousness that exists prior to linguistic expression (Howells, 2017, p. 226), so it should be accepted that the intentions are not purely expressed. Hence, attempting to analyse the meaning based on the work is not wholesome since the meaning will inevitably be tainted with the creator's own interpretations; and the meaning that is drawn from the text will not be objective.

In terms of the theme of dominance and the post-structuralist arguments on the fluidity of meaning in the text, it appears that Wanda demands to switch roles with Thomas just before the nature of the characters change in the play. Vanda is dominant and powerful when Wanda is playing her, and Wanda intends to play Kuchemski just when he becomes dominant in the play; and as a result, she remains dominant in her acting, and Thomas accepts it. From a poststructuralist-feminist point of view, gender roles are not innate but learned through the social occasions and repetitive behaviours of people that are observed by the children who are born with the biological sex; but not with an innate desire to perform the normative roles of the genders (Dökmen, 2009,

p. 25). With the combination of the feminist and poststructuralist theories, the aim is to understand how the gender roles are constructed, and how people are encouraged to actively think about their own sexuality from a young age. According to the “social learning theory”, people acquire the gender roles from a young age through the reward-punishment methods that are applied to their behaviours by the society. For example, just as a girl is reinforced by her family and her society if she helps her mother in the kitchen, and hence she inevitably acquires the action as her role as a kitchen worker at home to be approved by the society (Dökmen, 2009, p. 61), so a boy learns to be strong and protective of those around him when he is complimented for protecting or keeping a watch on his sister when out or when alone. Based on this theory, it can be argued that these constructed gender roles are reversed – or even erased in the play between Thomas and Wanda, exemplifying the deconstruction of the binary oppositions. As mentioned before, post-structuralism problematizes fixed meanings and constructed norms, which can be further analysed in the field of post-structural feminism. Deconstructing aspect of post-structuralist thought “problematizes what being a woman means”, and analyses how elements of gender are constructed (İşıtan, 2022, p. 147). Accordingly, it is often seen in the play that Thomas and Wanda are going against the social and sexual norms of dominance between man and woman, with Wanda being the dominant one and Thomas having a more assertive role. Moreover, it can be realized how effortlessly they can switch the sexual power dynamics when they play different characters, which exemplifies the performativity of gender (Butler, 1989, p. 187). They go beyond the traditional understanding of “feminine” and “masculine” and refuse to give these concepts a stable and a fixed meaning. These examples from the play attest that gender is in fact constructed through the repeated performances in society, as Judith Butler suggests (1989, p. 43).

Evidenced by the fluidity in Thomas and Vanda’s power and sexual dynamics, it becomes increasingly apparent that the language plays a crucial role in constructing or de-constructing gender roles. In the play, when Vanda remarks that “As a gentleman you’re bound to keep your word. Did you not just sign a paper swearing that you’re my slave?” (p. 41), she uses the socially constructed meaning of “being a man” to deconstruct the socially constructed meaning of masculinity. In addition, when Vanda tells Kuchemski to refer to her only as “madam”, she uses the language to establish her authority over him. It is futile and also problematic to attempt to define these

concepts of “man/woman” and “masculine/feminine”, since gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence (Butler, 1989, p. 33), and in this particular quotation, it is revealed how these misguided definitions can lead to the deconstruction of the same concepts, proving the power of language in constructing the meaning of the particular concepts.

As the play progresses, the boundaries between the characters in the play-within-the-play and the characters in the play get more blurred, and it gets gradually more challenging to separate the two, accordingly making the text more challenging to interpret. The intricacy of the interpretation, though, should not be considered as a weakness of the work, but instead, the work should be considered as the ideal text, since in the text there should be found various and interact networks. Hence, to properly understand the text, one does not, or should not have to try and give it one justified meaning, but instead, “should appreciate what plural constitutes it” (Barthes, 1970/1990, p. 5). On top of this, already as an outstanding representation of play-within-the-play, the equivocalness between fact and fiction in the play creates a stronger interconnected narrative. Even the play-within-the-play has a changing effect over the main play, which supports the idea that different texts and culture inevitably affects the works to come (Kristeva, 1986, p. 37).

As the boundaries between the reality and the fiction are blurred, so are the boundaries between the actors/actresses and the characters. The characters trespass into the real life, changing the relationships between the real people, which adds to the richness of the main play, and takes away the power from the author or the director. Characters start to have a stronger role in how the play unfolds, directing the director and the actors/actresses. The blur between the identities of the writer, the director, the actors/actresses is a fine instance of the deconstruction of binary oppositions (Derrida, 1967/1998, p. 33).

As can be understood in the play, Thomas begins to enjoy playing both Vanda and Kuchemski, which might indicate that in the play, he reflects the duality of his own sexuality, contesting the binary oppositions of genders. As the play proceeds, Thomas steps outside of his fixed identity that he tries to maintain through the beginning of the play. His identity becomes increasingly fluid, assigned sexual roles begin to change, and gender norms are challenged. Both Thomas and Wanda rely on

the scripted personas to get in more fluid sexual identities, and with this overflowing to real life, the idea that the sexual roles are not fixed and inherent but indeed stem from the repeated performances of the individuals is supported (Butler, 1989, p. 143). The more invested they are in their characters, the more effortlessly they change their gender roles. Their actions go beyond their scripted roles, and it appears that they begin to discover the fluidity of human nature. From a post-structuralist perspective, their switch in their masculine and feminine roles enables them not only to challenge but also to erase the binary opposition of gender roles.

To conclude, the play *Venus in Fur* by Ives features various aspects to analyse from a post-structuralist perspective. Both from the general tone of the play and its detailed analysis, various post-structuralist arguments can be interpreted. As mentioned before, initially Thomas sees himself as the authority and the source of meaning in the play. However, when it comes to playing the characters, he quickly realizes the barriers he has between him and the characters. He admits that it is not the same with “typing words onto the screen”, because in the flow of the text, the text widens, gains new layers of meanings and characters create their own individualities. Here, the first sign that there cannot be a sole origin of meaning in the text, comes to light, since according to Barthes, it is when the voice loses its origin, writing begins (1967/1977, p. 142). During the staging process, Wanda is the one who is more dominant and who changes the shape of the text more, which does not only stem from the actress’s performance, but also strongly from the fact that she is an outside perspective and can interpret the meaning much more limitlessly than the author who created the work based on the relationships it has with the previous works and his personal experiences. Later, Thomas seems to get gradually attracted to Wanda and her acting, even though she is exactly the type of a woman and an actress that he claims that he finds repulsive. When Wanda demolishes the ideals in his mind and challenges the social norms, she both captivates Thomas and gives a more realistic life to the character of Vanda, who is ahead of her time and who is also out of social norms. This fluid, changing essence she shares with the character and the way this essence adds to the richness of the play attest that even though a text is interpreted differently than what it was originally intended to mean, it can end up creating an even more interesting piece of work and meaning. Opening the text for more interpretations, in other words, killing the author and enabling the reader’s birth, allows it to achieve its full potential

of meaning without any restrictions (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 148).

Another crucial point in the play is the fact that the characters often refer to different texts that are related to or at the least share some characteristics with Thomas's play. According to Foucault, although different cultural contexts and histories may create a different meaning or change the shape of the meaning, this diversity should be embraced instead of tried to be avoided (Foucault, 1972, p. 159-160), since a text is never solely created in a centre, instead, there is interconnection between numerous texts, or various interpretations of the same text in different cultural contexts (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 146). Hence, as the new social structures are created and new works are produced, the meaning will simultaneously re-construct itself in each work, not only based on the culture and the other works, but also with the new individual experiences of the reader.

Even though in the play the role of an outside perspective – the reader or an audience in giving meaning to the text can be analysed through a number of incidents and dialogues, the role of the director is undeniable as well. Even though Thomas comes short in shaping the play on the stage most of the time compared to Wanda, his comments on some scenes seem to strengthen the effect of the play. While staging the play, especially if the actress shares similar characteristics with the character like Wanda shares with Vanda, it can be challenging for her to realize what might make the meaning stronger for an outside perspective. But as the director, Thomas is able to interpret a scene from a different perspective since he has the opportunity to vision the scene from an outside point of view, which enhances the overall artistic vision of the play. Craig believed that the director of theatre had a “prophetic vision” as the “supreme theatre artist of the modern age with his/her ability to grasp the piece from multiple aspects (Semercioğlu, 2021, p. 23) Director is the one who is expected to both be able to grasp the essence of the play like a character and to see it from an outside perspective like an audience, and despite being also the writer of the play which can compromise his impartiality towards it, when he gets in the role of a director and manages to leave behind his identity as the writer, his interpretations seem to have a positive effect on the meaning of the text. However, Thomas is not always able to leave behind his identity as the writer and is often of the belief that he is the one to construct the meaning in the text. He believes that he knows what the characters think

and what their true natures are, which often causes him to interrupt the staging process of the play. How much he contributes to the artistic efficiency of the play when he leaves his identity as a writer behind and how it disrupts the flow of the production when he fully adopts his identity as the author and the source of meaning support the post-structuralist argument that the author should be excluded from the construction of the meaning (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 145).

In the play, the roles of Wanda and Thomas change during the staging process. When Wanda starts directing the play, the overall atmosphere of the play changes drastically too. The change in the directing affects the flow of the play, which is supported from the post-structuralist perspective that in a text, there cannot be a fixed meaning that is coming from a fixed centre (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 146). As the meaning can re-construct itself from the perceptions of different readers and audiences, it can also re-construct itself when a change occurs in the direction, which supports the idea that the meaning is re-created every time the text is handled. With the shift in their roles as the director and the actor/actress, a creative, shared ownership is established over the play. When two different perspectives take role in creating the meaning, the creative product is enriched. This once again supports the idea in post-structuralism that the author's original intentions while creating the text is not the only determinant of the meaning, nor it should be expected as the most reliable and correct source of meaning (Yerli, 2018, p. 150). The slightest change in the direction, acting or reader/audience can play a significant role in reconstructing the meaning.

When it comes to the writer's role in the construction of the play, most of the time it is predictable that there are hints and traces from the author's life or personality in different aspects of the work, whether it is the personality of a character or an incident that the author himself experienced in his personal life (Foucault, 1969, p. 300). In *Venus in Fur*, even though Thomas argues that he did not add anything from his own personality or life to the play, it is recognized that he has strong similarities with Kuchemski in the play and that he is strongly affected by the plot when he starts playing Kuchemski (Brazil, 2024, p. 35). His overall enthusiasm with the play and the characters suggest that the meaning does not only differ from audience to audience, but it can also be different for the director or the author as well while reading the work. Whether or not the author had a specific goal while creating the work, when it is

produced and out of the creator's hands, the meaning rebuilds itself even for the creator. The author who created the work and the meaning at the beginning of the artistic process and the same author who reads it after it is produced can be two completely different people in terms of the feelings and the meanings that they grasp from the work. That is to say, it would not be reliable to try and analyse a work through the writer's intentions and personality, since the writer and his personality and the meaning he infers from – or adds to the work evolve with time as he gains new experiences. The meaning of the text does not stay the same even for the creator, since the text gains multiple meanings with different interpretations that are obtained by new experiences. When it is considered that the creator himself cannot be impartial while creating the work and that he is also subject to change in perspective and personality in progress of time, trying to infer a fixed meaning from the text cannot be accepted as a wholesome way to analyse it, since even in the "centre" of the creation, the meaning is not created based on a fixed ground.

Another post-structuralist aspect of the play is the deconstruction of gender roles that are constructed by the society. Thomas and Wanda and in the play-within-the-play Kuchemski and Vanda constantly switch their roles. In the play the traditional perception on gender roles are profoundly challenged, and the fluidity of the gender roles are emphasized. As Judith Butler suggests, gender is performative; suggesting that the more gender roles are repeated, the more they get persistent. She explains this argument in her *Gender Trouble* as follows; "Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts" (1989, p. 179). In the play, how easily the characters switch their gender roles supports the idea that femininity and masculinity or dominance and submissiveness in sexual relationships are not innate, but on the contrary, are constructed based on repetitions of the same roles recursively by the individuals.

As an example for the fluidity between the fiction and nonfiction in the text from a post-structuralist viewpoint, it can be seen that in the play, it gets gradually difficult to distinguish what is real and what is fiction. The characters in the play start overflowing to the real life and affecting the relationship between the individuals, which makes the flow of the play more unstable and equivocal. Furthermore, not only

the fiction and the reality blend into each other, but also the traces of other texts start affecting the plotline. The novella that Thomas's play is based on is numerous mentioned between the characters, and Thomas and Wanda bear in their minds the characters from the novella while playing their characters, they keep in my mind the personalities of the characters from the novella when they give life to their characters, which supports the idea that all works are interconnected and they are constructed upon one another as the production continues (Zengin, 2016, p. 301).

Consequently, *Venus in Fur* by Ives is contemporary work that can be analysed from a post-structuralist perspective with its rich context. With its commentaries on the artistic process of drama, the power dynamics between writer/director and actor/actress, timeless subjects of deconstruction of gender roles and the source of meaning in the text, the play represents a decent opportunity for the reader to contemplate it from various perspectives. More specifically, regarding the search for the true meaning in the text, the play paves the way for a post-structuralist argument that it all boils down to a final destination: the reader. Amongst countless different meanings each reader can infer from the text, it seems unlikely to be able to come up with a fixed meaning or a source that the meaning is constructed in, instead, the role of the reader in giving meaning to the text should be prioritized. The meaning should be allowed to remain private for each reader, and no external factors should be given the power to contaminate it, irrespective of the intentions of the creator himself.

3. CHAPTER TWO: (POST-)STRUCTURALIST ANALYSIS OF *THE AUTHOR* BY TIM CROUCH

Representing the horrors of the humankind on the stage shockingly, from murders to rapes, from tortures to suicides, but only by using words and nothing more; in his experimental play *The Author*, Tim Crouch pushes the limits of the language and takes on the responsibility of representing the violence on the stage (White, 2013, p. 191) without even showing a glimpse of it while questioning the traditional boundaries between the performers and the audience (Sierz, 2009). It was premiered on the 23rd of September 2009 in London, and it has managed to leave the audiences, readers and the critics to dissent. It represents two different worlds at once: The world of his audience and the world of the play and since the lines between the two worlds are blurred on purpose by Crouch, the play serves as a unique theatrical experience to the audience where the characters are extremely difficult to be separated from the audience (Ilter, 2011, p. 397) , and the audience is an active part of the production. From its disturbing story to the use of the power of language, from its exceptional characterization to the setting of the stage, the entire work is innovative and experimental.

3.1. Characters and Plot in *The Author*

To move forward with a brief summary of the play, it starts with Adrian, who identifies himself as a “friend of the Royal Court theatre” (p. 174). He sets the mood by asking the audience some questions and learning their names, and he seems to vocalize certain things that are likely to be in the audiences’ minds. After he encourages the audience to participate in the play by making them feel like they are understood, seen and appreciated to be there, Tim directly starts talking about a day of his. He is being led by a young woman to a floatation tank, and all the things he has been thinking about on the way there is expressed in detail to the audience in a state of stream of consciousness. It is sensed that Tim, as the author, puts himself in the light to be seen completely vulnerable with all his thoughts and emotions crystal clear in front of the audience. Then, Vic, an actor from a couple of Tim’s plays, starts having his monologue, and once again, the importance of the audience is stressed. Meanwhile, Tim talks about getting in the tub, and he gives the first clue that it is where he plans to take his own life. Then, Vic starts talking about a disturbing play that they worked

in together a while ago with Tim and Esther. The monologues of Tim, Esther and Vic continue; and it is understood that Vic was playing the abuser, and Esther was the victim in the play that they staged together.

Throughout their monologues, they talk about the process of creating a play; how they had gathered their data from different societies, from real-life experiences, and from the stories of real-life abusers and victims. It is understood that for the crew to create such a horrific play, they had to not only encounter, but also get very familiar with some horrific incidents, news, videos and photos from real life, and that this process had largely damaged their psychological well-being. Vic talks about how he became a different person, that he got gradually more aggressive during the run of the play, that he started to have less and less patience with everything since they were exposed to and obliged to normalize the extreme levels of violence throughout the staging process. While Tim mostly talks about the emotional and the psychological effects of creating such a play, Esther talks about the creative process of it; the trips that they had to take to witness the effects of violence first-hand, the techniques that they used to create the desired effect and the people that they met who inspired them to get deeper into their characters. All the while, Adrian's comments as a reader, audience and a theatre enthusiast are spread across the play. He talks about how great it is to witness such horrific things on the stage, that how normalized it is to gather and watch such things in a theatre, how safe it feels to just witness all of this in the comfort of an auditorium. He makes the audience question how it would feel for the actors to participate in such a production, forcing them to empathize with the actors.

Towards the end of the play, Tim starts talking about the dinner party that everyone in the team had together. He says that they were all drunk, and when everyone went to sleep, he started masturbating seeing some pornographic images on the computer. Eventually, he comes across a video of a baby being sexually abused, and instead of turning it off, he continues to masturbate. He forgets to delete the computer history and to log off. The story comes back to when Tim lies in the tub and how he knows he will not be forgiven for this; it is implied that he commits suicide, and the story ends with the death of the author.

3.2. A General Outlook onto *The Writer* from Post-Structuralist Perspective

The most significant feature that makes *The Author* suitable for analysing within a post-structuralist framework is the place it puts the reader/audience. While the play deconstructs the traditional structures of the theatre, it simultaneously liberates the reader/audience from their conventional passivity, transforming them into active participants in the process of meaning-making. Throughout the play, the reader/audience is repeatedly prompted to question their role and responsibilities, being compelled to take an active role in interpreting the play and shaping its trajectory (Angelaki, 2020, p. 5).

3.2.1. Audience Agency and Theatrical Form: The Staging of *The Author*

To start with the unique stage-setting, it is specified in the performance note from the beginning that the play should “happen inside its audience” (Crouch, 2009, p. 160). There cannot be found a traditional theatre stage, but instead, the audience encounters two banks of seating that are facing each other, not aimed to be creating a confrontational arrangement, but more a comfortable gathering; far enough for the audience to sit comfortably, but close enough that it will not create an actual stage in between. All the actors are seated amongst the audience, and they are not announced as actors; they act as the part of the audience. The audience is lit and a warm atmosphere amongst them is established to make them feel comfortable enough to participate in the production.

To continue with the objectives that are tried to be achieved by the unconventional setting, the first and foremost, the audience should feel comfortable and cared for. They are asked direct, seemingly light and open questions such as “Is everyone all right?” (p. 161), “Do you love this, (audience name)?”, “Do you, (audience name)?”, “Are you, (audience name?)” (p. 161) by the actors; as many names as possible amongst the audience should be learned and used by the actors so that the audience will truly feel like a part of the production. As Louisa-Claire Dunnigan simply remarks, “The Author brings horror unflinchingly into the room, seating it next to us, forcing us to look it in the face and accept a Malteser afterwards” (2010), both literally and figuratively, the targeted emotions and reactions are seated next to the audience. The actors should not draw more attention than any other person while they are seated, it should create an ambiguity amongst the audience about who

is an actor and who is not. There should be music to set a good atmosphere, the audience is expected to enjoy their own company rather than trying to look at whoever's speaking. The names of the characters are the names of the actual actors in the production; Vic, Adrian, Tim and Esther; yet they occasionally switch characters, and their names switch accordingly too, with only one exception of Tim Crouch, the author in the play and the author of the main play. His character's name should always be Crouch (p. 160).

As suggested by Sierz, Crouch's production is aimed at interrogating the reactions of the audience (2009). The audience is included in the play from the beginning, and they are encouraged to face the uncomfortable aspects of the society within the unusual setting of the play. The play conveys the unseen parts of the staging process as well specifically of such violent and shocking ones, and its effects on the author and the actors to the audience from a closer perspective. In his complication of letters that he received from his audience along with his responses to them, Crouch explains his intention behind revealing the "behind the scenes" during the preparations and the rehearsals of theatrical productions and how he aims to encourage audiences to critically examine these preparation techniques – as well as theatre and art in general, as follows:

This fictional play is a representation of much that I want to question in theatre – particularly the way that it is rehearsed – hyper-naturalistic rehearsal techniques, a writer/director raiding from real life to try and gain authenticity to his fiction, placing his actors into ethically reprehensible positions, subjecting them to graphic images in the name of search. The process of rehearsing and performing this fictional, abusive play had a de-sensitising effect on everyone involved. (2011, p. 417)

The toll that is taken on the staging team while creating such a work is observed amongst the audience, which offers a distinct perspective, and it gives the staging crew the opportunity to follow closely the reactions of the audience; the whole experience ensures a closer bond between the audience and the actors.

Crouch rips from the patterns of traditional theatre and rearranges it when he involves the audience in telling their own story. The audience's active participation in shaping the narratives of their own society is explained by Boal as follows:

The *poetics of the oppressed* focuses on the action itself: the spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or to think in his place; on the contrary, he himself assumes the protagonic role, changes the dramatic action,

tries out solutions, discusses plans for change – in short, trains himself for real action. In this case, perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution. The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action. (1985, p. 98)

In this context, through Crouch's use of unconventional theatrical techniques, the post-structuralist concept of the "birth of the reader" (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 148) gains greater significance. The reader/audience is transformed from a passive interpreter into a "liberated spectator" who actively participates in shaping the flow of action.

Though it is asserted in the performance note that the setting should not offer a "confrontational configuration", while the stories of the violence of their society are told amongst the audience so casually, the audience is left to confront themselves and their true nature that is easier to be overseen than accepted. It forces the audience to perceive the matter outside of the limits of their comfort zone and represents the disturbing side of social issues that are generally left outside of the daily conversations because of their intensity. According to Brook, this form of theatre that pushes the audience out of their comfort zone and challenges their limits as Crouch does, represents the essence of "The Rough Theatre", and is a commendable trait of popular theatre. By doing so, the play deconstructs the structures of the traditional theatre and achieves a structure that aligns with the post-structuralist principles of being anti-authoritarian, anti-traditional, anti-pomp and anti-pretence (1995, p. 68). Brook refers to this kind of theatre as the "theatre of noise" and commends any production that is capable of accomplishing it.

The blur between the play, the characters and the audience create a space for the audience to actively and continuously try and make meaning of what they are seeing on the stage. It does not let the audience get away in their thoughts from the play, they are at all times obliged to stay focused and present in the story. With this active participation of the audience, a constant interpretation is established. This continuous effort in the play to establish a ground for more interpretations – whether through special stage techniques or the storyline, aligns with the post-structuralist idea that the reader is the most crucial agent in deriving meaning from the text. This persistent drive for interpretation by the reader/audience that is expected by the play stems from the notion –as is also argued by Barthes, that the reader is the place where

the most unique and multidimensional interpretations are generated from (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 148).

3.2.2. Spectatorship Redefined: The Centrality of the Audience in *The Author*

With the responsibility that is put on the audience, it is also implied that the success of the play depends on the audience too. One of Crouch's techniques to include the audience actively in constructing the meaning is that he offers a lot of incomplete sentences, leaving them to the audience to fill the gaps in their minds. As argued by Güneş, Crouch does not only use the dynamic power of the language to create the desired effect, but he also uses pauses and gaps for the audience to discover the hidden message behind the text themselves, as well as add in their own thoughts and comments on the meaning (2018, p. 50). When the audience/reader is forced to fill the gaps with their own interpretations, they come to the position of the creator as well, hence, the initial aim of the play is achieved, the audience/reader affectively become a part of the creation process of the work. With this, the text gets out of its original boundaries, hence the original producer of the work, the writer, is questioned by the audience/reader, which seems to be the intended effect according to the preface and afterword of the play. This technique puts the reader/audience in the creation process, making them also the producer of the work, not only the consumer of it, and it is where the responsibility of the audience/reader lies in terms of the success of the work; it is the audience/reader who is represented on the stage, all the wrongs in the very society they live in, so it should be the society itself who has the responsibility to question their own moral choices. An unconventionally nice attitude towards the audience in the theatre combined with the representation of the gruesome realities of the society creates a shocking effect on the audience, making them experience the work not only as a form of entertainment, but also as a source of disturbance that forces them to involve themselves more in the production; in other words, a disturbance that does not let anybody off the hook (Gardner, 2009). Starting from the performance note, the place of the audience is preserved;

This is a play that happens inside its audience. (...) The request the play makes is for us to be okay about ourselves, to gently see ourselves and ourselves seeing. There should be plenty of warm, open space in the play. The audience should be beautifully lit and cared for. When the audience is asked questions,

these are direct questions that the audience are more than welcome to answer but under no pressure to do so. (p. 160)

In this introduction it is made sure from the beginning that the perception of the audience is safely founded within the production. Rather than the concentration on the actors/actresses or the stage décor, it is demanded that the placement of the audience should be the priority to make sure the individual experience of the audience is preserved. This introduction aligns with the understanding that the birth of the reader should be enabled in shaping the perception of the production and the meaning of the text (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 148). Later in the performance note, the importance of the music choice is stressed. It is argued that the chosen music should enable the audience to enjoy being there in the theatre and together, and that it should make the whole experience of the audience “good”. With this argument, it can be understood that the intention is not only to preserve the individual experience, but also to create a comfortable environment as a whole for the audience. It is in line with the post-structuralist argument that a space for rich and diverse interpretations should always be enabled for the reader and the audience since as the “last destination”, it is the reader/audience where the true meaning of the work is created. The significant space granted to the reader/audience in the play can be supported by Barthes’ argument that the meaning is ultimately shaped by the reader (1967/1977, p. 148), and the more empowered and comfortable the reader/audience feels, the freer and richer their interpretations will become, and with the audiences creating a collaborative atmosphere amongst themselves, the text is opened for a more multi-dimensional interpretation.

As it is read in the performance note, the audience is welcome to participate in the play via their answers to the direct questions that are asked by the stage crew. This strengthened connection between the actors/actresses and the spectator gives way for the play to have the opportunity to unfold based on the audiences’ reactions and contributions to the performance. Angelaki argues, “spectators are encouraged to consider the possibility that any vocal reaction they produce may end up leaving an imprint on performance” (2020, p. 3), which aligns with the post-structuralist idea that the reader/audience should play a big role in shaping the text while giving it different meanings.

3.3. The Decentred Spectacle: A Post-Structuralist Analysis of *The Author*

To start with analysis of the play from a post-structuralist viewpoint, at the beginning, Adrian starts talking to the audience by saying things such as “our knees touching!” (p. 161) with a great enthusiasm. In a way, he creates a comfortable and friendly atmosphere amongst the audience and prepares them to have a more positive approach to this experimental location of them. Before expecting a collaborative contribution from the audience, he aims to establish a secure basis.

Later, the fact that Adrian asks the names of a lot of people from the audience as requested on the preface supports the idea that the individual experience of the audience is taken seriously in the production as well as the collective experience. This approach may enable the audience to interpret the text in a freer and confident manner, knowing that their individual contributions are taken seriously and are in fact used to shape the flow of the play. From the beginning of the play, the audience is encouraged to participate in shaping the meaning in the text. According to Derrida, the meaning in its nature rebuilds itself in text countless of times (1967/1973, p. 58) since it is expectedly shaped by different perspectives and backgrounds. In *The Author*, this post-structuralist idea is represented by enabling more space for the reader/audience to make their unique interpretations.

To continue, when Adrian reads the preview of the play, the comments “Yes, blah. Yes, well. Doesn’t say anything really. Does it?” (p. 162). With this comment, he blocks any possible prejudices that might be created in the reader/audience’s mind by the writer or the director – or anyone from the production. He excludes the creative team from the process of interpretation in the audience’s minds, making it feel like the most reliable interpreter should be the audience. According to Barthes, the reason why the most reliable interpreter, and where the meaning is created is the reader is because the reader is the place where the multiplicity of interpretations is gathered upon (1967/1977, p. 148), which is numerous supported in the play.

Later on when Adrian says, “I think we’re better looking than the actors” (p. 162), it shakes the boundaries between the actors/actresses and the audience. He diminishes the aesthetic value of the stage crew and tries to take away the sacred, almost holy place of the actors/actresses in the audience’s mind. He does not let the production hold more power than the audience in any way possible, neither artistically

nor aesthetically. After this comment, to shape his monologues based on the estimated reactions of the audience, he continues, “Maybe not better looking... But more realistic” (p. 163). He stresses that the play is a fiction, and it is the audience who will make it real with their participation in the play, which aligns with Barthes’ idea of “writerly text” that forces the audience mentally and persuade them to make their own interpretations (Günenç, 2018, p. 50), the audience is given the impression that the text solely is not complete without their active participation and creation. As should be in a writerly text, according to Barthes, the reader/audience is put in a position to “rewrite” the text (1970/1990, p. 5), rather than reading it and moving on.

Thereafter, Adrian says that he saw a play before and that in the play, he has been imagined; but poorly by the writer (p. 163). He complains that the audience/reader was imagined by the writer very unrealistically, and he demolishes the belief that the writer is the source of imagination, thus the meaning in the text. This can be supported by Derrida’s argument that assuming that there can be found a “source” whether it is the author or the text itself where the meaning is created can be nothing more than a “philosophical fiction” (1966/1988, p. 110). Creating an atmosphere as though the actual play has not started yet, he aims for the author to be seen as powerless as possible with the help of his comments and anecdotes as a “real” person like the audience, a man amongst them. With his criticisms, the authority of the writer in the creation is shaken and the audience is raised as high as possible in terms of uniqueness, reality and creativity.

Later he continues:

And everything’s always so promising before the play begins! Before they open their mouths. That’s the best moment... We’re all so expectant. We’re all being so lovely. And then the lights go down. (...) Look at us. Look at all out lonely, hopeful hearts!! Sitting here, staring out! Hoping for something to happen. Waiting for someone to talk to us. Really talk.” (p. 164)

With this speech, Adrian diminishes the expectations of the audience and allows them to start watching the play from a clean basis and enables them to construct a meaning that is cleansed from the expectations that they created under the influence of the comments, the preview and all the other outside interpretations.

When Tim says that the young woman he met has not heard of him before and that it has taken him three months to redeem it (p. 164), he disregards himself as the

writer and reveals his egocentric weaknesses to the audience, diminishing the valuable place of the writer as the creator and representing his ordinary human nature. According to Barthes, what goes against the post-structuralist thought is the idea that the meaning is centred on the author (1967/1977, p. 143). However, it is a misconception since as supported by Tim; author is in no place to hold a greater power than the reader/audience. Accordingly, when he continues talking about his sexual desires towards the young woman from a place where he is willing to reveal all of his imperfections and primal instincts as a human-being, he aims to prove that the author is an ordinary person just as everyone else in the audience, and that there is no reason why the author's contributions to the text should be more significant or greater than theirs. With this method, he makes the ground for the audience/reader to have the self-confidence to participate with him in producing the play and its meaning. He continues to demolish his superior place by mocking himself by sarcastically referring to himself as "The celebrated author. The famous playwright. Darling of the universities" (p. 168). He aims to cleanse the audience's minds from the possible positive prejudices they might develop for him, his works and achievements so that he guarantees that all this information that they might have heard about him do not make him superior as the writer, and that he naturally shares a lot of imperfections with the audience.

To continue, when Vic says "You have to give the audience a character, a relationship to you. Doesn't matter if you can't see them. Something has to be at stake for the audience. They have to maybe need convincing of something, or persuading of something or rousing or enlisting" (p. 167), what is aimed to be done throughout the play becomes clear, by representing the disturbing realities of the society in a form of a discussion with the audience, the audience is put at stake, they now feel obliged to comment on something that they normally would not desire to talk about in their daily lives. Brook describes this almost "shaking-up" the audience to encourage, or even force their participation as "The Rough Theatre" and explains it as follows: "The Rough Theatre doesn't pick and choose: if the audience is restive, then it is obviously more important to holler at the trouble makers – or improvise a gag – than to try to preserve the unity of style of the scene" (1996, p. 66). Exemplifying this, using the names of the audiences while asking them to comment on the subjects, Crouch persuades the audience to be involved, to open their eyes to the realities, to force the audience to put their conscience at stake, to "holler at them" and eventually make them

choose to be a part of not only the play, but also the reality of what is represented on the stage.

In post-structuralist thought, it is commonly supported that a work of art is a product of the social setting of the time that it was produced in (Derrida, 1972, p. 135). In the play, it is revealed openly how the context of the play is chosen directly from its time and the incidents surrounding and happening within the society. All the characters share numerous anecdotes of how they had to watch horrible videos from beheadings to rapes to get their stories as accurate as they can, to reflect their characters as honest as possible and create the setting as close as possible to reality in their production. Vic declares that they had to go to a war zone to investigate the reality of what they will turn into a fiction more closely (p. 178). Furthermore, when Esther says, “I was really lucky. I met a woman who had been raped as a teenager by her father. That’s just like my character, I said” (p. 180), it can be seen how though the incidents are taken from real life, in the process of it being turned into a work of fiction, the topics taken from the society can face the hazard of losing its severity. Thus, with this, not only the place of the writer, but also the place of the text is aimed to be questioned in the audience/reader’s mind. The audience is left questioning the reliability of what they witness, and they are forced to watch the production with a more critical eye. While criticizing, they are required to make some moral corrections and suggestions in their minds (Willis, 2021, p. 37), which achieves the goal of turning the audiences/readers into “co-producers” of the work (Ilter, 2011, p. 397).

To proceed, as a technique that is commonly used in post-structuralist works, the elements of play-within-play can be recognized in the play when Esther starts reenacting Karen, a victim of child abuse that she met before while preparing for a play that they were about to stage. When getting into the play-within-play, the stable flow of the work is temporarily deconstructed, thus the spectators are obliged to unexpectedly switch their focus to something different. The play-within-the-play technique can be regarded as a tool that facilitates the application of post-structuralist thought to drama since it introduces equivocalness into the text. While this equivocalness may make the play more challenging for the reader/audience to follow, it simultaneously necessitates a closer engagement with the text, drawing the reader/audience into a more immersive interaction. As the reader/audience internalizes

the play more deeply and follow it more attentively, this equivocalness creates a broader space for interpretation, which goes parallel with Barthes' argument that rather than searching for one justified meaning, one should appreciate "what plural constitutes it" (1970/1990, p. 5).

While expecting from the audience the participation in the creative process of the work, Crouch also adjusts the audience for the upcoming changes that might occur in the production; audience realizes that they should not lose focus not even for a single moment, or else the whole meaning can easily slip away. As expected from the audience/reader in experimental theatre, they are made aware of their responsibilities (Güneç, 2018, p. 47). A moment of alienation from the flow of the plot can conclude in losing track of incidents since the lines between the play and the play-within-play are blurry, considering the fact that when on one side Esther re-enacts Karen, on the other one Adrian asks a question to Esther and shatters the boundaries between the two plays.

To move forward, when Tim says, "You write and write and discover and discover. And then you let go. You hand over. You leave it to the actors. They will make their own discoveries. You leave it to your audience" (p. 187), it can be perceived as a suitable illustration of the post-structuralist perspective on the meaning of the work. According to Barthes, the work is out of the writer's hands once it is released to the audience (1967/1977, p. 148). The writer, who has been traditionally perceived as the origin of the work and the meaning of it (Constantinidis, 1989, p. 39), is left to be just the starting point of the long journey of the text in achieving its true meaning. Actors, who are the part of the stage crew yet still the outside perspectives towards the text, inevitably give a part of their own selves, emotions, experiences and thoughts to the characters while carrying them onto the stage, and the next and the final destination remains to be the audience/reader who will "interpret the interpretation", who will create the rich meaning behind the text. What is striking is that as suggested by Barthes and Crouch, all throughout this process, the writer has no power to affect the way these new meanings are formed in the destination (1967/1977, p. 148). When Tim goes forward to say, "My job was to find a story that would contain those ideas, those questions. A relationship. That's the job of a writer. Not to go in and solve things. But to reveal things, things for other people to solve. To present the truth of the story" (p.

187), he exemplifies what is supported by post-structuralist thought; the writer should remain a tool, an instrument in constructing the meaning. He should not be perceived as the producer of the meaning, but a tool to guide the eventual destinations where the meaning is constructed. Mallarmé argues that for a text to gain its full potential, the author should be suppressed or even taken out of the equation when it comes to deriving meaning out of it (1897/2009, p. 208). Hence, the writer's role cannot be ignored or ridiculed, but it should be recognized while avoiding misplacements.

It is observed that several examples can be found for the post-structuralist argument that "the text is a tissue of various other texts" (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 146). The text is inevitably affected by the works that came before it, therefore it is expected to find the traces of other texts in it as revealed quite explicitly:

It feels like in here anything is possible and it's safe. It's all safe! I've seen everything imaginable here. I've seen bum sex and rimming and cock sucking and wankings and rapings and stabbings and shootings and bombings. Bombings and bummings!! I've seen someone shit on a table! I've seen a man have his eyes sucked out. I've seen so many blindings! And stonings. Um. I've seen a dead baby in a bag. A baby stoned to death. I've seen a dead baby get eaten! That was great! (p. 189)

With a passage seen above from Tim's monologue in the play, there are an abundance of references to different In-Yer-Face plays such as *Saved* by Edward Bond and *Blasted* by Sarah Kane (Bozkurt, 2020, p. 115). Furthermore, it does not only exemplify the equivocal nature of the text, but also, Crouch secures the ground for the disturbing elements of his experimental work by drawing the attention to the seemingly more disturbing plays.

To proceed, when Esther invites the audience to imitate the spasming and jerking of the American whose throat was cut by the Arab man, she involves the audience in the production more intensely by making them actualize the experience of the victim (p. 193). With this, the audience is taken out of the role of a passive spectator and takes on the role of both the actor and the victim whose story is told, hence the audience is once again pushed to have stronger and more realistic criticisms on both the social and political issues and the production. What makes Crouch's work exceptional is the fact that he manages to involve the spectator in the staging process as if they are a part of the staging crew. It is revealed in the play that this serves as a device to stage the play all together with the active participation of the audience. Later,

Esther presents the stage crew's gratitude towards the audience by giving them an applause for putting up with all the horrors that just happened on the stage and for not walking out. However, while Esther and Adrian clap for the audience, Vic tells a story about how he had beaten up an audience before who he assumed had tried to hurt him, and he leaves the auditorium while swearing loudly. It can be argued that the two completely contrasting attitudes in the auditorium represent the two different attitudes towards the audience/reader in general. One of them perceives the ear of the audience as the ultimate achievement to be accomplished; the audience should be praised even for bearing with the performances or simply being there and present, meanwhile, the other one view them as ordinary people they are passing by on the street, an outside perspective, and never truly a part of the text and the meaning; who will never be able to grasp the true meaning of the work properly and who always carry the risk of being an obstacle along the way of the production. In this new form of theatre where the boundaries between the stage and the audience dissolve, it is inevitable to encounter the challenges that arise as a result. Bennett argues that in this context, where the reader/audience gains unprecedented importance, not every new interpretation will possess the requisite background demanded by the work. This is because understanding a play often requires a variety of competencies, which an audience may lack, thereby hindering their ability to interpret the work effectively. In such a case, the significant role of the reader/audience in interpreting or even shaping the work, in other words, disappearing of the distance between the stage and the audience, may ultimately lead to the disappearing of art and meaning itself (Bennett, 1988, p. 219).

Towards the end of the play, Tim seems to suggest that there will be no chance for him to take back what he has confessed, and that his testimony is out in the world for the people to see and react to, and he will in no way have an impact of what people will think of him by saying, "The writing is leaving the writer" (p. 199). It seems to be a metaphor constructed between his confession and the text; he confessed everything and it is out of his reach, just as the text he created. Both of them are out of his possession now, and are the products of the society; hence, the audience. Crouch finishes the play by giving a conspicuous reference to Roland Barthes's "Death of the Author". The argument that the "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 148), is illustrated on the stage; Tim leaves the theatre (p. 200).

Though the play contains plenty of aspects that are prone to be handled from a post-structuralist viewpoint, the afterword that is written by the co-director, Andy Smith, leaves a wide-open window for the audiences and the readers. As suggested by Günenç (2018), the responsibility of the audience should be to open the text for more debates and discussions (p. 3); and Smiths openly declares this responsibility by giving the full custody of the text to the reader and persuading them to give it numerous different meanings. He stresses that there is in no means a finality in his words and that he hopes the play will live in different minds and different lives, taking different shapes and forms. By stating, “You are the reason for these plays’ existence. You are the reader and the audience. You are the most important person in the room” (p. 201), he reminds the audience/reader that whatever they think about the play, is what the play really is. He reassures the audience that they have always been a part of the play, since it has started to be created; and that the work will only achieve its goal through the audience. With the afterword, the play becomes even more adequate to be handled from a post-structuralist perspective since Smith’s statements aligns with the essential of the post-structuralist thought, the importance of the reader.

To conclude, *The Author* by Crouch is an innovative and experimental play that deals with the responsibility of the audience in producing a play and making meaning off it while handling the disturbing social issues like war, sexual abuse, murder, suicide and all kinds of violence using the power of language, rather than taking the advantage of the stage in terms of representing visual stimulus. With its different stage-setting and seating arrangement, it serves as a unique theatrical experience to the audience, making them a part of the production in representing society’s dark sides with the contribution of the society itself. As Rebelatto states, the play removes the traditional space between the actors and the audience and the audience is expected to face their own selves while witnessing the play unfold within themselves (2013, p. 141). Before making this happen, Crouch makes sure that the audience is taken care of, that they are seated comfortably, reassured about their importance to the production team, and that their comments and contributions are appreciated. On one hand the audience is responsible of contributing to the play, and on the other hand, the stage crew is responsible of following the reactions of the audience and wisely shaping the narrative according to the audience’s reactions. As risky and unpredictable as this type of

production is, the aim should be achieved: The audience/reader should be the producer of the work and the whole play should be staged with the contributions of the audience.

With the help of the techniques that are used to involve the audience more in the production such as direct questions, gaps and silences; the text is opened for more multidimensional interpretations. The reader is not accepted to be passive; they are encouraged throughout the play that any contribution they make is welcome by the team, that the play would not exist without its reader/audience. With its initial perspective, the play offers a rich foundation to be handled from a post-structuralist perspective; the reader, the destination of the text, is where the meaning is created. Hence, securing the place of the reader/audience, the destination, allows the text to secure its rich meaning within itself.

The relationship between the audience and the creative team or the responsibility of the audience are not the only things that are effectively handled in *The Author*. The powerful use of language is one of the most striking features of the play; though it talks about the most horrible sides of the society, there is nothing graphic shown on the stage. Only by using words, the audience is left feeling extremely uncomfortable, and they are encouraged to even leave the auditorium if it is too much for them (p. 168).

From the beginning of the play, the main focus is on the audience. It is made sure that the audience feels some level of responsibility to contribute to the production. The language that is used is in line with the aim that the audience participation should be enabled; they are encouraged to find their own answers and make their own unique interpretations to what is happening in the play via the questions and during the gaps and silences. In post-structuralist thought, a text can have infinite numbers of meanings and for the text to achieve this plurality, it must break through its rigid boundaries (Derrida, 1967/1998, p. 10), and release it to recreate its meaning based on different perspectives since it is the individual experiences and thoughts that shape the meaning of it. In *The Author*, the audience does not only make their own meaning off the text, but also is encouraged to reflect their meaning actively in the staging process, which actualizes the experience for everyone to witness.

The characters' detailed descriptions of how they prepare for a play and how much they are affected by the preparation process make the audience feel more

involved with the story from the very early stages of the production; it is not only the final product that is expected to be evaluated and interpreted by the audience, but the whole process of it in the making as well. In their preparation process, it is represented to the audience how they have been influenced by the real-life experiences from different societies and cultures and other works of art to create their play, which exemplifies the argument that a text is a tissue of innumerable other texts and cultures. Their preparation process sheds light on the details of the methods that are used while creating a play, making the audience face with the facts that the play is based on and preclude them from only seeing the play as a work of fiction. It is aimed that by making the audience witness the whole process and the psychological and physical effects of it on everyone who is included in the play, the audience is able to empathize not only with the fictional characters, but also the actors, actresses and the author behind them.

From the beginning of the play, it is made sure by Adrian that the audience is avoided to have any prejudices against the play; whether they are positive or negative by disregarding the preview of the work. Furthermore, the characters are determined to depress the importance of the actors/actresses, the author and the director, and it is made sure that no one from the theatre crew will have more importance and power than the audience. This way, it is prevented for the audience to feel intimidated by anyone from the production, they are reassured that they are the most important ones in the room and any contributions they can possibly make are appreciated; and that it will allow them to “rewrite” the text (Barthes, 1970/1990, p. 5).

Additionally, the authority of the author is constantly shaken by the criticisms that are mostly made by Adrian and the author himself throughout the play, making the audience question the power and the respectability of the author. The audience’s high level of expectations is aimed to be kept as low as possible from the earliest monologues in the play, it is crucial that the audience is there with a completely cleared perspective that is not stained with any type of influence from anyone or anything besides themselves. The weaknesses of the author are revealed frequently, it is represented that the author is not greater than anyone in the auditorium; he is just a human with similar flaws and weaknesses regardless of his success in his career.

To continue, the techniques that are used to enable the audience participation makes the audience feel obliged to comment on the disturbing subjects that they would

most probably avoid talking about in real life. Though it is stated that the audience should not be forced to comment in the performance note, they are pushed to feel conscientiously obliged to contribute since it is uttered with emphasis that the stories that are talked about in the play are taken from real life incidents that are happening currently in their own society.

The reliability and the value of the work are aimed to be further questioned by the audience by representing how the real-life incidents that the story is based on can lose its integrity in the eyes of the production crew while they are preparing for the play, since they are exposed to excessive amounts of graphic photos, videos and incidents to grasp the essence of the characters more realistically. By this, the audience is encouraged to have a more critical eye towards the whole work and the team, and they are forced to undertake the responsibility of the awareness of the incidents that are represented.

Another aspect that makes *The Author* a suitable work to be analysed from a post-structuralist viewpoint is the use of play-within-play. With this technique, the equivocalness in the text is enhanced, and the distinction between the two texts gets more blurred, making a way for more ambiguity and accordingly more room for interpretation. Meanwhile, since the audience is obliged to be more concentrated on the flow of the play, their critiques tend to be based on a more secure ground.

All through the play, the traces of the post-structuralist idea can be found. It is implied frequently that the job of the author ends when he finishes writing (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 148) and the text is opened to be interpreted, changed and altered by other perspectives. The text does not gain its true meaning unless it is interpreted by its reader and the audience. The traditional idea that the author gives the text its meaning is dismissed, the author is now only perceived as a tool in the making of the meaning; but not the source of it. Furthermore, it is not only the author whose authority in giving meaning to the text is questioned, but also the actors. Though they seem to hold more power on the text since they also interpret the text based on their individual experiences and characteristics while giving life to the characters, the greater part of the responsibility is handed to the reader and the audience, since it is the reader who has the accountability of making a choice and who will adapt the work to their life or their life to the work, making it a source for a never-ending interpretation. As Tim

suggests, it is not the author's duty to solve things; the author is just an instrument to represent the things, and it is the reader/audience who is expected to criticize, comment and solve (p. 187).

In the play, the audience is often challenged to participate intensely in the experiences of the victims who the stories are based on as well. They are forced to empathize with not only the author and the actors, but also with the real victims; it is aimed for the audience to form a stronger connection with the story so that the text will cut across being only a form of entertainment and become a genuine place to evaluate and change. The more the audience is involved with the experience, more strongly they feel about the issues that are represented in the play. Thus, they feel more responsible to talk about the issues and make their interpretations and criticisms.

Though in the play the audience is given a huge responsibility and a high praise just to be present, they are also criticized for passively watching the plays and closing their eyes to and not caring about what they see on the stage, or in Angelaki's words, being a "numb, decontextualized observer" (2020, p. 15). In spite of the gruesome realities that might be faced with in the theatre, "nothing really happens" and "it's the safest place in the world" (p. 188). On the contrary of the extreme levels of violence there might be in the auditorium, traditionally the audience sits, enjoys his show and leaves. This is what is attempted to be prevented in Crouch's play, the audience should not feel like they have come to have a pleasant evening in a safe place. What is requested contrasts with this traditional perception of theatre, the text should get richer with interpretations, it should stimulate a need in the audience to make a contribution and a choice. Through the extraordinary techniques, the play criticizes the traditional passivity of the audience while aiming to immerse the audience fully within the storyline. It seeks to evoke responses from the audience as though they were encountering the events of the play in real life (Atlar, 2022, p. 9).

As a result, *The Author* by Crouch is an innovative and provocative play that have been causing significant amounts of divergency amongst the critics, readers and the audiences. With this being said, the play appears to have achieved its goal; according to Crouch, the arguments and speculations should never come to an end when a work of art is the point in question. Crouch views this as a positive outcome of

the work since it forces the reader/audience to wake to their responsibility of giving meaning to the text.



4. CHAPTER THREE: (POST-)STRUCTURALIST ANALYSIS OF *THE WRITER* BY ELLA HICKSON

Ella Hickson's play *The Writer* is a work that includes many universal and provocative themes for its audience, such as the current situation of the theatre industry, the writer-director dilemma, power conflicts between genders, social norms, gender inequality, and the purpose of art. In the work, which reveals how all these themes are positioned within art specifically through the theatre-writing process, an important questioning is made, in the words of critic Michael Billington: "Do we need new theatrical forms to reflect a society in the midst of a sexual revolution?" (2018). In the play that aims to answer this question, a young woman who tries to gain a place for herself in the world of art within the patriarchal social order and who challenges the structures that are facing decay and corruption in every aspect of society can answer this question positively. However, the answer to this question differs greatly from the Writer's for the Director in the play, who is aware and not bothered by the fact that art, and specifically theatre, has become a profit-oriented livelihood. In contrast to the young woman, Director is not disturbed by this, on the contrary, he approaches the situation "realistically" in his mind and finds Young Woman's anger towards this situation amusingly exaggerated.

The contemporary play *The Writer*, written by Hickson, was first staged at Almedia Theatre in 2018. The play, directed by Blanche Mclytre, mostly received positive feedback from the audience and critics from the first day it was staged (Fakhrkonandeh, 2018, p. 790). The play questions the problems that currently exist in the art world; the damage that is caused to art and the terrible consequences of perceiving art as a "product" (Taylor, 2018), and shows how women and art are wrongly perceived in today's patriarchal societies all around the world. While revealing this wrong perception, the play also gives the message that "another order is possible" through its main character who has adopted the principle of deconstructing this order. In these aspects, the play deals with many issues that post-structuralist theory deals with, especially the ones that can be reconciled with the feminist post-structuralist perspective. As argued in feminist post-structuralism, gender roles are unnatural norms structured by society (Butler, 1989, p. 179) and that are susceptible to deconstruction. Likewise, in the play, these roles are fiercely criticized and

attempted to be deconstructed, especially through the character of Writer. In addition, the play also reveals the impact of language on these roles and how language can be mistakenly used to support these roles.

While the play questions the place of women in society, it presents a character who tries to take the image of “woman” out of the boundaries of certain stereotypes formed by the society and emphasizes the multifaceted identities of women. In particular, it examines and criticizes the sexist structure of traditional forms and techniques in the theatre industry. The play aims to make the audience question the harm these structures pose to art and, more generally, to lives of the individuals and especially women. In this context, the play tries to answer the question asked by Billington: Is there a need for new theatrical forms? If so, what should these forms seem like?

The play, which constitutes an intense criticism against patriarchal social structure from a feminist post-structuralist perspective, also points out and exemplifies many issues that post-structuralist theory is interested in. The general structure of the play differs sharply from traditional theatre; the transitions between scenes are sharp and have a deconstructive nature that is relatively confusing compared to the traditional theatre. Throughout the play, apart from the act that Director describes as “the best act”, metatheatrical elements are frequently used. When all the factors are taken into account, Hickson’s *The Writer* becomes an eligible work to be examined and analysed from a post-structuralist perspective.

4.1. Characters and Plot in *The Writer*

To give a brief summary of the play, the first scene opens with a young woman coming back to the theatre to take back the bag that she forgot after seeing a play. She encounters with an older man, in his forties, and they start to have a conversation. When the man questions whether the young woman likes the play, the woman begins to criticize how corrupt the entire theatre industry has become, that cheap and non-artistic techniques are utilized to keep the audience in the theatre, and that everything problematic in today’s world has begun to come to life in theatre plays. According to the young woman, while art, and especially theatre, should take on the role to alert the audience about the problems of the patriarchal, sexist and unequal world and encourage the audience to think and criticize, on the contrary, it has turned into an

industry that in a way promotes all these problems. While there are so many things going wrong in today's world, the fact that theatre ignores all of today's real problems and becomes only a means of entertainment irritates the woman profoundly.

In the face of the young woman's anger, the man adopts a sarcastic tone, and what he is interested in is not the content of the woman's comments, but her unbridled anger. He says in a patronizing manner that being so angry is a quality that a playwright should have, and he offers the woman a job in the theatre to write something for the stage. The woman rejects since she has lost her faith in the industry. Since she dreams of changing the world with the works she produces, she does not want this dream to become only a tool of entertainment. The man, on the other hand, opposes the woman's ideas with a pretentious attitude, emphasizes that art cannot be independent of financial concerns, that art must be performed in a form that can make money. Later, it turns out that the young woman actually knew the man and that they have spent time together a few years ago. Back then, the young woman looked up to the man and asked for his opinion on her own writings. The man gave positive feedback and even made a job offer to the young woman, but since he tried to kiss her right after his offer, the woman got the idea that he was not sincere about his comments on her writings.

Later the scene switches to a Q&A. Writer, Director, an actress and an actor answer the audience's questions and discuss the work. It turns out that the scene between the young woman and the man is a theatre act in the process. The conversations between Director and Writer about the scene reveal their differences of opinion and power struggles. While Director finds the anger of the young woman in the written scene intolerable, he argues the points that the man makes are more logical. At the end of the act, the pressure Director puts on Writer about the revision of the plot is revealed.

The second act takes place between Boyfriend and Writer. Boyfriend surprises Writer with an expensive new sofa since he learned about an offer made to Writer to adapt one of her works into a movie, and that she would receive a large amount of money for the adaptation. When Writer says that she will not accept this offer for idealistic reasons, a passive-aggressive argument breaks out between them. Writer says that if what she writes is adapted to the movie, it will be distorted and not give the message she wants it to give and lose its meaning. However, all these are

meaningless and selfish arguments for Boyfriend. According to him, Writer throws away the most important things in their lives because of her selfish obsessions with her ideals. During all these discussions, problematic points in male-female relationships are also touched upon. Expectations from the relationship, physical and emotional needs that are not met in the relationship, jealousies, and conflicting desires become the subject of their discussion. Towards the end of the scene, Boyfriend's attempt to propose to Writer is the final straw for her. While Writer has an emotional breakdown, the reality of the scene shifts and a metaphysical structure is formed. Writer begins to hear a baby crying gradually more loudly and is crushed under the pressure of social expectations that she does not want to be a part of. During all this chaos, the director is shown watching from the side of the stage, which adds to the surrealistic aspect of the act.

The third scene differs sharply from the other scenes of the play in terms of its tone and structure. A tribe where only women live in is depicted in the forest, far from the patriarchal society. The woman explains in detail how she feels in this utopian order. For the first time, she feels that she belongs somewhere with all her being. In this order, there are no stereotypes that she has to fit into, there are no social expectations that she is oppressed under, and there are no aesthetic perceptions that she has to comply with. Within this social structure, women live in peace and tranquillity by helping each other and meeting all their emotional and physical needs only with each other, without feeling any pressure. Their bodies are sacred gifts that enable them to survive, they do not have to carry any aesthetic value. The aesthetic judgments imposed on women in the patriarchal society are of no importance here; the only important thing about bodies is that they are healthy and have the features that will enable women to live comfortably. Here, the woman has sexual intercourse with another woman and feels that this relationship is a real spiritual and physical union, a completion. Unlike her sexual experiences with men, she thinks that this experience completes her and she feels happy for the first time in her life. This utopian social structure is eventually disrupted when she realizes that a man is watching them from afar. The repulsiveness of modern society is started to be felt again when the man is noticed.

In the next act, it becomes clear that the third scene is a theatre act written by Writer. Director is not happy with the third act and he insists that the first act of the play is the best one. He emphasizes that the discussions between the young woman and the man makes the first act the liveliest and therefore the most financially profitable act of the play. He finds the utopic setting drawn by Writer in the third act unnecessary and incomprehensible though Writer insists on how special the scene is. He complains that the things Writer talks about on the third act are unnecessary and contain ideas that are impossible to apply to real life, and he insists that the first act must be continued and finalized.

In the last act of the play, a different version of the second act is given, which takes place between Girlfriend and Writer this time. This time, it depicts how the problems in a heterosexual relationship appear to be similar with the ones in a homosexual relationship. Power struggles, clashing benefits and unmet expectations exist in this relationship as well. Towards the end of the act, at Girlfriend's request, they have sexual intercourse using a fake penis, and both Writer and Girlfriend are left feeling very bad afterwards. Something does not feel as it should, according to Writer, there is something unnatural and uncomfortable about the whole experience. The scene ends with Girlfriend singing an innocent child-like song and Writer watching Girlfriend in fear, feeling excessively guilty.

4.2. Beyond Structure: Post-Structuralist Analysis of *The Writer*

To continue with the analysis of the play, firstly, the use of the language in the text should be taken into consideration. Language, as accepted by the majority, is not only a tool that allows people to communicate at a basic level, but also a form of complex systems that are explicit or implicit indicators of numerous dynamics in social life, and it both enables the parties to create certain effects on each other while communicating and indicates the courses of relationships between people, as well as the backgrounds or social status of the individuals. In Hickson's *The Writer*, it can be observed how the characters influence each other through their use of language by constructing sentences in various ways, or through their particular word choices, and how they aim to establish authority over one another or influence each other due to different interests. How language is processed, how it is used and what role it plays in power relations, which is one of the most important issues of post-structuralist theory,

can be exemplified with a number of quotes from *The Writer* with the personalities of the characters and their relationships with each other, and the place of the language amongst all can also give important clues about the general theme and flow of events of the play.

4.2.1. The Politics of Language: Power and Resistance in *The Writer*

Post-structuralist theory problematizes the traditional tendency on the objectivity and universality of language and emphasizes that language, or specifically writing, is open to many interpretations and “it does not know where it is going” (Derrida, 1967/1978, p. 11). However, in addition to perceiving language as being on a slippery ground in terms of the objectivity of meaning, post-structuralist theory accepts that language involves a collection of cultures, disciplines and relationships, and therefore the use of language will have a huge impact on human relations and literary works. Therefore, the language used by the characters in *The Writer* is of great importance in the post-structuralist analysis of the text.

Regarding the fact that the language used by the characters in *The Writer* is an indicator that gives clues about the relationships between the characters and the emotional states and thoughts of them, the aggressive language adorned with swear words used by the young woman in the first scene is an indication of her rage towards the theatre industry and the patriarchal social structure that percolate through life to art and especially theatre. It can be observed how sincerely she shows her anger at her impenetrable reflection.

And the actors, man, they've got nothing new, no insides, they just need the job – they know it's pretend so they're living on the applause and applause alone and that is fucking dangerous. That is a perilous way to be. Moving fucking tables about and living on applause for it. ... Do what you *want*; do it to get laid or I don't give a shit, do it whilst galloping across the stage in a fucking thong pretending to be Bambi, do it HOW THE FUCK YOU LIKE – because at least then someone is actually doing it for real. (p. 14)

According to Weedon (1997, p. 38), language not only plays an important role in forming the characteristics, emotions and thoughts of the individuals, but also allows them to reveal their subjectivity in the most striking way. Due to the characteristics of the language that is used, in this example the audience/reader can understand not only the character's opinions on the deplorable state of the theatre industry, but also how much this situation affects the character. The fact that she conveys her negative

criticisms unfiltered, in a way that does not comply with the norms constructed by society while talking to an older male, gives clues about the young woman's unapologetic personality, her deep connection with the theatre, and that she is an unconventional individual who does not give in to the social norms.

Again, according to Weedon's arguments, the words that individuals use when defining events, objects, thoughts and emotions in their society and environment, and the "naming" they do, provide important information about where they stand in life. Blunden explains this "subjectivity" of language as follows: "(subjectivity) refers to that aspect of an individual's psyche by means of which the person identifies themselves and their place in the world. This entails the person 'inserting' themselves into a particular 'subject position' within a chosen 'discourse'" (2005, p. 1). The background and "truths" of individuals can be understood from the language they use and the way they speak. However, the fact that the phenomenon called "truth" varies from person to person shows the subjectivity of the language and that it is on a slippery ground in terms of conveying meaning. In the first scene, the young woman explains this subjectivity with the following words:

We're sick to the back fucking teeth of hearing from old men, with flaky skin, at weddings, patting the back of your hand gently as they explain what they consider to be the truths of the world, like I share the same truths, like his truth and my truth are anywhere near the fucking same when it's you that gets to make the world and me that's got to live in it. (p. 14)

In the dialogues between the young woman and the man, it can be seen how much the director's language makes the young woman angry, even though it is much calmer than the language used by the young woman and does not contain sharp judgments or criticisms. The effect created by the man's calm words on the young woman arises from the fact that language does not contain objective judgments and certainty, on the contrary, as Derrida advocates, "is menaced in its very life, helpless, adrift in the threat of limitlessness" (1967/1998, p. 1), which means it contains different meanings according to each situation, time and person. This is why the young woman responds to the man's observation "You just seem very, twenty-four. That's all" with "Don't be a patronizing cunt" (p. 16). What irritates the young woman here and makes her think that the man is a "patronizing cunt" is not simply because of his statement of her age, but how the position, status and age of the man shape this sentence and what kind of subtext it provides to this context.

In “Word, Dialogue and Novel”, Kristeva briefly explains Bakhtin’s “three categories of words within the narrative”. According to Bakhtin, there are three distinct types of language usage. The first is the “direct word”, which possesses an objective meaning. The second is the object-oriented word. These words also carry direct and objective meanings, but they can be perceived in a way that may diverge from the orientation of the writer or the speaker. The third type is a discourse in which the speaker aims to express one thing using a completely different, even contrasting language (Kristeva, 1986, p. 43). These various uses of language can be clearly analysed in *The Writer* through numerous dialogues, specifically in Boyfriend’s lines, where his language appears caring and affectionate on the surface while the subtext reveals a distinctly aggressive undertone. In the second scene, almost the entire dialogue between Writer and Boyfriend proves the subjectivity of meaning. Although Boyfriend wants Writer to explain herself (p. 44), in the rest of the dialogue, he perceives all of her explanations according to his own emotional state and thoughts due to his dissatisfaction with Writer’s perspective on the world. Although Writer has a much calmer attitude than Boyfriend, she can be perceived as quite hurtful and aggressive due to the sub-meanings in her words.

In the continuation of the second scene, in the dialogue between Boyfriend and Writer, when the current state of communication between them, Boyfriend’s anger towards Writer, and the general content of the issue they were talking about were not known or taken into consideration by the audience/reader, Boyfriend’s words could be interpreted positively, even sympathetically and generous:

BOYFRIEND. I just desperately want you to be happy.

WRITER. I know.

BOYFRIEND. I’ll keep selling football boots for us. You don’t have to do the job.

WRITER. The two things aren’t related.

BOYFRIEND. I’ll keep selling football boots for us.

WRITER. I’ve never lived off your money.

BOYFRIEND. I’ll look after you. (p. 52)

The passive-aggressive attitude underlying Boyfriend’s seemingly sympathetic words can be clearly observed proving that words and sentences cannot be evaluated independently of content, human relationships, emotions and past experiences. From a post-structuralist viewpoint, the meaning in the language cannot be evaluated independently from the context and that the same exact words that are used have the

potential to consist of completely different meanings in different contexts or situations. As Derrida suggests, there are numerous different factors that help define the meaning in the language such as culture, historical background and social status of the parties (1967/1998).

The dialogues between Director and Writer in the fourth scene exemplify the decisive role that language plays in authority and power relations. Director's persistent demand of Writer to continue and complete the first scene, and the patronizing, arrogant and threatening language he uses while doing this, not only reinforces the hierarchy created by the age difference or gender roles, but also demonstrate the conflicts that occur between directors and writers in the theatre industry.

Throughout the play, hierarchical relationships in the art industry are revealed through the characteristics of the language used by the characters. In the fourth scene, Director's tone is insistent, but after seeing Writer's determination, he changes his tone and compliments her; "I do it because I think you're good. I do it because I think you are exceptional. It scares me how good you are (...) I know you suffer. The idea of anything happening to - If you stopped, I - Let me do what I can do, the only thing I can do - to make you safe" (p. 73) proves that language can be manipulated according to people's wishes and desires and is used to manipulate the other party. No matter how cleverly Director manipulates the language while trying to frame Writer's mind according to his benefit, at the end of the scene, the sentence that reveals the hierarchical relationship between them and enables Director to show the Writer who has the power can be seen; "Get it finished. Get it finished or it doesn't go on" (p. 74).

As Dan Rebeletto suggests, in *The Writer*, the role of the director in shaping the text, thus its meaning is handled thoroughly. It is observed frequently in the play that the relationship between the writer and the director governs numerous power struggles. Though there are divisions about how much the director is entitled to change the text that he has been handed over by the playwright, in the play, it appears that the director holds the greater power as opposed to Clurman's argument that "the decisions ultimately rest with the writer" (p. 44). This seems to line with the post-structuralist idea that once the text is released from its writer, it is open to never-ending interpretations and modifications (Barthes, 1967/1977, p. 142). However, in the play, it is observed that the director's authority expands to the level where he can request a

completely different final scene, which means that his role exceeds the boundaries of just improvising the text for the stage or in broader terms, “rewriting” it. According to Leigh Silverman, a director’s role is to rewrite the play rather than creating a final performance” (Kiely, p. 42). In this respect, the director in *The Writer* appears to take on a role that he originally should not be entitled of.

4.2.2. Deconstructing Dualities in *The Writer*: Binary Oppositions

Another element that enables Hickson’s *The Writer* to be examined from a post-structuralist framework is the deconstruction elements witnessed in the play. Matt Trueman declares that the play is perceived by the critics as “dazzling deconstruction of the art form that resists and rebels against those structures” (2018). *The Writer* with its theatrical structure, complex and versatile features of the characters, the topics that are effectively discussed, self-reflexive and meta-theatrical techniques that are used revealing binary oppositions and intertextuality, offers many examples for the use of post-structuralist deconstruction. According to Cheuk (2022), *The Writer* is an “unbuilding” in every aspect. Traditional theatre writing and staging is challenged with all the features of the play, and the traces of this can be observed all the way from the structure of the play to the topics that are discussed.

In *The Writer*, there can be found various examples of gender roles which are handled extensively in the topic of binary oppositions and the use of language to deconstruct these roles. The Writer’s expressive anger and the Director’s resistance to hearing what this anger articulates – his fixation on the anger as a “symptom” of the Writer’s artistic and personal “immaturity” – is a key dialectic throughout the play, and indeed he takes on the disciplinary role throughout. Hickson’s play not only calls out this misogyny for what it is, but stages the act of calling it out. (Willis, 2021, p. 148)

As suggested by Willis, the young woman’s attitude and anger towards gender roles are frequently discussed in the play, specifically in the dialogues between the young woman and the man in the first act. Although the young woman’s anger is perceived by the man as just a personality trait or a common characteristic of the modern-day women, and cannot find its real basis, various attempts to destroy traditional gender roles can be witnessed throughout the play. The aim of the play regarding gender roles is not only to deconstruct them, but also to reveal that the

acrimony towards these roles is often misunderstood by the society. In this sense, the play does not only aim to deconstruct gender roles, but also aims to justify this goal and deconstruct society's established wrong attitude towards it.

4.2.3. The Collapse of Plot Integrity and Deconstructing the Line between the Real and Imagined

In the play, not only gender roles and attitudes towards the socially constructed roles, but also the traditional staging techniques in theatre are aimed to be deconstructed. In the second scene, although the dialogues between Writer and Boyfriend seem quite realistic at first, towards the end of the act, Director's reflections, the increasingly loud sound of a baby crying, and the surreal experience had by the Writer deconstruct the reality in the general flow of the play. Hickson's genius blending of realism and surrealism, especially in this scene, presents the situation of the characters are in and the impact they are under in a more intense and realistic manner to the audience and reader. As Emma Willis argues, seeing Director's reflections in this seemingly realistic scene "creates a palimpsest of dramatic and 'real' worlds" (2021, p. 151).

In the third scene, with a flow of events and a topic that seems completely disconnected and different from the rest of the play, Hickson again deconstructs the perception of unity that the play is traditionally expected to present. In this scene, Writer aims to portray a real "female experience" and draws a social structure where only women live, far from capitalism and patriarchy. The inter-gender and authoritarian discussions witnessed in the other scenes are not included in this drawn utopia, and it tells how the main character gets a real-life experience when she lives away from all of the social problems and feels like she belongs somewhere for the first time in her life. However, complete tonal integrity is not achieved in this scene, and towards the end of the scene, an eye watching the main character from outside disrupts this utopian world. Later, in the dialogue between Director and Writer in the fourth scene, it becomes clear that the previous utopian scene is a part of the play that Writer is working on to be staged. In this scene, Director's perspective towards the third scene serves as a window to the condition that art of theatre has reached today and society's expectations from a theatre piece, and generates a criticism against the mentioned expectations. The fact that the theatre has turned into an industry that is solely

cultivated for the purpose of making a profit and is increasingly moving away from artistic concerns is revealed by the conflicts between Director and Writer. It is emphasized that the traditional and relatively “simpler” flow of a play will be preferred by the audience over a meta-theatrical work, and that deconstructing the expected flow will not be appreciated by either the audience or the director:

DIRECTOR. ... I'm offering you a production. That's a lot. (...) Finish the play. Hand it in with a real fucking ending. It has to sell tickets or the whole financial model doesn't work, and if that's too much reality for your delicate artist soul then take a hike. Take it to someone else because I can't listen to this shit any more. (p. 69)

One of the other elements that provide post-structuralist deconstruction in the play is the unstable narrative. Throughout the play, the lack of a traditional plot integrity, the unusual transition of scenes, the interspersed metafictional elements within a seemingly realistic narrative, and the application of the play-within-play technique, which is frequently encountered in contemporary theatre, prevent the play from unfolding in a straight line and deconstruct the expected plot structure. At this point, Director's resistance to this unstable narrative and deconstruction of the plot structure occurs. After the realistic first scene between Writer and Director arguing about the industry of theatre, the play interrupts the usual and expected plot flow by shifting in the tone and reality. The play-within-the-play technique, which is one of the factors that provide the unstable narrative in the play, forces the audience/reader to constantly follow the play with intense attention. Although this technique prevents the play from being easily understood, it gives the message it wants to give more energetically by ensuring the full focus of the audience and pushing the audience to try and make sense of it.

Play-within-the-play, where the same actors portray different characters or the same characters have different roles in different scenes, promises diversity in the meaning of the text with the ambiguous perception it creates in the audience/reader. For example, the young woman in the first scene, who has a heated argument with the man, is represented in a completely different role with Boyfriend in the second scene. Although the character is the same, the character's characteristics and status have completely changed. While the young woman is perceived from Director's perspective in the first scene, in the second scene she is perceived from the eyes of a boyfriend who cannot get the results he wants from his relationship, and thus the same character

appears before the audience with very different aspects in two different scenes. Transferring different aspects of the character to the audience helps the character have a richer background and be interpreted in a more versatile way by the audience/reader. Likewise, in the third scene, the character takes on a completely different role, this time revealing a Writer who is away from all the power conflicts, freed from the oppression of patriarchy, and found her own self. In this way, it is shown not only the ideals that the character has acquired in a capitalist system like it is seen in the first two scenes, but also what kind of structure she has in her inner world when she is freed from all. The ideals that the character fights for in the first two scenes, and “the world that changes shape” (p. 19), become reality in the third scene, and it is demonstrated how this affects both the character and the society in which the character lives. In the fourth scene, Writer, with her aspects known to the audience/reader, is brought back in a discussion with Director. Writer is on stage again with the aspects previously presented to the audience, but this time her determination in the first scene has been replaced by an anger that has lost its intensity, and an idealism that is tied down by a contract. In this scene, Writer has become a part of the order that she fiercely opposes in the first and second scenes, and even if she is not a defender of it, she is doomed to take part in a production that will contribute to this profit-centred order.

Another element that contributes to the unstable narrative in the play is the way that the inner conflicts, emotions, inner world, thoughts and psychological state of the characters, especially Writer, are handled more prominently than the flow of events. Compared to a play in which events proceed chronologically and the abstract aspect is more in the background, the heavy abstract narratives in Hickson’s play, the emphasis given to the inner world of the characters, and the distorted chronological flow make it relatively more difficult for the audience/reader to follow the play. The deconstruction this creates in the structure of the play makes the play a work of art that can be considered from a broader perspective, while preparing a suitable ground for applying meta-theatrical elements. What is presented on the stage is not a work that the audience can easily comprehend with a simple act of “watching”, but a work that pushes the audience to think and criticize, focuses all attention on the stage, and at the same time allows the audience to question the order they are in. In this respect, this unusual narrative structure that is created, with its instability, transforms the text into a product that can be interpreted more sophisticatedly, provides the audience/reader

with the motivation to engage in self-criticism, and is suitable for attributing subjective meanings as post-structuralist thought supports.

Another factor that enables the play to go beyond the expected flow is that the play resists to having a definitive conclusion and strong semantic connections between scenes. What exactly Director expects and asks for from Writer in the fourth scene, an ending, a closure that will wrap the whole play, is not found in Hickson's play. While Director's insistent request from the Writer to write an ending in the fourth scene (p. 74) gives the audience an idea of what traditional theatre and a conventional play structure are like, in Hickson's play this lack of unity of the subject and a rehabilitative ending are emphasized. This absence of an ending implies that the structure of the play was deliberately deconstructed in opposition to this idea and that the play was deliberately left without an ending.

4.2.4. Feminist Deconstruction: Power, Identity and Gender in *The Writer*

To continue with another issue that is discussed, criticized and deconstructed in the play is the gender roles that are constructed by the society and the power struggles between the genders (Tripney, 2018). In the play, the deconstruction of gender roles is initiated with the heated arguments of the young woman in the first scene. With all the anger she has accumulated within the patriarchal system, the young woman explains how gender roles in the society they live in exclude women from the act of "getting to make the world" and how this has become the role of men, and how women are expected to submit to the order and live in this world order that men "get to make".

At the same time, she emphasizes that the theatre industry is also excessively corrupted by this patriarchal structure. While theatre is an art form that is expected to give real messages to the society and "change" the society at some point, according to the woman, within the patriarchal system, it has become an industry that is only expected to entertain the audience and is a subject to financial concerns. According to the woman, theatre has become unable to fulfil its main duty and one of the biggest culprits of this is the patriarchal social structure.

The woman's angry and unfiltered comments about gender roles and the corrupt theatre industry are perceived by the man as "simple aggression of a young girl"; and as a clear example of gender roles, the man patronizingly ignores all of her

comments and even makes fun of them. Here, the importance of language in power dynamics and gender roles, one of the topics frequently addressed by post-structuralist thought, is clearly exemplified. While the woman tries to deconstruct these roles by speaking in an unfiltered manner to an older male who should “traditionally” be respected, the man ignores the young woman’s criticisms with the language he uses in a manner that defends the norms built by the society for his benefit.

Feminist post-structuralism is concerned with what role language plays in power conflicts between genders or in the patriarchal social structure in general, and how power relations can be changed, restructured or even destroyed through the use of language. For Wittig, though language is not originally misogynist, it is the way of the application of the language that recreates it to be used in a way that reinforces the misogynist social norms (1983, p. 64). It can be exemplified with how the language can be bended and re-shaped based on the intentions of the speakers, and how the “re-shaped” language can reinforce or deconstruct the social norms.

Feminist post-structuralism perceives language not only as a means of communication, but also as a factor that plays a major role in these social structures. Therefore, what the language used by the characters in *The Writer* reconstructs or deconstructs, what values it reinforces and what it disregards can be examined from a feminist post-structuralist perspective. While the language used by the characters is an indicator of the characters’ attitudes towards gender roles, it also conveys the messages the play aims to present on these issues and the social issues it aims to make the reader/audience think about. Judging from the comments made by the young woman, gender roles are reinforced in a patriarchal manner not only through language but in all areas of social life, and consequently, it affects art in the worst way possible.

To summarize, when Hickson’s play *The Writer* is examined with a post-structuralist approach, it contains many ideas supported by post-structuralist thought, both in terms of the ideas it deals with and with its unconventional structure and characterization. First and foremost, it examines the current state of the theatre industry and discusses the underlying reasons why the industry has become corrupted in its current state. Later, while criticizing these reasons in an unapologetic way through the characters, it also offers solutions to change this order.

The Writer aims to reveal the problems caused by the patriarchal social structure in all areas of society. While doing this, Hickson uses the method of deconstruction, which is adopted as a principle by post-structuralist thought, both to demolish the norms created by society and the monotonous forms within art. As mentioned in the play, gender inequality is so ingrained in every aspect of society that it is felt deeply in the language, works of art and also the hierarchy established between artists. For this reason, the character in *The Writer* finds the solution in “starting somewhere” and believes that changes to be made in the structure and form of theatre works will be a start in solving the problems. However, the art industry, which has become profit-oriented, is getting worse every day before the eyes of the writer.

In the light of all the mentioned social issues, the play also examines the use of language, which is one of the most important issues that the post-structuralist theory deals with. The play emphasizes how language plays a decisive role in the relationships between people when it is manipulated in different ways, and how it is a forceful tool in strengthening the hierarchy. It is explained that language is much more than a simple means of communication, that it acquires the power to destroy and rebuild the entire social order with different ways of using, but as long as it is used in the wrong way in the wrong order, it only makes the social structure even more unbearable. Therefore, it appears that language is not a reliable source of conveying meaning since it is widely susceptible to interpretations, bending and shaping. The characters’ very subjective use of language throughout the play exemplifies to the audience that language is a structure that can lose its credibility very quickly. The sentences, which are essentially subjective but uttered by the characters in a very confident tone, once again make the audience question the reliability of language in conveying meaning.

The aggressive and offensive meanings underlying some sentences, especially those made in a very polite and understanding tone in certain scenes, reveal how misleading language can be unless the context is known and unless the state of mind and intentions of the people using the language are unquestionably understood, however, since the intent of the writer or the speaker cannot be completely made sure of by the reader, listener or the audience, the post-structuralist thought that supports the idea that the true meaning is created in the reader gains more meaning, because it can never be known for sure with what intent the writer/speaker produces a text, hence,

what becomes the most important is how the meaning is formed in the “final destination”.

In addition, the director-writer conflict is discussed extensively in *The Writer*, which provides various answers to the main question of this thesis. Contemplating the director-writer conflicts from a post-structuralist perspective, the director’s pressure on the writer contrasts strongly with the ideal of post-structuralist thought to deconstruct authority. While post-structuralist theory argues that there should be no authority over the meaning of the text, it seems that there is a combat over the authority between the writer and the director in the play, and as a result, a work that neither side is satisfied with is produced.

Furthermore, some of the staging techniques used in *The Writer* also coincide with the post-structuralist approach that aims to deconstruct conventional theatre writing. With techniques such as not establishing a chronological connection between scenes, scenes adorned with surreal elements following very realistic scenes, and a sudden representation of a surreal event that will break that reality in a very realistic flow, the play always keeps the audience alert and offers the audience a space where they can criticize the play. Although these techniques make the play relatively more difficult to understand, the audience is more actively involved in the process of meaning-making of the play, as post-structuralist thought aims. At the same time, focusing on the abstract thoughts of the characters rather than the flow of events in the play prevents the audience from getting caught up within the flow of events, and forces the audience to think and criticize the issues discussed on stage, while making the play more suitable for the application of meta-theatrical elements.

Hence, as a result of analysing Hickson’s play within a post-structuralist framework, it can be concluded that the biggest goal of the play is to warn the audience and encourage them to think and criticize with the help of post-structuralist techniques. In this context, as supported by post-structuralist theory, the reader/viewer is reminded of their responsibilities and asked to interpret the text within their own perspectives.



5. CONCLUSION

As a result, in the light of the issues mentioned throughout the thesis, adapting the post-structuralist approach, which brings a new breath to literary criticism, to theatre works gives the opportunity to interpret and give meaning to these works from a broader framework. In order to better understand the post-structuralist approach, it would be convenient to have an idea about the general ideas of the structuralist approach. The structuralist approach, which emerged in France in the 20th-century, discusses the systemic structures that language contains. According to this theory, the message that the language or text aims to convey and the meaning it contains can be understood only through the pattern found in the structural system it contains, isolated from all kinds of external factors, whether social, cultural, economic, historical or personal. Because, according to the structuralist approach, all the factors and information that need to be taken into consideration when searching for meaning in the text are already coded in this system, and therefore, meaning can be conveyed even from the smallest structure of the language, thanks to interconnected structures extending from the part to the whole. Ferdinand de Saussure argues that these bonds within the language are built on binary oppositions; in other words, every concept can exist with its opposite; hence he emphasizes that in order to fully understand a concept, it is necessary to know its opposite. This theory, developed by Ferdinand de Saussure in the field of linguistics, began to be implemented in the field of literature, especially with the works of Roland Barthes. However, Barthes brings a different perspective to the theory and emphasizes that the text must first be purified from authorities over the meaning. The author and the author's intention, which has traditionally been of great importance in the former literary criticism styles, must be removed from the equation in the analysis of the true meaning of the text.

With Barthes's approach to structuralist theory, the way is also opened for the emergence of post-structuralist theory, which opposes to the structuralist approach. The post-structuralist approach argues against the idea that the meaning of the text can only be encoded within a structural system, arguing that the sharp boundaries of the structuralist approach are too objective and rigid in structuring the meaning of the text. With Derrida's great contributions to the post-structuralist approach, views opposing the immensely objective structure of the structuralist approach were developed.

According to the post-structuralist theory, neither any structural system nor the author of the text can establish authority over the meaning of the text, for the reason that the text does not have a clear, unchanging and objective meaning. The post-structuralist approach argues that language is not reliable in terms of conveying meaning and emphasizes that meaning is created depending on innumerable variables. Since all variables change the meaning conveyed by the language at any time, the meaning is constantly renewing itself and can be perceived differently for each recipient at any time.

Post-structuralist criticism in literature argues that trying to derive a precise and clear meaning from the text would be futile and unhealthy. According to this idea, texts carry the traces of many texts that came before them, and it is impossible to evaluate a text within itself, without taking any variables into consideration. According to the post-structuralist approach, in addition to this intertextuality, the meaning in the text also depends on the reader's background, intellectual level, emotional state, the value judgments of the society they live in, everything they know and do not know, the conditions of the period in which the text was written, the conditions of the period in which the text was published and read and countless other variables. For this reason, the post-structuralist approach emphasizes that the meaning of the text is constantly changing and that it is impossible to derive an objective meaning from the text, leaving the responsibility of constructing the meaning of the text to the reader. Since the text will have a different meaning for each reader, the process of interpretation is subjective and cannot be done by adhering to an authority.

In this context, post-structuralist theory adopts the deconstruction approach as its principle. According to this approach, language, which is already an unreliable tool in conveying meaning, does not provide objective reliability as it is already quite vulnerable to interpretations. According to Derrida, binary oppositions, which are believed to connect the structural ties in the text according to the structuralist approach, are also doomed to this deconstruction because no concept is exactly opposite to each other and these oppositions can never fully complement each other to form a perfect structure.

Another structure that post-structuralist thought deconstructs is authority. According to the post-structuralist approach, the process of interpreting the text should

be as diverse, open and broad as possible and should allow for an infinite number of interpretations. Therefore, the post-structuralist approach aims to deconstruct any factor that may limit the meaning of the text. The author, who is traditionally perceived as the greatest authority over the text, also gets his share of the deconstruction. According to post-structuralist theory, the mental state the author is in when producing the text, the thoughts he has, and the meaning he intends to convey should be disregarded, because an analysis and interpretation that takes all these into consideration will be a limited one. Instead, the post-structuralist approach argues that the author should be removed from the equation and the text should be opened to unlimited interpretation. With this concept, which Barthes calls “Death of the Author”, the author is in a way “killed” and the reader’s place in structuring the meaning is strengthened. This responsibility is given to the reader, as every interpretation made by the reader will enrich the meaning of the text. The reader, whose position has been strengthened with the post-structuralist approach, now abandons their passive position and takes on the responsibility of playing an active role in the process of meaning-making of the text.

This deconstruction has an important place in the adaptation of the post-structuralist approach to theatre. In theatre plays written with a post-structuralist approach or aimed to be criticized with a post-structuralist approach, the structure of traditional theatre plays is questioned, and the aim is to disrupt these structures. In theatre plays written from a post-structuralist perspective, the flow of events is more complex, the structure of the play is more irregular and freer, and the structure of the language that is used is suitable for rich interpretations. At the same time, as post-structuralist thought advocates for the deconstruction of the authorities, everything and everyone that can establish authority over meaning is questioned in the plays written within this framework. Just as the author’s authority is tried to be deconstructed in written texts, the director is also excluded from the equation in staged plays. This time, the audience, like the reader, is expected to be an active part of the process of meaning-making of the text, and the techniques that are used in staging also serve this purpose. The structure of such plays is suitable to be changed and freely interpreted by the audience. Accordingly, the language that is used has blurred boundaries and emphasizes the fluid nature of the language, so that readers and audience can shape the meaning conveyed by the language in a more subjective and richer way. The

subjects of the plays written within the post-structuralist framework are chosen in a way that would lead the reader/audience to question, and encourage them to play an active role in meaning-making. Although all these features of post-structuralist theatre distance it from the conventional theatre structure and make it more difficult to comprehend, they pave the way for the reader/audience to take a greater role in structuring the meaning of the text.

One of the questions that played the biggest role in the emergence of post-structuralist theory, “Who determines the meaning of the text?”, has been tried to be answered in this thesis by examining three different contemporary theatre works from a post-structuralist framework.

One of the plays that are suitable for an analysis from a post-structuralist framework is *Venus in Fur* that was written by Ives. In this work, which illustrates the process of adapting a novella to the theatre stage, power conflicts are especially witnessed between the director/writer and the actor. The question of who gives meaning to the text is constantly discussed between Thomas (director/writer) and Wanda (actress) and causes a lot of controversy during the staging process of the play. The idea of “death of the author” advocated by the post-structuralist approach is at first strongly rejected by Thomas who wants to be an authority over the meaning of the text. According to post-structuralist thought, no work can be completely original since every text contains traces from all the texts that came before it, so the person who creates a new work cannot establish sole authority over the work they created. Similarly, in the play, Thomas adapts a story to the theatre stage that is inspired by an old novella; but he still finds it difficult to suppress his desire to establish authority over the meaning of the text. On the other hand, Wanda makes the play richer and more variable with her own interpretations, and even Thomas, who wants to see himself as an authority, sees how rich and developed the play becomes when it is opened to different interpretations. As Derrida argues, the text is a “product of ambiguity”, and the more this ambiguity is celebrated in the play, the richer the meaning of the text becomes. The fact that the play-within-the-play in *Venus in Fur*, which was created with the traces of the works that came before it, then gains new meanings with Thomas’s rewriting, then becomes further enriched with Wanda’s interpretations, and finally transformed when Thomas and Wanda celebrate the fluidity

of the text and set the meaning free, exemplifies the one of the main ideas of post-structuralist theory.

Thomas, who believes that it is necessary to take into account the value judgments of the period in which the text was produced, as well as the scenes of a period text, provides evidence of how many factors are effective on structuring the meaning of the text. Ironically, Thomas, who still sees himself as the authority in structuring the meaning of the text, believes that his views and beliefs are original, but he is actually under the influence of many factors such as his upbringing, education, and the social environment he is in, and his views and beliefs have developed accordingly.

Venus in Fur also provides examples of the deconstruction of gender roles addressed by post-structuralism. The fact that Thomas and Wanda step out of gender roles and easily change the roles assigned to them by society while shifting characters from and between scenes of the play reveals the unnatural structure of gender roles that are initially constructed by society. It becomes clear that gender is in fact molded into certain patterns through repeatedly performed social roles and how fluid its nature is. During the deliberation of all these, the effect of language on gender roles is also discussed. It is revealed that gender roles that are accepted as “normal” by society are reinforced with different uses of language and become more permanent.

Furthermore, the fact that Thomas and Wanda are inspired by the novella, which is the original of the play staged in *Venus in Fur*, while portraying the characters, and that they take into account the characters in the original work while embodying the characters, makes the play they stage much more intense, which is an example of the intertextuality that is advocated by post-structuralist theory. The more variables it contains, the richer and denser the meaning becomes. Therefore, the play not only exemplifies absence of the writer/director from the equation, but also what the writer/director brings to the play since it is also observed that some of the ideas given by Thomas during the staging process enrich the meaning of the play, so instead of killing the author completely in his play, Ives only aims to take away the author’s authority while still keeping him in the equation.

Another post-structuralist idea that the play deals with is the nature of power dynamics. Considering the deconstructive structure of post-structuralist thought,

power dynamics in social life are considered variable and unbalanced, and the biggest factor on these dynamics is the use of language. Both the use of language creates these dynamics, and the structure of the dynamics becomes understandable through the use of the language, that is, language and power dynamics are in a cycle that constantly affects each other, and the unstable structure of the language is reflected in the structure of power dynamics.

Considering the technical structure of the play *Venus in Fur*, traces of post-structuralist theory can be identified. As the play progresses, the line between the play-within-the-play that Thomas and Wanda stage and the main play becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish. With the deconstructing principle of post-structuralist theatre, the flow of the plot is interrupted to create a surreal atmosphere, which provides more space for the interpretation of the play.

Another important work that can be given as an example of post-structuralist theatre works is *The Author* that was written by Crouch. With its provocative topics and unconventional stage techniques, *The Author* brings numerous issues addressed by post-structuralist theory to the stage.

What attracts attention at first glance in *The Author* is its interesting stage-setting, which strongly exemplifies the deconstruction aspect of post-structuralist theory. There is no traditional stage in the play, instead there are audience chairs placed facing towards each other and the actors are positioned on these chairs among the audience. With this stage arrangement, Crouch aims to include the audience in the play as much as possible, of which the importance is emphasized by post-structuralist theory. Crouch aims this not only with the seating arrangement, but also by making the audience have a say in the play. Characters ask questions to the audience, and the way the play is staged is arranged to allow the audience to comment on it. At the same time, the characters ask the names of the audience while directing questions to the audience, and it is aimed to learn as many audience names as possible throughout the play, so that the audience, which the post-structuralist approach puts at the most important point in structuring the meaning, is made aware of their own importance during the play.

In *The Author*, several topics that are avoided in society because they are disturbing are discussed; and the play, which involves the audience in the production

from the very beginning of the play, aims to prevent the audience from remaining passive about these topics that are socially averted from being talked about. Since the audience is exposed to the issues they avoid in society in the most open way possible, they feel a responsibility to think, criticize and comment on these issues, which is exactly what Crouch aims to do; as suggested by the post-structuralist approach, the audience should want to fulfill their responsibility. In fact, Crouch takes this to such a point that he implies that the fact that whether the play is successful or not lies with the responsibility of audience. If the play achieves what it sets out to do, which is to make people question and interpret, then it has succeeded. The play's uncensored exposure of terrible social problems right in front of the audience forces the audience to question these problems, especially when the audience has been made aware of their responsibility for constructing the meaning of the text. The audience is "at stake", so they cannot passively watch the play and they feel obliged to think, criticize, and find a solution to these problems.

Crouch also uses numerous linguistic techniques to involve the audience in the meaning-making process of the play. One of these is to leave completed sentences in the play; thus, the audience will inevitably complete these sentences within themselves and become an active part of the play's meaning-making. With such techniques, the audience also begins to question the place of the author, who is traditionally seen as the authority of the meaning in the text, since the audience is an active part of the production and construction of meaning and is made aware of their own importance. To support this, there is pleasant music played in the background, the lighting is beautifully done, the actors address the audience by their names and create a friendly atmosphere, so that the audience is aware of their own importance and feels more comfortable and confident to interpret the play.

In the play, the writer, director, and actors are often underestimated by the characters. The production team is ensured to have as little say as possible on the play, thus bringing to life the "death of the author", one of the fundamental ideas of post-structuralist theory. Tim, the Author character in the play, conveys his own humane, weak sides as a writer to the audience in an uncensored way, and reduces the author to the level of a flawed human being, thus taking away the power that traditional literary criticism gives to the author. The play also draws attention to the intertextual structure

of language and literature by referring to many works coming before itself. With these references, the attention of audience is drawn to the accumulated structure of the text, implying that the topics that are discussed in this play are not and cannot be original, and that these have been discussed many times before.

By this implication, the play leaves the interpretations that will structure the meaning of the text entirely to the responsibility of the audience and makes this clear from the very beginning. At this point, it would be useful to refer to Barthes' term "writerly text"; which explains how the meaning in the text can only be completed by the reader not only by consuming the text, but also by interpreting, maintaining and changing the text. In this way, the text is rewritten, reinterpreted and enriched by the reader/viewer.

At the same time, in order for the audience to interpret the play as freely and without prejudice as possible, the characters warn the audience to forget everything they have read about the play before and not to have any expectations about the play before watching it. As the post-structuralist approach aims, the interpretations made by the reader/audience from their own pure perspective will provide a great diversity in structuring the meaning of the text.

Apart from techniques such as the seating arrangement being far from traditional and the breaking of the fourth wall, there is also no real action on the stage. The play is entirely based on language; even though it deals with incredibly disturbing social problems, it conveys the issues and makes the audience experience this discomfort only by using the power of language. In addition, there is no chronological flow of events in the play, the characters tell their experiences independently of each other, sometimes at the same time, and the audience is forced to focus their attention on the play at a high level in order to be truly involved in the meaning-making process.

In short, in his work *The Author*, Crouch deals with numerous issues that post-structuralist theory deals with, in a very innovative and provocative way; and while doing this, he constantly reminds the audience of their responsibilities and makes the audience a big part of the creative process. With all these features, *The Author* becomes a work that both exemplifies the post-structuralist approach very well and is very suitable for post-structuralist analysis.

The last work that the thesis examines from a post-structuralist framework is the play *The Writer* that was written by Hickson. The work, which deals with many important issues such as the current situation of the theatre industry, power conflicts that may occur between the writer and director, gender inequality in society and the purpose of art, band together with post-structuralist theory in terms of plentiful issues it presents.

The Writer not only points out these issues, but also suggests solutions to these problems through its characters. It points out that there is a need for deconstruction, especially regarding gender roles and inequalities, which it deals with from the feminist post-structuralist framework. In doing so, the play reveals how big of a role language plays in human relationships, and therefore in society and in the ideas and opinions produced by society. It achieves its aim again with the approaches adopted by post-structuralist theory; emphasizing that the meaning that is aimed to be conveyed by language can be unreliable, and discusses how different uses of language contribute to the corruption in society.

While *The Writer* emphasizes how big a role language plays in indicating people's status, in the artistic products produced by society, and ultimately in the set of rules created by society, it reveals how dangerous it is that language is an organism that is so open to manipulation. For this reason, in the play, it is illustrated that no matter how objectively language is used by some authoritarian figures, it has in fact a subjective structure. At the same time, the different language structures used by characters with different statuses in the play open a door for the audience to question the connection between language and social hierarchy. Additionally, the difference between some of the sentences made by the characters in the play and the actual meanings underlying these sentences supports the idea advocated by post-structuralist theory that language does not contain objective and definitive meanings. It is exemplified in the play that there are many factors that structure the meaning in language, and that meaning interpretation will most likely not be reliable if the language is considered only within itself, independent of all contexts on the grounds that there are many different items among the factors affecting language, such as the environment, emotional state, personal beliefs, prejudices, and the relationship of the

parties with each other, and an analysis without taking these into consideration will be one-sided and insufficient.

Another post-structuralist idea discussed in *The Writer* is the question of who or what is the authority in giving meaning to the text. It is especially evident in the power struggles between the director and the writer that when one insists on finding a single authority figure in structuring the meaning of the text, no reliable meaning can be acquired. For this reason, after the text is produced, it should not be bound to any semantic authority and should be left free so that the text can expand and enrich with the unlimited interpretations it receives.

The idea of the necessity of disrupting the structure, which is one of the basic features of post-structuralist theatre, was applied in *The Writer* with both characterization and meta-theatrical techniques. By sprinkling surreal events and elements into the scenes that will disrupt the realism of the scene and surprise the audience, it is aimed to break the monotonous flow of the play and prevent the audience from watching the play passively by making them question the product they are watching. At the same time, as in the other two plays analysed in the thesis, a chronological flow of events is not depicted in *The Writer*, on the contrary, although the scenes are connected to each other in terms of characters and the subjects that are discussed, they are sharply separated from each other in terms of both atmosphere and stage techniques that are used. The fact that the traditional flow of events is constantly disrupted and at the same time the narrative is quite unstable, causes the expected theatrical integrity to not be achieved. As a common feature shared by post-structuralist plays, the play is relatively more difficult to follow than a conventional theatre work, although it is what post-structuralist theory targets; the audience must be invested in the play enough to be able to form the meaning of the text in the most accurate and versatile way. In *The Writer*, the same characters are presented to the audience in many different social contexts, in order to enable the audience to form a more versatile idea about the characters and to make sense of the text from a broader framework.

To add, what *The Writer* focuses on is not the flow of events, but the ideas and feelings of the characters. By placing abstract concepts on the centre of the play, Hickson paves the way for the audience to establish a stronger bond with the play and

prepares a more suitable ground for the meta-theatrical elements she wants to implement in it.

To continue, In *The Writer*, scenes are often cut without a resolution, which is exactly the opposite of what the character Director demands. There are no closures in the scenes that would allow events to reach a conclusion; events and ideas are left unfinished; thus, definitive conclusions are avoided as advocated by the post-structuralist approach, and the reader/viewer questions this incompleteness, makes their own internal interpretations and becomes a part of the creative process.

While addressing all these, *The Writer* also exemplifies how language affects relations between genders, which is one of the main topics of feminist post-structuralism. In the play, it is clearly shown how the use of language reinforces the norms in the patriarchal social structure and once again emphasizes the nature of language that is open to manipulation.

As a result of all the information given in the thesis and the text analyses made from the post-structuralist framework, to go back to the question “What determines the meaning of the text?”, in post-structuralist approach, unlike traditional literary criticism movements, the greatest power and responsibility is given to the reader. Since language is open to being changed and manipulated in many different ways, and therefore cannot be expected to convey meaning securely; searching for a secure meaning in any message that is conveyed through language would be misleading to start with.

As seen in the analyses, meaning goes through many different stages before reaching its destination, is affected by many different factors and undergoes many changes. Therefore, the idea of searching for the meaning of the text in a certain “centre” is wrong from the very beginning, because the meaning can never stay in a centre in a secured way. Therefore, focusing on where meaning is created and where it is hidden will yield a rather one-sided and weak result. However, the place to focus is on the point where the meaning is at its richest and most versatile, which is the destination; the reader.

The meaning, which has undergone infinite transformations until it reaches the reader, undergoes countless changes and transformations once it reaches the reader and continues to constantly renew, develop, multiply its layers and expand its

framework after it reaches the reader as well. Each reader reconstructs the meaning of the text they receive in their own unique experience and continue by adding more and re-shaping it in their own lives. This is exactly what post-structuralist thought advocates; instead of trying to find an objective, universal meaning in the text, one should free the text from its authorities, set it free and open it to endless interpretations, so that the text can reach its true potential and create endless meanings, and the creative process can continue even if the author dies.



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ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Kişisel Bilgiler

Soyadı Adı Kılınç Büşra
Uyruğu Türkiye Cumhuriyeti

Eğitim Bilgileri

Derece	Eğitim Birimi	Mezuniyet Tarihi
Yüksek Lisans	Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi	Devam Ediyor
Lisans	Ankara Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi	2021
Lise	Özel İzmir Anadolu Lisesi	2016

İş Deneyimi

Yıl	Yer	Görev
2023	Öveçler Sınav Koleji	İngilizce Öğretmeni
2022	Ecole Jean de La Mennais	İngilizce Asistanı
2022	Lokman Hekim Üniversitesi	İngilizce Okutman

Yabancı Dil

İngilizce



