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“WHEN ONE WRITES ONE SHOULD FORGET ALL RULES”

A Study of *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac as the Literary Product of Collaborative Authorship

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1. INTRODUCTION

“I FIRST met Dean not long after my wife and I split up. I had just gotten over a serious illness that I won’t bother to talk about, except that it had something to do with the miserably weary split-up and my feeling that everything was dead. With the coming of Dean Moriarty began the part of my life you could call my life on the road” (Kerouac 7).

Helen McNeill defines *On the Road* as “a love story [...] between two men, both of them meanwhile being in love with the womanly body of America” (188). Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty’s portrayed friendship, as McNeill insinuates, has an ambiguous character to it. Their friendship is not solely based on mutual affection; it is defined by adoration for the other and even a mutual urge to exploit the other’s talent and wisdom. Dean, “a young jailkid all hung-up on the wonderful possibilities of becoming a real intellectual”, needs Sal to teach him how to write (Kerouac 9). Sal, too, needs Dean in order to vicariously experience what it feels like to live in the moment and to pursue “IT” (Kerouac 194). As one of the most famous quotes in *On the Road* demonstrates, Sal desperately wants to live a life like Dean’s:

I shambled after as I’ve been doing all my life after people who interest me, because the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centrelight pop and everybody goes ‘Awww!’ (Kerouac 11).

Sal and Deans friendship is simultaneously based on admiration, adoration, influence and mutual exploitation.

Continuing McNeill’s thought, I would like to argue that the theme of profound friendship and especially the theme of influence is not only reflected on a thematic level in the novel but also prevails in the genealogy of *On the Road*. Two years before Kerouac started working on

his first version of *On the Road*, the “Ray Smith Novel of Fall 1948”, he befriended Neal Cassady, a “tremendously vital – if somewhat wild [...] hipster” (Nicosia 146). Kerouac and Cassady wrote each other letters in which they, much like Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty, gave each other advice on how to write and how to pursue life. It was their camaraderie, their many road trips together and their profound literary advice to each other in the form of letters that shaped the manuscript history of *On the Road*. Cassady’s continuous encouragement to abolish the distinction between writing and talking is what inspired Kerouac to “think and then write rather than, think what to write about and what to say as you write” (Moore 28).

Just like Sal’s life on the road began with the coming of Dean Moriarty, Kerouac’s road story commenced with Cassady’s infamous “Joan Anderson Letter”. Kerouac had been trying to get his road story on paper for three years when in December 1950, he received a long letter from Cassady. “Cassady’s long, fast and sexually frank and detailed first-person story” inspired Kerouac to write his road novel in a conversational register freed from the artificiality of fiction and to write it down as fast as he could (Cunnell 21). Even though Cassady was a major influence on the genealogy of Kerouac’s road novel, *On the Road* was not solely influenced by Cassady’s voice alone. The manuscript history of Kerouac’s second novel was embedded in the post-war American socio-political context as well as in the pre-existing literary tradition. *On the Road* is the echo of multiple authorial voices, the result of an engaging dialogue between Kerouac and his environment, the collaboration between multiple authorial functions that helped to shape the genesis of the novel. In this dissertation I argue that *On the Road* can be analyzed as the literary product of collaborative authorship.

I begin this dissertation with a discussion of the ambiguous status of the Beats. This first chapter will serve to situate the Beat culture and its riotous literature in their appropriate social and literary contexts as well as define and demarcate the ambiguous nature of Beat authorship. While the Beat writers’ heroic appeal as individual masterminds seems to call for a distinct concept of the author as solitary genius, the ambiguity surrounding their creative process brings this concept into question.

Chapter two is centered on the pivotal question of how to approach collaborative authorship. In order to define collaborative authorship, I must first define the concept of the author. I will begin this second chapter with a brief outline of the history of authorship in which I will discuss and compare four distinct periods: the author in ancient Greece, the medieval author, the Renaissance author and the Romantic author (Bennett 30; 55). This historical overview

will provide a better understanding of the concept of the author and serves to illustrate that collaborative authorship far predates the Romantic idea of the author as the embodiment of literary individuality.

In the second part of this second chapter I will approach collaborative authorship from two different viewpoints, namely a philosophical viewpoint and a systematic or methodical viewpoint. Each approach will generate a different reading of *On the Road* as the product of collaborative authorship. I will start off the discussion of the philosophical viewpoint on collaborative authorship with an analysis of Roland Barthes's essay "The Death of the Author" (1967) and Michel Foucault's "What Is an Author?" (1969). Barthes and Foucault were the first philosophers and literary critics who critically questioned the concept of the author and who actively reacted against the Romantic idea of the author as solitary genius. I have chosen to discuss the work of Barthes and Foucault because, even though their essays were written in the late 1960s, their theories are still relevant for the contemporary authorship debate of the 21st century and as Biriotti remarks: "Although new theoretical positions have emerged in the last few years which avoid a return to the old humanist conception of the Author, little has been published since 1969 that deals with authorship directly" (2).

Barthes and Foucault argue that a literary text is never solely the result of the author's psyche, a text is always the product of a multifaceted manifestation of the context in which the literary text was produced. In the light of Barthes's and Foucault's poststructuralist theories, collaborative authorship can be defined as the act of creating a literary work in dialogue with the literary and non-literary contexts in which the genesis of that literary work is immersed. *On the Road* is both a work of fiction and an autobiography. Kerouac consciously created an ambiguous continuum between his art and his life. His life can be seen as an extension of his art and his art can be analyzed as a reflection of his life and of the literary and non-literary contexts that influenced his life. I will thus examine in how far *On the Road* can be analyzed as a dialogue between Kerouac and the contexts in which the genealogy of *On the Road* was immersed.

For the second approach or the methodical viewpoint on collaborative authorship, I will discuss Harold Love's contribution to attribution studies. In his book *Attributing Authorship* (2002), Love defines collaborative authorship as "a set of linked activities (*authemes*) which are sometimes performed by a single person but will often be performed collaboratively or by several persons in succession" (Love 39). With the help of attribution studies I will try to

uncover the genealogy of *On the Road* and examine which authorial functions collaborated in the creation of Kerouac's second novel. In my analysis I make a distinction between *On the Road: The Original Scroll* or the 1951 edition and the 1957 edition of *On the Road* because these are two different versions in the genealogy of Kerouac's road novel. The former is the product of Kerouac's long brooding idea of writing a road novel that finally took concrete shape during the years of letter writing to and from Neal Cassady and can thus be analyzed as a literary product of collaborative authorship between Kerouac and Cassady. The 1957 edition, however, cannot be analyzed as directly influenced by the letters of Kerouac and Cassady sent each other because their letter correspondence diminished as soon as *The Scroll* was written in 1951. When Harcourt, Brace, Kerouac's previous publisher, rejected the scroll, Kerouac sent his manuscript to multiple other publishing houses. Malcolm Cowley, editor at Viking, read the manuscript of *On the Road* in 1953 but it took him four years and multiple revisions to convince Viking to publish Kerouac's work. I will examine in how far editing can be seen as a form of collaborative authorship and thus in how far the 1957 edition, which was heavily edited compared to the 1951 edition of Kerouac's novel, can be analyzed as a literary collaboration between Kerouac and Malcolm Cowley.

2. BEAT AMBIGUITY

2.1 THE FIRST SELF-CONSCIOUS LITERARY ICONS

On the Road and its author have held many readers in their grip. Kerouac was, together with William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg, part of “the triumvirate of principal male Beat writers” (R.C. Johnson 22). As a member of the Beat Generation, Kerouac was known as “a pop-culture icon that represents youth movements, quests of the spirit, and satiation of the senses with fast cars, jazz, drugs, and the pursuit of kicks” (Theado, “Understanding” 1). The Beats became “the first self-conscious literary icons, products of a new advertising- and consumer based society” (Grassian 9). Kerouac’s status as a writer became overshadowed by the image that the media created for him. As Theado points out, “The Beat generation of writers sought literary achievement, but contemporary fashion, entertainment, and opinion columnists granted them much more notice than did literary critics” (“Literary Criticism” 747). According to Theado, it was only since the first Beat Generation conference at the Naropa Institute in 1982 that scholars, critics and readers have started to liberate the Beats’ literature from its “accumulated cultural debris” and appreciate their work for its non-apologetic and non-conformist literary achievements instead of its pop-culture status (Theado, “Understanding” 1).

Even though the literary value of Beat writing has been acknowledged, the Beats and especially Kerouac still have an ambiguous status. “In the thirty years following Kerouac’s death, more than a dozen biographers have covered his life, replacing the popular press’s snapshots with deeply researched tomes that depict a serious and dedicated writer at work” (Theado, “Literary Criticism” 747). Works like *Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac* (1983) by Gerald Nicosia, *Naked Angels: The Lives and Literature of the Beat Generation* (1986) by John Tytell, *Beat Generation Writers* (1996) by A. Robert Lee, *Reconstructing the Beats* (2004) by Jennie Skerl and many more sources of secondary literature have shone a more profound light on the figure of Jack Kerouac and the Beat Generation and have tried to capture and contextualize the ambiguous character of the Beat culture and its riotous literature.

2.2 BEAT

“Instead of art functioning as a refuge from life as it did for the Modernists, art for the Beats served as an arena in which to record or contemplate transcendental life experiences” (Grassian 9). By consciously obscuring the line between art and reality, the Beats created an ambiguous continuum in which life became art and art became life. Not only did the Beats adopt an ambiguous artistic ideology, they also purposely portrayed themselves as ambiguous personalities in the media and especially in interviews.

A first prominent illustration of the ambiguous character of the Beat Generation is the definite meaning of the term ‘beat’.

2.2.1 POSTWAR EXHAUSTION

According to the *Collins English Dictionary* the adjective ‘beat’ was used as slang for ‘totally exhausted’ (“Beat”). Kerouac used this meaning of the term ‘beat’ to refer to an American post-war generation that was herded into mass consumption and blindly accepted the “demeaning changes in the American idea of self-determination” (Tytell 4). After World War II, America was consumed by “[t]he hysteria of rabid anticommunism” (Tytell 6). “[T]he patriotic blood-boiling became a convenient veil assuring a continued blindness to domestic social conditions that desperately needed attention” (Tytell 6). The American government used the Cold War as an excuse for implicit anticommunist propaganda and bureaucratic secrecy. The average American was scared into coloring inside the lines. Postwar prosperity, partly due to mass consumption, lured the middle class into a suburban lifestyle of social conformity. Consuming was the norm, questioning the authorities was the exception. Social and emotional conservatism prevailed during the years following the Second World War. Kerouac and his fellow Beat Generation members can be defined, in the light of postwar America, as “a crystallization of a sweeping discontent with American ‘virtues’ of progress and power” (Tytell 4). The Beats were rebellious in the sense that they made self-expression and self-exposure, two highly oppressed traits during the postwar American era, the focal point of their literary work. “In the fifties, when the voice of personality seemed so endangered by an anonymity of sameness, the Beats discovered a natural counter for the

silence of the day in a new sense of self, a renaissance of the romantic impulse to combat unbelievably superior forces” (Tytell 16). They “crashed through the restraining mask of the removed artist” and freed poetry from its “ivory-tower entrapment” (Tytell 16; Theado, “Literary Criticism” 749). ‘Beat’ thus simultaneously refers to a generation that is worn down by bureaucratic secrecy and anonymous consumerism and to the literary battle cry of a non-conformist counterculture that wanted to rid the postwar American era of its depletion of self-expression.

2.2.2 SUPREME BLESSEDNESS

Kerouac altered the original meaning of the word ‘beat’ when he was asked to explain the origin behind the term ‘Beat Generation’ by Fernand Seguin in an interview for Radio-Canada in 1967. Kerouac explained that he visited the church of Saint-Jeanne-d’Arc when the meaning of ‘beat’ in the sense of ‘beatitude’ or ‘supreme blessedness or happiness’ struck him (Seguin 273). Kerouac was a devout Catholic who believed that his peers were not only so bold as to fully express themselves; they also embodied a secret holiness in doing so.

2.2.3 BEBOP BEAT

In the same interview Kerouac even hinted at a third meaning of the word ‘beat’ by comparing it to the beat of a jazz band (Seguin 273). Bebop was a particular type of jazz that innovated the New York jazz scene of the 1940’s and 50’s with its complex rhythms and its emphasis on improvisation and virtuosity (Deveaux 27). Holmes described in his novel *Go* (1952) the affinity the Beats had with jazz music:

In this modern jazz, they heard something rebel and nameless that spoke for them, and their lives knew a gospel for the first time. It was more than a music; it became an attitude toward life, a way of walking, a language and a costume; and these introverted kids (emotional outcasts of a war they had been too young to join, or in which they

had lost their innocence), who had never belonged anywhere before, now felt somewhere at last (161).

Although the etymology of the term 'beat' refers to 'totally exhausted' or 'defeated' and was used by the Beat Generation as a call to arms to withstand the deceitful prosperity of postwar America, the term also reflected the Beat Generation's affinity with New York City's jazz scene and even hints at Kerouac's religious search for supreme happiness.

2.3 THE INITIAL CONJUNCTION

A second example of the ambiguous character of the Beat Generation deals with the history of when and how Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs, the three main members of "the initial conjunction of Beat writers" met (Tytell 61). Kerouac might have even purposefully contributed to the ambiguity surrounding the Beat writers when he told a rather equivocal story about his first encounter with Ginsberg and Burroughs. In an interview with the poet Ted Berrigan for the *Paris Review* in 1968, Berrigan asked Kerouac how he met Ginsberg (131). Kerouac began his anecdote by telling Berrigan that he met Claude, also known as Lucien Carr, before he met Ginsberg:

Claude came in through the fire escape... There were gunshots down in the alley – Pow! Pow! – and it was raining, and my wife says, Here comes Claude. And here comes this blonde guy through the fire escape, all wet. I said, What's this all about, What the hell is this? He says, They're chasing me. Next day in walks Allen Ginsberg carrying books. Sixteen years old with his ears sticking out. He says, Well discretion is the better part of valor! I said, Aw shutup. You little twitch. Then the next day here comes Burroughs wearing a seersucker suit, followed by the other guy (Berrigan 131).

Kerouac made it seem as if he met Carr, Ginsberg and Burroughs in three consecutive days. Gerald Nicosia's biography *Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac*, however, discards Kerouac's story from its fast pace narration. Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs met

each other through Lucien Carr, a freshman student at Columbia University (Nicosia 114). Kerouac met Carr in 1943 through Edie Parker, Kerouac's girlfriend at the time (Nicosia 114). Ginsberg met Carr when he heard Brahm's Trio No. 1 playing in the Union Theological Seminary hallway and knocked on Carr's door to see who his "cultivated neighbor" was (Nicosia 116). Days later Ginsberg entered Kerouac's New York apartment looking for the "romantic seaman who writes poem books" that Carr told him so much about (Nicosia 115). Kerouac met Burroughs, a friend of Carr as well, shortly before he met Ginsberg when Burroughs came to ask Kerouac for advice about being accepted into the merchant marine (Nicosia 118; J. Johnson 160). The fact that Kerouac consciously deformed the story so it would measure up to his fast paced and bebop inspired literary prose, confirms the fact that life and art were part of the same ambiguous continuum for the Beats. It is almost as if Kerouac deformed the story intentionally so as to maintain his ambiguous aura.

2.4 BEAT INFLUENCE

2.4.1 ABSENCE OF SHARED PLATFORM

Notwithstanding the fact that the Beat Generation "lacked any shared platform such as the Imagist or Surrealist manifestoes, it cohered as a literary group" (Tytell 3). "Beginning in despair, the Beat vision was elevated through the shocks of experience to a realization of what was most perilous about American life" (Tytell 4). Even though the Beat Generation members shared references to drugs, criminality and mental institutions to counterbalance the American ideal of ignorant suburban consumerism, they all developed very individual and distinct literary techniques to go against the grain and disobey the postwar American virtues reflected in the American literary tradition.

Allen Ginsberg's most famous work "Howl" (1956) and its "long, rushing lines", for example, conveys a persuading urge to bring attention to "a definition of sanity that defied the expectations of their time" and to homosexuality which was believed to be "criminal perversion" (Simpson 21; Tytell 10). Ginsberg mimicked the speech of a mentally unstable person by using repetition and syntactical parallelisms (Jackson 311). By assimilating the

speech of a psychiatric patient, Ginsberg drew attention to the outskirts of society and stressed the need for self-exposure instead of self-depletion.

Whereas “Howl” is known for its “Whitmanian long lines”, *Naked Lunch* (1959) is characterized by its non-linear narration (Jackson 310). Burroughs’s distinct non-linear writing style can be analyzed as a direct reflection of his literary philosophy. “The word [...] cannot be expressed direct... It can perhaps be indicated by mosaic of juxtaposition like articles abandoned in a hotel drawer, defined by negatives and absence ...” (Burroughs qtd. in Murphy 85). *Naked Lunch* “presents the reader with an apparently random sequence or mosaic of juxtaposed scenes [...] that forms a fantastic panorama of coercion, distortion, and betrayal” (Murphy 85). This collage of discordant scenes can be interpreted as “a series of drug- and withdrawal-induced hallucinations that pass through Lee’s mind, presented through a kind of radically disjunct stream-of-consciousness technique in which the subjective perspective is often distorted beyond easy recognition” (Murphy 85). *Naked Lunch* is, according to Murphy, the “formal and thematic counter-balance to the spontaneous, bebop-influenced romanticism of Kerouac’s novels” (86).

Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* (1957) is the embodiment of Kerouac’s commitment to “the original impulses of his imagination” (Tytell 4). “In his fiction Kerouac was not only resisting the ways a capitalistic society, based increasingly on consumption and conformity, threatened to erase the individual [...], but he was also responding to the impact of mass media – film, radio, recordings- not just as content but as new media in competition with writing” (Hunt, “Blow” 49). Spontaneous prose, a writing method Kerouac first experimented with in *On the Road: The Original Scroll* (1951), was the literary product of Kerouac’s hypersensitivity to speaking and writing as “competing modes of language” (Hunt, “Blow” 49). Kerouac recognized that literature could no longer be kept in its “ivory-tower entrapment” (Theado, “Literary Criticism” 749). He acknowledged the fact that “[t]he impact of new textual media could not be evaded by privileging established norms of the literary (whatever the *Paris* and *Partisan Review* crowds might believe)” (Hunt, “Blow” 49). By merging the art of writing with the act of speaking in spontaneous prose, Kerouac demolished the distinction between high and low art. Even though Ginsberg’s, Burroughs’s and Kerouac’s work all deals with “the bowels and entrails of the city”, they have all developed individual literary techniques to go against the literary grain (Tytell 4). Whereas Ginsberg is most famous for his long lines of verse, Burroughs is known for his non-linear narratives and Kerouac is renowned for his spontaneous prose novels.

2.4.2 BEAT COLLABORATIONS

Although Ginsberg, Burroughs and Kerouac developed their own distinct literary voice, they nevertheless influenced each other greatly. Ginsberg's "Howl", for example, was the literary product of Kenneth Rexroth and Jack Kerouac's criticism. Ginsberg had sent a copy of "Record of a Dream-Vision Night 8 June, 1955" to American poet and critic Kenneth Rexroth (Miles 186). Rexroth thought his work was too formal and Ginsberg, taking Rexroth's critique to heart, tried to let his imagination go, open secrecy and write from his real mind (Miles 187). "He began to write about his life, again using William Carlos Williams's triadic verse form, only with the lines extended out to his own breath length – each line a single breath, like blowing an extended cadenza on a saxophone" (Miles 187). After finishing a first version of "Howl", Ginsberg sent Kerouac a copy but "Jack, instead of recognizing the great breakthrough that the poem represented for Allen, responded on August 19 to say that 'Howl for Carl Solomon' was very powerful, but that he wanted 'spontaneity or nothing'" (Miles 191). "Kerouac did not like the x-ing out in the poem and wanted Allen to stick to his first thoughts, not make corrections as he worked" (Miles 191).

Even Burroughs's novel *Naked Lunch* was a collaborative project. In the interview with Ted Berrigan for the *Paris Review*, Kerouac admits that he typed up the first two chapters of the *Naked Lunch* manuscript (Berrigan 114 – 115). Allen Ginsberg and Alan Ansen worked on Burroughs's manuscript too (Berrigan 115).

Kerouac seemed to be the one who always influenced his fellow Beat members but some of his literary work has, despite Kerouac claiming otherwise, also been influenced by members of the Beat circle. In the same *Paris Review* interview, Berrigan asks Kerouac if he believes in collaborations and if he has ever collaborated with another artist (116). Kerouac mockingly answers the question by saying that he did a couple of collaborations with Bill Cannastra in bed (Berrigan 116). A couple of interview question earlier, however, Kerouac admitted that the idea for writing *On the Road* in spontaneous prose was inspired by a letter that Neal Cassady wrote him (Berrigan 108). On December 17, 1950 Cassady wrote Kerouac a long letter, a letter that Kerouac would later refer to as the "Joan Anderson Letter" (Moore 244). The letter was written on a Benzedrine-fueled frenzy and consists of a deeply confessional and compelling prose (J. Johnson 382). The notorious letter deals with the affairs Cassady had

with Joan Anderson and Cherry Mary in his late teenage years (J. Johnson 382). Kerouac thought Cassady's letter "ranked among the best things ever written in America" (Charters, "Selected Letters" 242.) He even compared the letter to the works of Joyce, Céline, Dostoevsky and Proust (Charters, "Selected Letters" 242). The day after Kerouac received the "Joan Anderson Letter" he tried to write Cassady a confessional letter back (Charters, "Selected Letters" 246). "This attempt to 'proceed into the actual truth' of his life for Cassady was the foundation for all of Kerouac's subsequent books, beginning with the successful completion of *On the Road* three months later" (Charters, "Selected Letters" 246). Even though Kerouac answered Berrigan's question about literary collaborations very ambiguously, *On the Road* can be analyzed as the literary result of collaborative authorship since Neal Cassady's letters were of major importance to the genealogy of *On the Road*. Kerouac and his fellow Beat members' heroic appeal as individual geniuses does not tally with their ambiguous attitude towards authorship. The Beats claim to be literary individuals but their literary work can often be analyzed as an extension of the literary guidance and encouragement they provided for each other.

In the following chapter, I will take a closer look at how the concept of the author changed throughout history. This historical overview will serve to elucidate the fact that the author has not always been a solitary genius. The collaborative character of Beat authorship is thus more a normality than it is an exception.

3. ON THE ROAD TO COLLABORATION

3.1 COLLABORATIVE AUTHORSHIP AS A SERIES OF VOICES

3.1.1 HISTORY OF AUTHORSHIP

Even though the Romantic perception of the author as the sole originator of a written work is the predominant conception in modern authorship studies, the author was not always considered a sole individual. Bennett states that the question “who was the first author?” is a futile question because it is “itself immersed in what we might call an authorcentric or *auteurist* ideology, in an unreflecting and perhaps superficial sense that literary culture is invariably based around isolated individuals, around the solitary figure of the genius” (30). Before the Romantic period, questioning the solitariness of the author would have been preposterous and superfluous since authorship was not perceived as an individual creative act but as a continuous tradition of collective influence.

In his study *The Author* (2005), Bennett focuses on four critical periods in literary history: the author in ancient Greece, the author in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance author and the Romantic author (30; 55). The first period in authorship history is defined by the “Homeric question” and the endless quest for who is/are the author/authors of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (Bennett 32). According to Lord, “conventional ways of addressing the question of Homer involved anachronistic ways of thinking about the ‘authorship’ of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (qtd. in Bennett 32). “Homer should be seen as both an individual *and* as a certain oral tradition” (Lord qtd. in Bennett 32). The singer had the binary task of creating a poem and reciting it to an audience (Bennett 32 – 33):

Any oral epic poem is radically unique in a way that is different from the singularity that we might ascribe to a written or memorized text since the oral epic is only ever heard one time, in its single performance. But at the same time any oral epic is also a

‘repetition’ of countless earlier performances: it is a singular event but one that can, however, be repeated by different singers across the centuries (Bennett 33)

An epic poem is thus simultaneously a unique creation and a reiteration of previous performances, which makes the singer both “an individual and part of tradition” (Bennett 33). “[H]is song is both *a* song and *the* song” (Bennett 33). Bennett argues that “in the oral epic tradition, there is no origin, since the ‘origin’ just is the multiple rehearsals of a song” (33). Each performer of the same oral epic can thus be seen as its co-author, “developing and changing the song in his or her own ways” (34). The ‘original’ author might have been a retrospectively constructed concept and is therefore “a back-formation [created] through the performers’ own differentiation of themselves from the imagined originator of the song” (Nagy qtd. in Bennett 34). “The archetypal poet” is the product of “*authorization*” or “a process of retrospective figuration within and by the tradition” (Bennett 34). Authorship in the ancient Greek period can thus be defined as an act of collaborative authorship whereby each individual singer contributes to the conservation of the tradition by reworking and enhancing already existing texts.

Medieval authorship consisted of keeping the manuscript culture operative. According to Franciscan monk St Bonaventure there were four different ways of making a book in the Middle Ages (Burrow 31). First, the *scriptor*, *scribe* or *copyist* simply copies the original manuscript without adding or changing anything (Burrow 31). Second, a *compiler* puts together passages from different yet already existing texts that are not his own (Burrow 31). Third, a *commentator* adds his own commentary to the words of already existing texts of others (Burrow 31). The fourth and last way to make a book is when an *auctor* both writes his own words and others’ but prioritizes his own words and uses those of others only for validating purposes (Burrow 31). It is noteworthy however that, in contrast to the modern approach to authorship, the medieval viewpoint on authorship did not privilege the last method of making a book (Burrow 31). Even though the function of the *auctor* does not seem to be of greater importance than that of the *scribe*, *compiler* or *commentator*, the *auctor* did however have a privileged position over the other above-mentioned functions as authority belonged to the *auctor* (Bennett 39). It was the *auctor*’s duty to heighten “the knowledge and wisdom of humanity” (Burrow 34). “[T]he medieval author, the *auctor*, [...] seems to have a highly specialized, highly privileged identity, allied as it is to the question of authority and

ultimately to God's authority itself" (Bennett 39). Even though the *auctor* had, in comparison to the *scriptor*, *compiler* and *commentator*, a privileged position in the medieval literary field, he did not have the authorial power and independence of the Romantic author.

Contrary to the modern author, the medieval *auctor* published his work anonymously (Bennett 40). "The medieval sense of authorship [...] involves fundamental differences from the modern sense of authors as individuals, as expressing subjective truths, as having particular 'styles' or 'voices' – even as having names" (Bennett 41). This medieval sense of authorship can actually be repudiated because more and more authors articulated their individual voices and fought to be recognized as authors. In order to be recognized as an "*auctores*", "one's identification as an author involved both self-assertion and a submission to the tradition" (Bennett 41). Even though authors tried to discard themselves from the anonymous literary tradition, the manuscript culture was not author-centered and not regularized:

In the system of manuscript transmission, it was normal for lyrics to elicit revisions, corrections, supplements, and answers, for they were part of an ongoing social discourse. In this environment texts were inherently malleable, escaping authorial control to enter a social world in which recipients both consciously and unconsciously altered what they received (Marotti 135).

Authorship in the Middle Ages can thus be analyzed as collaborative because, similar to authorship in the ancient Greek period, the author's function is to contribute to the manuscript culture by copying and reworking texts from their predecessors in order to preserve the literary tradition.

The possibility of regularizing published works became more tangible when the movable type was invented in the late fifteenth century (Bennett 44). This improvement in print culture evidently gave rise to a new sense of authorship as "[t]he new forms of authorship and literary property-rights undermined older concepts of collective authority" (Eisenstein 122). "The wish to see one's work in print (fixed forever with one's name in card files and anthologies) is different from the desire to pen lines that could never get fixed in a permanent form, might be lost forever, altered by copying, or – if truly memorable – be carried by oral transmission and

assigned ultimately to ‘anon’” (Eisenstein 121). With this new sense of authorship comes a new perception on originality. “Its old meaning was ‘closest to divine inspiration; closest to the fount, to the well-spring, to the original, or to the source.’ [...] The modern meaning is quite different. As every art-critic knows, to be original is to break with precedent, to depart from tradition” (Eisenstein 192). Not only did the attitude towards authorship and originality change due to the invention of movable type, the print culture even helped to manifest the predominant idea of the solitary genius.

Despite the burgeoning Romantic idea of the author as the sole creator of a unique work during the early modern period, “the modern sense of authorship [...] [is] firmly wedded to questions not only of technology but also of economics” (Bennett 48). The introduction of the early modern printing press did not automatically signify the end of the manuscript culture. Both print and manuscript culture existed along side each other. This led to “the collision between manuscript and print practices on the one hand, and between aristocratic amateurism and the marketplace on the other” (Wall 3). “The development of a market for printed books [...] was inhibited by an aristocratic, courtly disdain for the professionalization of writing, and a prejudice against publication in print on account of its perceived propensity to undermine the fragile class boundary between the aristocracy and the lower gentry” (Bennett 46). “Because gentlemanly amateurism was a vital part of court culture, writers from many social spheres, even those eager to publish, found it expedient to endorse the idea that publication made one common and vulgar” (Wall x). “The courtier gained his prestige and his wealth from his position in court and the attempt to earn either wealth or position from publication was seen as both unnecessary and a disreputable degradation of one’s aristocratic status, or of one’s aspirations to such status” (Bennett 47). The artistic freedom of the Renaissance author who operated in court culture, however, was severely curtailed by the demands of the patron due to the fact that “poets and other sponsored writers were required to compose material reflecting and promoting their patrons’ interests, or were specifically commissioned to create and undertake work for particular purposes” (Finkelstein and McCleery 73).

The Renaissance period was defined by a “stigma of print” (Wall x). Writers who did choose to print their work “could not govern the way in which texts were read, circulated, or classified” since copyright did not yet exist (Wall x). Authors who did print their texts had considerably “less social authority” (Wall 8). It was difficult for writers in the Renaissance period to distinguish themselves as authors in the modern sense of the word “because of the

prestige attached to poetic amateurism, the vitality of the institution of patronage [and] the court's curb on channels of ambition" (Wall 13):

So long as it is not economically viable for an individual to make his or her living from writing, rather than from patronage, a modern sense of authorship remains dormant or only partly articulated within the dominant culture. It is only with a reduction in the prestige, status and financial and political power of the court, a reduction that goes along with the growth of the mercantile classes and the increasing financial opportunities made available by print technology, that the profession of authorship, that authorship as a profession, can emerge (Bennett 48).

Wall argues that "there were no Renaissance authors at all, at least in the modern sense of the word" (x). Despite the burgeoning print culture, Renaissance authors were not considered to be individual creators. They were dependent on the patronage system. Renaissance authorship can thus be perceived as a collaboration between the author and his patron.

It was not until the social and economic settings in the seventeenth and eighteenth century changed that modern authorship had a chance at survival (Bennett 49). It was only when the stigma had been removed from the print culture and people were actually buying printed books that the idea of the modern author or the "individual dedicated to writing and dependent on writing either for a living or for a sense of identity, the author as autonomous and as independent of patronage and ultimately of society itself" had been established (Bennett 50). This crucial moment in the history of authorship was the first step toward authorial independency.

This new sense of authorship did, however, bring about a "commercial paradox" (Bennett 52). "Just at the time that authorship becomes financially and legally viable, an 'aesthetic ideology' of the transcendent and autonomous artistic work and of the author as guarantor of the originality and autonomy of that work comes into play" (Bennett 52). Books that were commercially worthwhile were perceived as aesthetically weak (Bennett 52). But paradoxically enough, it was "this mystificatory sense of the author as above and beyond commercial considerations that makes his work economically or commercially viable" (Bennett 53):

Before, the author's subjection to obligations created by client relations and patronage ties was accompanied by a radical incommensurability between literary works and economic transactions. After the mid-century the situation was reversed when a possible and necessary monetary appreciation of literary compositions, remunerated as labour and subject to the laws of the market, was founded on an ideology of creative and disinterested genius that guaranteed the originality of the work (Chartier 38).

According to Burke, "the crucial historical change in conceptions of authorship did not occur in the theoretical upheaval of the last thirty years but with the romantic revolution and the eighteenth century philosophical and aesthetic discourses upon which it drew" ("Authorship" xix). "The eighteenth-century philosophical, commercial and political emphasis on individuality, with its ideology of possessive individualism and its special privileging of authorial autonomy, is bound up with a transformation in the value of the idea of originality" (Bennett 58). This new idea of originality can be linked to a new perception of individuality. According to R. Williams, "[t]he emergence of notions of individuality [...] can be related to the break-up of the medieval social, economic and religious order" (163). Before the rise of Romanticism, the value of a person's existence was always measured to his "function in a rigid hierarchical society" (R. Williams 163). In the Romantic era, a person had to define his own existence by dissociating himself from his hierarchical position in society, by being authentic, by being original.

Originality became a "term for praise of art and literature" (R. Williams 230). "A work was good not by comparison with other, or by a standard but 'in its own terms'" (R. Williams 231). "In the Romantic period [...], this notion of originality develops into the mantra of a poet being ahead of his time, into the idea that the true poet, the genius, is original to such an extent that he will necessarily be neglected in his own time and only fully appreciated in the future, after his death" (Bennett 59). By associating authorship with originality, the figure of the author loses all its ties with the ancient singer, the medieval *scriptor* and the Renaissance writer. Before Romanticism, the author operated in the existing literary tradition. The Romantic author, however, purposefully dissociates himself from that tradition by creating literature that is not originated in the existing literary tradition. The Romantic author can thus be defined as "fully intentional, fully sentient source of the literary text, as authority for and

limitation on the ‘proliferating’ meanings of the text” (Bennett 55). The Romantic genius’s work can thus, contrary to the work of the ancient singer, the medieval author and the Renaissance author, not be seen as a form of collaborative authorship since the Romantic author’s work is not created in dialogue with the literary tradition but is the exclusive product of his individual brilliance.

3.1.2 ROLAND BARTHES – “THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR”

According to Bennett, “Literary theory [...] is largely a question of author theory” (4). Even though the author seems to be at the center of literary theory, it is only in the twentieth-century that the concept of the author and authority has been thoroughly questioned and critically studied. It was only when Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault challenged the concept of the author that literary theory ceased to take the Romantic ideal of the author as solitary genius for granted.

Barthes and Foucault’s poststructuralist theories are to be understood in the light of structuralism, a philosophy that claims that “phenomena of human life are not intelligible except through their interrelations” which “constitute a structure” (“structuralism”). Whereas structuralists only studies the underlying structures of a text, poststructuralists believe that both the text and the historical context in which this text was embedded should be studied.

One of the [...] theoretical paths leading to the announcement of the death of the author travels along the familiar circuit by which the work of the Russian Formalists passes through Czech and French structuralism to culminate in the poststructuralism practiced by Barthes [and] Foucault [...] in the 1960s. Along this route, the Formalist’s reduction of the author in the interest of establishing a science of literature and language is seen to flow virtually undisturbed into the modern theory of literature (Burke, “Death and Return” 10).

This theoretical path, however, did not take the importance of phenomenology in French thought during the 1950s into account (Burke, “Death and Return” 10). Barthes and Foucault,

whose intellectual careers had just begun, were highly influenced by phenomenology (Burke, “Death and Return” 10). Phenomenologists study “the structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view” (“phenomenology”). Because these structures of consciousness are partly embedded in a cultural context, phenomenology is thus also the study of the context that partly generates these structures of consciousness.

When phenomenology met structuralism, however, “an iconoclastic and far-ranging form of antisubjectivism” arose (Burke, “Death and Return” 14). Eliminating the author from the literary text was not an option for Barthes and Foucault. “A phenomenological training had taught them that the subject was too powerful, too sophisticated a subject to be simply bracketed; rather subjectivity was something to be annihilated” (Burke, “Death and Return” 14). By shifting the focus from subjectivity to the subject, Barthes and Foucault marry the philosophies of phenomenology and structuralism. The Romantic solitary genius’s subjectivity no longer reigns over the interpretative boundaries of a text. Instead, the author is reduced to an element which is related to the literary text which is, in itself, part of a larger context.

In 1967 Barthes declared the author dead in his essay “The Death of the Author”. Barthes’s essay was first published in an American magazine called *Aspen* (Burke, “Death and Return” 211). The issue in which “The Death of the Author” was published revolved around contributions from members of the French and American avant-gardes who discussed the theme of closing the gap between highbrow and lowbrow culture (Burke, “Death and Return” 211). “Barthes’s essay thus fitted into this general format in announcing the end of the elite figure of the author and proposing in its stead a textually anonymity free from traditional hierarchies” (Burke, “Death and Return” 211). According to Burke, Barthes’s essay can be called “the single most influential meditation on the question of authorship in modern times” (“Death and Return” 19). Even though “The Death of the Author” was often thought of as Barthes “reading the last rites over the corpse of the idea of the author”, the essay has, on the contrary, ensured the rebirth of the author (Bennet 10). As Burke points out, “Roland Barthes [...] does not so much destroy the ‘Author-God’, but participates in its construction” (“Death and Return” 26). In order for there to be an author to dethrone, there must be an author in the first place. As much as Barthes advocates for the complete abnegation of the author, “[o]ne must, at base, be deeply *auteurist* to call for the Death of the Author” (Burke, “Death and Return” 27).

In “The Death of the Author” Barthes equates writing with “the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin” (125). The act of writing creates, according to Barthes, “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” (125). Barthes claims that “[a]s soon as a fact is *narrated* no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins” (125). By declaring the author dead, Barthes erases all subjectivity from a text. The subjective authorial voice is bracketed, the text is freed from its subjective and delimiting interpretation or reading and a blank canvas is created in which multiple unrestricted authorial voices are speaking and thus multiple interpretations are possible. Banning the absolute authorial voice results in giving a voice to multiple authorial voices.

The crucial distinction that Barthes makes between a narration that acts directly on reality and an intransitive narration evokes two specific types of writers, namely the author and the *scriptor* (Barthes 127). “The author is thought to *nourish* the book, which is to say that he exist before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child” (Barthes 127). Whereas the author’s existence is prior to the creation of a literary work, the *scriptor* “is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written *here and now*” (Barthes 127). Writing thus becomes a performative act and “[r]ather than a controlling consciousness, the scriptor is an agent of language” (Barthes 128; Bennett 15).

Since a text solely originates in language, the text is consequently “a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (Barthes 128). “Such a model of textuality – textuality as intertextuality – eliminates the central, controlling power of authorial consciousness” (Bennett 16). Barthes declares that “[t]o give a text an author is to impose a limit on that text” (Barthes 128). When the hegemony of the author is removed from a literary text, the limits formerly enforced on that text are destroyed. The predominant idea that one author can only generate one meaning is hereby abolished because the interpretation of a literary work does not have to be sought in the author but in, according to Barthes, the intertextuality of that literary work, in language (128). Barthes relocates the interpretative magnitude from the person behind the text to the text itself which transforms the text into a soundboard for multiple authorial voices. In other words, the purpose of “The Death of the

Author” is thus to obliterate “the oppressive, controlling, authority-figure of the author” in order to free the reader of any imposed meanings, to divert the authority from the single authorial voice to a polyphony of authorial voices (Bennett 14). Barthes’s theory is an “*auteurist*” theory but instead of glorifying the absolute authorial voice, Barthes dethrones the author or “the demands [...] that an autonomous subject would exact from a textual environment” in order to give voice to a synergy of multiple authorial voices (Burke, “Death and Return” 27; Pease 271).

3.1.3 MICHEL FOUCAULT – “WHAT IS AN AUTHOR?”

Michel Foucault’s essay “What Is an author?” was an influential theoretical work that, together with Barthes’s essay, has continued to stir the academic world long after its publication in 1969. The essay can be analyzed as both a continuation of and an objection to Barthes’s essay “The Death of the Author”. Whereas Barthes proposes the question “Who is speaking thus?”, Foucault asks his reader “What does it *matter* who is speaking?” (Barthes 125; Foucault 115). “While Barthes asks who is speaking, and answers that nobody is speaking or that writing originates only in an infinitely dispersed textuality, Foucault emphasizes the significance of the question itself” (Bennett 19). Foucault’s question evokes a twofold answer: on the one hand it does in fact matter who is speaking because the author operates as an indicator for a literary text and as a function for the discourse used in that text. On the other hand it should not matter who is speaking since the subject’s subjectivity does not confine the interpretative boundaries of a text.

Even though Foucault never explicitly mentions Barthes or his essay, he positions himself in relation to Barthes’s claims. While Barthes dethrones the author, Foucault worries that “the consequences derived from the disappearance or death have [not] been fully explored or that the importance of this event has been appreciated” (117).

There are, according to Foucault, two themes “destined to replace the privileged position accorded the author [that] have merely served to arrest the possibility of genuine change” (118). A first theme is “the thesis concerning a work” (Foucault 118). Foucault contemplates “[w]hat is necessary to its composition, if a work is not something written by a person called an ‘author’” (118). What defines a literary work as a literary work if the ‘author’ is not a valid criterion? This crucial question evokes two other questions: how are the things that someone,

who is not an author, to be defined and if someone is called an author, is everything that particular person has written to be called his work? (Foucault 118). Foucault remarks that if we ignore the individuality of the author in order to focus on the intrinsic features of a work that we fail to recognize the “equally problematic nature of the word ‘work’ and the unity it designates” (119). The author thus has a defining function and cannot be banned from a text without denying the literary status of that text.

A second theme that confines us from fully realizing the death of the author is “the notion of *écriture*” or “the act of writing” (Foucault 119; Bouchard and Simon 119). This notion should “allow us not only to circumvent references to an author, but to situate his recent absence” (Foucault 119). Barthes’s intention to focus solely on the writing in and of itself, has led, according to Foucault, to the preservation of “the existence of the author” (119). The current conception of the notion of *écriture* has “transposed the empirical characteristics of an author to a transcendental anonymity” (120). Foucault worries that solely focusing on the act of writing has a reverse effect on the status of writing since “granting a primordial status to writing [...] [might] reinscribe in transcendental terms the theological affirmation of its sacred origin or a critical belief in its creative nature” (120). Solely focusing on the act of writing might thus in fact result in a rebirth of the cult of the author because “the disappearance of the author [...] is held in check by the transcendental” (Foucault 120). As mentioned above and as confirmed by Foucault, “Roland Barthes [...] does not so much destroy the ‘Author-God’, but participates in its construction” (Burke, “Death and Return” 26). Banning the author’s subjectivity from the literary text will, as Foucault anticipated, result in the rebirth of the author. But whereas Foucault worries that the rebirth of the author will result in the author’s subjectivity reigning over the interpretation of the text, it will, on the contrary, discard the absolute authorial voice in order to give voice to multiple authorial subjects present in the language of a literary text.

Foucault advocates for a reexamination of “the empty space left by the author’s disappearance” and an observation of “its new demarcations, and the reapportionment of this void” (121). This empty space left by the disappearance of the author is what Foucault calls the *author-function*, a term he links to problem of the author’s name (125). Foucault makes a distinction between the proper name and the author name and argues that “[t]he proper name and the name of an author oscillate between the poles of description and designation, and granting that they are linked to what they name, they are not totally determined either by their descriptive or designative functions” (Foucault 121). But whereas a proper name, “which

moves from the interior of a discourse to the real person outside who produced it”, the author name “remains at the contours of texts – separating one from the other, defining their form, and characterizing their mode of existence” (Foucault 123). The name of the author has a classificatory function because it can “group together a number of texts and thus differentiate them from others” and it “characterizes a particular manner of existence in discourse” (Foucault 123). Foucault concludes by saying that “the name of an author is a variable that accompanies only certain texts to the exclusion of others” (124).

The *author-function* has four different characteristics (Foucault 124). First, the *author-function* can be characterized as an object of appropriation (124). It is “tied to the legal and institutional systems that circumscribe, determine, and articulate the realm of discourses” (Foucault 130). Foucault explains that it was only when ownership and copyright were introduced that “the transgressive properties always intrinsic to the act of writing became the forceful imperative of literature” (125). Second, the *author-function* “does not operate in a uniform manner in all discourses, at all times, and in any given culture” (Foucault 130). “The *author-function* is historically, culturally, economically, institutionally specific” (Bennett 24). Literary texts originating in the Middle Ages were “accepted, circulated, and valorized without any question about identity of the author” whereas scientific texts were only validated to be true when the author’s name was known (Foucault 125 - 126). In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, however, the authentication of scientific texts no longer required authorial validation because “the role of the author disappeared as an index of truthfulness” (Foucault 126). Seventeenth and eighteenth century literary texts, on the other hand, were “obliged to state its author and the date, place, and circumstance of its writing” (Foucault 126). “Literary anonymity was of interest only as a puzzle to be solved as [...] literary works are totally dominated by the sovereignty of the author” (Foucault 126). Thirdly, the *author-function* “is not formed spontaneously through the simple attribution of a discourse to an individual. It results from a complex operation whose purpose is to construct the rational entity we call an author” (Foucault 127). The *author-function* determines “the presence of certain events, as well as their transformations, distortions, and their various modifications” as well as ensures a “unity in writing where any unevenness of production is ascribed to changes caused by evolution, maturation, or outside influence” (Foucault 128). The fourth characteristic declares that the *author-function* “does not refer, purely and simply, to an actual individual insofar as it simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy” (Foucault 130 – 131).

Foucault makes a distinction between the author and the actual writer and explains that “the ‘author-function’ arises out of their scission – in the division and the distance of the two” (129). By separating the author from the writer, Foucault disconnects the literary text from the delimiting subjective authority of the author.

Foucault closes his essay by saying that the subject should not be completely discarded. “It should be reconsidered, not to restore the theme of an originating subject, but to seize its functions, its intervention in discourse, and its system of dependencies” (Foucault 137). Foucault thus alludes to a possible shift from biography and subjectivity to discourse when he declares that “the subject (and its substitutes) must be stripped of its creative role and analyzed as a complex and variable function of discourse” (138). By dehumanizing the author and degrading it to a function, Foucault steers the reader or literary critic in a different direction. Instead of trying to authenticate the author’s meaning behind the text, Foucault expands the text’s interpretative boundaries.

In his essay “What an Author Is”, Nehamas stresses the fact that, “[w]e must grant immediately and press more consistently than [...] Foucault himself does the distinction between author and writer” (686). Writers, according to Nehamas, are individuals who have “no interpretive authority over them” (686). Authors, on the other hand, are “whoever can be understood to have produced a particular text as we interpret it” (Nehamas 686). “Authors are not individuals but characters manifested or exemplified, though not depicted or described, in texts. [...] Their nature guides interpretation, and interpretation determines their nature ” (Nehamas 686). An authored text does not generate one absolute meaning, but produces various interpretations. Nehamas presses for the separation of interpretation and the metaphor of depth (687). Interpretation should “be conceived in terms of breadth and expansion” (Nehamas 687). Nehamas argues that interpretation “will then be protected against attacks that, like Foucault’s, are motivated by a rejection of the appearance/reality distinction” (687). Nehamas’s theory can be summarized by saying that writers write texts, some texts undergo interpretations and others do not, texts that are interpreted are construed as works and works generate an author (688). In contrast to Barthes’s author, who exists before the book, Nehamas’s author is “situated toward the notional end, not at the actual beginning, of interpretation” (127; 688). An author is “an interpretive construct and not an independent person” (Nehamas 689). The author can thus be whoever the interpreter chooses it to be and not necessarily the one who wrote the text. While Barthes asks “Who is speaking thus?”,

Foucault asks “What does it *matter* who is speaking?” and Nehamas proposes the question “Who *can be* speaking?” (125; 115; 690).

Barthes and Foucault’s theories can be associated with theories of reader response because they both strive to ban the subjective author from the experience of reading and interpreting a literary text. By banning the subjective author, they shift the interpretative focus from the author to the reader. But Barthes’s and Foucault’s essay can also be associated with theories of authorial intent. They abrogate the solitary authorial voice in order to free the numerous authorial voices at work in a literary text. By banning the solitary author they evoke an inverse effect: the predominant authorial presence is substituted for multiple equally dominant authorial presences. As Burke points out, “[t]he death of the author emerges as a blind-spot in the work of Barthes [and] Foucault [...], an absence they seek to create and explore, but one which is always already filled with the idea of the author” (“Death and Return” 172). The ambiguous line between the presence and absence of the author or authors in a literary text is reflected in the ambiguous discrepancy between literary theories of authorial intent and reader response.

“The Death of the Author” and “What Is an Author” can be read as a plea for the rebirth of pre-Romantic authorship, for the return to authorship as an act of collaboration. By dethroning the Romantic author, Barthes and Foucault shift the focus from the self-contained psyche of the Romantic author to the language used in the text; from a context generated by one authorial voice to a context that is influenced by multiple voices, multiple authorial voices who collaborate in the creation of a literary work. Collaborative authorship is thus to be understood as an act of creating a literary work in dialogue with the literary and non-literary contexts present at the time of creation. It is not the author’s subjectivity who reigns over the meaning of a literary text, it is the author’s context and his interactions with this context that defines the meaning of a text. Multiple interactions generate multiple voices and evoke multiple possible readings of a literary text. Studying the biographical, socio-political and literary context of a literary work will help to unveil these multiple authorial voices at work in the literary text.

3.1.4 A POLYPHONIC FRAMEWORK

Hunt argues that *On the Road* is frequently understood to be a “naïve autobiography, controversial best-seller of little merit, or [...] ‘inspired’ testament, a harbinger of a new confessional literature free of past constraints on form and subject matter” (“Crooked Road” lviii). According to Hunt, “[t]hese three approaches actually share a similar sense of the novel [because] [t]hey begin from the story that the book was the product of only three weeks of impetuous work in the spring of 1951 and see this as proof of the book’s transparency” (“Crooked Road” lviii). “Those who view *On the Road* as naïve autobiography identify Kerouac with the narrator Sal Paradise, conclude that the book reports events without reflection, and reduce it to the mores of a particular bohemia” (Hunt, “Crooked Road” lviii). Those who see Kerouac’s second novel as a “controversial best-seller of little merit” or “inspired testament” classify *On the Road* respectively as a “pop culture artifact” or a “product of communal conscious [that] advocates a way of life” (Hunt, “Crooked Road” lviii – lix).

Even though Hunt claims that analyzing *On the Road* as a transparent autobiography testifies of literary ignorance, I argue that Kerouac’s road novel can be read as a partly transparent account of Kerouac’s personal life. Despite the fact that *On the Road* is considered to be a work of literary fiction, Kerouac did rely heavily on the many road trips he undertook with Cassady to structure his road narrative. He even used Neal Cassady as inspiration for the character of Dean Moriarty. *On the Road* can even be analyzed as a transparent account of the context in which Kerouac’s road novel was created. Kerouac’s road novel is a prime example of the Beats’ ambiguous artistic ideology, of their intentions to amalgamate life and art into one continuum. Kerouac strove to experience the world as he would have wanted to portray it in his novels and he models his narratives after his real life experiences. Because the threshold between Kerouac’s personal life and his art was very low, many of Kerouac’s novels can be analyzed as a direct rendering of the context in which they were created.

Theado claims that *On the Road* “is both a story and a cultural event” (“Understanding” 54). This cultural event was embedded in the American socio-political context of the late 1940s and early until mid-1950s. Aside from the socio-political context, *On the Road* was also embedded in a literary context or tradition; a tradition that Kerouac simultaneously built upon as well as rebelled against.

On the Road is the story of Sal Paradise, a young and naïve writer, and Dean Moriarty, “a youth tremendously excited with life” roaming through America and “looking outwardly for kicks and inwardly for salvation” (Kerouac 10; Theado, “Understanding” 57). Sal finds himself at a crucial turning point in his life, a crossroad that is defined by the arrival of Dean Moriarty. Before he met Dean, he had “often dreamed of going West to see the country, always vaguely planning and never taking off” (Kerouac 7). It was Dean’s excitement that pushed Sal to pursue his dream of travelling West.

“Challenging the complacency and prosperity of postwar America hadn’t been Kerouac’s intent when he wrote his novel, but he had created a book that heralded a change of consciousness in the country” (Charters qtd. in Simmons 16). Even though creating a novel that directly questioned the postwar American ideology was not Kerouac’s primary ambition, the creative process of *On the Road* was embedded in the American socio-political context of the late 1940s until mid 1950s; a context which is defined by a growing aversion for mass consumption, social conformity and anonymity. *On the Road* is the story of Sal Paradise’s quest for authenticity and the American identity, a quest initiated by Dean Moriarty. The tension between Sal’s naïve nature, his inexperience and his willingness to forgive Dean’s unacceptable behavior on the one hand and Dean’s refusal to accept “the rhetoric of responsibility” on the other hand can be analyzed as a reflection of the growing tension between the imposed mass acceptance of the abdication of individuality “in favor of corporate largeness” and of bureaucratic secrecy on the one hand and the non-conformist rebellion on the other hand (McNeil 188; Tytell 5).

Dean is “the HOLY GOOF”, he is the embodiment of non-conformism, he is *On the Road*’s anti-hero (Kerouac 183). Sal envisions Dean as:

A burning shuddering frightful Angel, palpitating towards me across the road, approaching like a cloud, with enormous speed, pursuing me like the Shrouded Traveller on the plain, bearing down on me. I saw his huge face over the plains with the mad, bony purpose and the gleaming eyes; I saw his wings; I saw his old jalopy chariot with thousands of sparking flames shooting out from it; I saw the path it burned over the road; it even made its own road and went over the corn, through cities, destroying bridges, drying rivers (Kerouac 244).

Dean purposefully going off road, following his own tailored road and rebelling against any form of responsibility can be analyzed as Kerouac's answer to the socio-political trouble in America at the time. American citizens were, just like Sal, in search for someone like Dean, someone who showed them how to create their own road and color outside the lines, someone who encouraged them to go West.

On his first trip to the West Coast, Sal realizes: "I wasn't scared; I was just somebody else, some stranger, and my whole life was a haunted life, the life of a ghost. I was half way across America, at the dividing line between the East of my youth and the West of my future" (Kerouac 20). Just like Dean's "wild yea-saying overburst of American joy" encouraged Sal to leave behind the East and head for the West, Cassady, who was the inspiration behind the character of Dean Moriarty, incessantly encouraged Kerouac to leave behind "such pretensions as large words, lordly clauses and other phrases as such, i.e. rolling the words around in the mouth as one would wine and proper or not putting them down because they sound no good" and to "[j]ust write Jack, write" (Kerouac 13; Moore 69 - 70; Moore 29).

Just like Sal finds himself at the dividing line between his past and his future, Kerouac found himself at the dividing line between composing books "according to the traditional methods of slow, painstaking revision" and writing novels "with a more consistently sustained intensity" (Dardess 733). Cassady's literary advice inspired Kerouac to write his story of the road as if he would tell it to a friend. Kerouac named this technique spontaneous prose. *On the Road* is one of the first novels in which Kerouac experimented with his newly discovered writing technique.

In 1953, at the request of Ginsberg and Burroughs, Kerouac wrote "The Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" (Charters, "Portable Kerouac" 481). Spontaneous prose can be described as "an attempt to discover form, not imitate it, and to discover experience in the act of writing about it, as if the language of the 'mental spontaneous process' could expose some human experience as yet unknown simply because no writer had dared to set it down unimpinged by 'craft' in the traditional sense" (Weinreich 4). But, as Weinreich points out, "spontaneous prose was not new with Kerouac" (3). Kerouac's invention and experimentation with spontaneous prose is a continuation of the literary tradition.

Kerouac distinguishes nine essentials: set-up, procedure, method, scoping, lag in procedure, timing, center of interest, structure of work and mental state (Charters, "Portable Kerouac" 484 - 485). Some of these essentials were influenced by pre-existing literary trends. Kerouac

described the first essential or the set-up as the act of setting the object for the mind either in reality or in the memory in order to sketch it (Charters, "Portable Kerouac" 484). This first step in the process of creating spontaneous prose refers back to the Romantic literary tradition and to Wordsworth's preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) in particular. Wordsworth explains that:

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a similar mood to this it is carried on (303).

Just like Wordsworth meditates on the emotions before putting pen to paper, Kerouac recalls the object either mentally or physically before sketching it. Even though Kerouac's spontaneous prose method was partly inspired by the Romantic tradition, Kerouac cannot be considered a Romantic solitary genius. When Berrigan asked about the genesis of his work, Kerouac explained that: "You think out what actually happened, you tell friends long stories about it, you mull it over in your mind, you connect it together at leisure, then when the time comes to pay the rent again you force yourself to sit at the typewriter, or at the writing notebook, and get it over with as fast as you can" (126). Whereas the solitary genius deprives his senses of his exterior surroundings in order to internally contemplate on his utmost individual emotions, Kerouac meditates on his object by immersing his senses in the stimuli of the external world.

The third essential or the method talks about the need for a "vigorous space dash separating rhetorical breeding" instead of "periods separating sentence-structures already arbitrarily riddled by false colons and timid usually needless commas" (Charters, "Portable Kerouac" 484). Kerouac refers to William Carlos Williams's theory concerning the variable foot or the triadic line. "Williams claimed that the traditional fixed foot of English prosody needed to be altered to represent idiomatic American speech rhythms" (Hirsch 671). Williams explains that the variable foot "rejects the standard of the conventionally fixed foot and suggests that measure varies with the idiom by which it is employed and the tonality of the individual

poem” (Williams qtd. in Hirsch 671). Just like Williams wished to “resolve the conflict between form and freedom in verse” in the variable foot, Kerouac wanted to merge the auditory aspect with the visual aspect of writing and divide his sentences by rhetorical breaths separated by dashes instead of using periods, colons and commas (W.C. Williams). Kerouac’s third essential of spontaneous prose can thus be analyzed as being influenced by Williams’s prosodic theory. The Beats’ literature was after all a continuation of and a reaction to modernist literature.

Kerouac’s spontaneous prose was not only influenced by Williams, it can also be linked to Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* (1855). The seventh essential of spontaneous prose or the center of interest advises not to begin “from preconceived idea of what to say about image but from jewel center of interest in subject of image at *moment* of writing” (Charters, “Portable Kerouac” 485). Kerouac urges the writer to “tap from yourself the song of yourself” (Charters, “Portable Kerouac” 485). This self-assured and self-reliant individualism can be linked to the individualism that is portrayed in Whitman’s “Song of Myself”. Just like Whitman’s omnipotent I searches within himself to state the universal truth, Kerouac encourages the writer to trust his creative instinct and to search within himself for the center of interest in order to “write outwards swimming in sea of language to peripheral release and exhaustion” because “*your way is your only way*” (Charters, “Portable Kerouac” 485).

Kerouac’s second novel can be read as a reflection of the American postwar discontent as well as a non-conformist answer to the political, economic and social troubles. *On the Road*, and especially the early experiment with spontaneous prose in the novel, can be analyzed as a continuation of the Wordsworth’s, Williams’s and Whitman’s literary legacy as well as a dialogue with the American socio-political context on the one hand and with the pre-existing literary tradition on the other hand. Jack Kerouac simultaneously represents his own individual authorial voice and multiple other authorial voices. *On the Road* is thus the product of collaboration between Kerouac and the contextual influences or voices that helped shape the genesis of his second novel.

3.2 COLLABORATIVE AUTHORSHIP AS A SERIES OF FUNCTIONS

3.2.1 HAROLD LOVE – *ATTRIBUTING AUTHORSHIP*

“The idea of literary collaboration [...] seems only to have become a matter for consideration, seems only to need its own word, once the Romantic conception of authorship, with its emphasis on expression, originality and autonomy, emerges as the dominant ‘ideology’ of composition” (Bennett 94). According to Inge:

Americans have praised the solitary individuals willing to strike out on their own, take the law into their own hands, rise above the common crowd, and chart a unique path for themselves. True creativity and innovation are the products of those gifted individuals who break the pattern of tradition and the commonplace to lead us into new directions of enlightenment and achievement [...]. Thus collaboration, group creation, or mass production are likely to result in the ordinary, unexceptional, and unimaginative (3).

“Collaboration [...] disrupts the regal isolation, the solitary individualism, of the Romantic author and is conceived of as an aberration or a marginal literary mode” (Bennett 94). The Romantic idea of the author as solitary genius, as the embodiment of innovation and creativity seems to have overshadowed the fact that before the rise of the Romantic movement, literary individuality was insignificant. As Woodmansee point out “[a]s we move backward in time, the collective, corporate, or collaborative element in writing, [...] , becomes even more pronounced. From the Middle Ages right down through the Renaissance new writing derived its value and authority from its affiliation with the texts that preceded it, its derivation rather than its deviation from prior texts” (17). Authority in the Classical period and the Middle Ages signified a complete surrender to the literary tradition. The Classical and medieval author’s role consisted in keeping the literary tradition alive by copying and reworking the already existing texts. The Renaissance author’s individuality was restricted by the patron’s wishes. Literary individuality only emerged after the author gained financial freedom and purposefully abandoned the literary tradition. The Classical, Medieval and the Renaissance author can furthermore be considered as collaborative authors since they worked jointly either with their established predecessors to keep the literary tradition operative or cooperated with a patron in exchange for financial support. As Bennett confirms, collaborations are “often seen

as exceptions that prove the rule of solitary authorship” whereas it was only after the Romantic conception of the author as solitary genius was introduced that authorship became a strictly singular affair (Bennett 95). Inge goes even further by saying that “[t]he truth is that most of the culture of this century, probably of the nineteenth century, and possibly since the Industrial Revolution has largely been the product of the art of collaboration rather than the art of the individual” (4). According to Inge, “[t]he concept of the artist as complete individualist is a romantic notion whose day has passed and perhaps never really existed anyway except in our imaginations” (10 – 11).

The Romantic idea of the author as solitary genius is still predominant in the present-day literary academic research. Stillinger remarks that both literary theorists who banish the author from the text and theorists who deify the author partake in treating the author as a single entity but “[i]n many cases such a concept does not accord with the facts of literary production” since “numerous texts considered to be the work of single authorship turn out to be the product of several hands” (v). Stillinger worries that the current theories about authorship do not account for the fact that “literary works [...] do have multiple authors, sometimes with divided and even conflicting intentions among them” (vi). Bennett points out that:

In certain forms of post-Romantic criticism, collaboration [...] has the whiff of scandal [...] and is seen as something like literature’s shameful family secret, a shared vice of writing. The significance of collaboration has therefore often been elided or denied: either the *extent* of the collaboration in a particular text is downplayed or it is argued that the aesthetic *value* of the collaborative work is compromised by its dissipation within the mind of more than one creative agent (95).

Instead of challenging the predominant ideology in authorship studies, academics should use the myth of the author as solitary genius to their advantage in interpreting collaborative works (Stillinger 187). “In practical criticism [...] the particulars of multiple authorship can frequently be illuminating, even when one is pursuing the meanings of a mythical single author” (187). When a literary work is studied as a product of a solitary genius even when it has collaborative nature, it does enlighten which statements and opinions from the ‘outside’ circle of collaborators the nominal authors chooses to incorporate in the literary work

(Stillinger 187 – 188). Harris explains that “when writers whose purposes were aesthetic involved others in their writing, they often concealed it, referred to it as editing, or rationalized that it wasn’t really collaboration because no one else physically performed the act of writing the words” (J. Harris 78 – 79). Approaching a collaborative work from a single author perspective might thus reveal what the nominal author wrote off as editing or some other form of authorship.

Biography studies can also shine a more profound light on the genealogy of a book and can therefore complement authorship studies:

Biography helps to recover “how an author wrote and revised a work; recovery of the circumstances of the transmission of a text, publication, and original and subsequent reception; consideration of an author’s reading and education; study of comments that an author makes about a work (or about writing in general) in letters, journals, diaries, recorded conversations; relationship of details in a work to details of the author’s life (and to the lives of people among the author’s acquaintance); relationship of a work to other writings by the same author and to writings by other authors; study of an author’s language and its sources; study of an author’s ideas and their sources (and their relationship to ideas of the author’s time and earlier); study of the historical, political, social, and cultural contexts that, although beyond an author’s control, are channeled through the author into a work (Stillinger 9).

Attribution studies can, as well as biography studies, partly uncover the genealogy of a book. “[A]tribution studies attempt to distinguish the traces of agency that cohere in pieces of writing, sometimes discovering one singular trace, but often a subtle entanglement of several many” (Love 32). By uncovering the manuscript history of a literary text, the networks of authorial traces present in the genesis of that text are revealed. Attribution studies distinguish which authorial trace in the network of traces can be held accountable for which part in the manuscript history and thus help to determine whether or not a literary work has a collaborative nature.

“One reason why it was possible to sustain the myth of solitary artist in literature for so long is that, until recently, collaborative writing was defined very narrowly” (J. Harris 79). In

Attributing Authorship Harold Love expands the definition of collaborative authorship by defining authorship as “a series of functions performed during the creation of the work” rather than one “single, coherent activity” (39). Love redirects the definition of authorship from one person being the originator of a literary work to “a set of linked activities (*authemes*) which are sometimes performed by a single person but will often be performed collaboratively or by several persons in succession” (39). Whereas Barthes and Foucault define the nominal author as a compilation of multiple authorial voices, Love defines the nominal author as a hypernym for a series of authorial activities.

Love distinguishes four different functions of authorship. The first function is called *precursory authorship* (Love 40). *Precursory authorship* refers to “cases in which a significant contribution from an earlier writer is incorporated into the new work”. This first function of authorship can be compared to Harold Bloom’s theory of influence. In *The Anxiety of Influence: A theory of Poetry* (1973), Bloom argues that every poet’s creative process is influenced and or even inhibited by the voice or voices of precursor poets. “A precursory author would be anyone whose function as a ‘source’ or ‘influence’ makes a substantial contribution to the shape and substance of the work” (Love 40). A prominent example of precursory authorship is Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) which has been analyzed as “*Jane Eyre*’s reinscription” (Spivak 244). Jean Rhys read *Jane Eyre* when she was young and was moved by the character of Bertha Mason (Spivak 249). *Wide Sargasso Sea* is the rewriting of *Jane Eyre* from the perspective of Bertha, Edward Rochester’s first wife who he locked in the attic of Thornfield Hall. Charlotte Brontë can thus be considered the precursory author of Jean Rhys’s novel.

A second function of authorship is called *executive authorship* (Love 43). Executive authorship is used to refer to the “maker or *artifex*” of the literary work (Love 43). “The executive author may be defined as the compiler of the verbal text up to the point where it is judged suitable for publication in one or another form (all subsequent alterations being classified as revisions)” (Love 43). This second function of authorship may be performed collaboratively or separately. A prominent example of collaborative executive authorship is the novels by Nicci French or Nicci Gerard and Sean French.

A third distinct function of authorship is *declarative authorship* by which the declarative author validates the text or owns the words (Love 44; 45). An example of *declarative authorship* is Anne Frank’s *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947). It was Anne’s father, Otto

Frank, who rearranged and rewrote his daughter's journal entries and made it into a cohesive story. Anne is thus the precursor author and the declarative author because it is her name on the cover of the book but it was Otto Frank who took the executive role on his behalf. Love remarks that "it is only through performing the declarative part of authorship that one can figure oneself as an author or enable a work to activate Foucault's 'author-function'" (Love 45). Love emphasizes the fact that "[i]t is necessary to repeat that this declarative role is still a genuine element of the sequence of processes we know as authorship even if the person claiming it has made no other contribution to the creation of the work concerned" (46).

A fourth function of authorship is that of *revisionary authorship* (Love 46). "The very notion [of revisionary authorship] implies a chronology in which either an entire text or a discrete section of text is first created and then polished and corrected" (Love 46 – 47). Even though *executive authorship* and *revisionary authorship* can be executed by one and the same person, it is mostly done by the editor(s) (Love 46). "The simplest way out of the difficulty is to consign to the phase of executive authorship all work up to the completion of a text regarded by the author/authors as suitable for sending to a publisher or putting into manuscript circulation, and everything that comes after that to the phase of revisionary authorship, no matter who performs it" (Love 47). An example of revisionary authorship is Maxwell Perkins's contribution to the work of Thomas Wolfe (Inge 9). Wolfe's work might not have seen the light if Perkins was not willing to edit "the mountain of disorganized manuscripts" very heavily (Inge 9). When Wolfe sent Perkins *O Lost* which would later be published as *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929), Perkins "moved one major episode, Gant's homecoming, from Book II to Book I; recommended the cutting of 60,000 words (22% of the work); and advised Wolfe to write connecting passages bridging the cuts" (Brucoli and Bucker xvii). Perkins did not write a single word of *Look Homeward, Angel* and thus left the role of executive author to Wolfe but he did, however, fulfill the role of revisionary author.

Love's four functions of authorship illustrate that multiple authorship does occur more often than thought. The process of creating a book, even when that book only has one nominal author, can thus always be considered a process of collaborative authorship.

3.2.2 ATTRIBUTING *ON THE ROAD*

3.2.2.1 THE MYTH OF 1951

“Like everything else about him, the story of how Jack Kerouac came to write *On the Road* became a legend” (Cunnell 1). The legend says that Kerouac had a literary epiphany after reading Cassady’s “Joan Anderson Letter” and decided to write down the story of his adventures on the road “in a three-week frenzy fueled by coffee” (Brinkley xxiii). Kerouac taped multiple sheets of Japanese drawing paper together “so as not to distract his concentration when changing paper” (Brinkley xxiii). “The whole manuscript was a single paragraph with no commas and few periods” (Nicosia 343). When Kerouac finished his manuscript on April 22, 1951 he rolled it up into a “120-foot roll” and took it to his editor at Harcourt, Brace (Nicosia 348). “Ceremoniously unrolling *On the Road* across Giroux’s carpet, Jack prepared to exult with his old editor over this hard-earned triumph” (Nicosia 349). Giroux, startled by the shape of the manuscript, asked Kerouac: “How the hell can a printer work from this?” (Giroux qtd. in Brinkley xxiii). Kerouac was upset and refused to alter the scroll because he believed that “[r]evisions were for hung-up squares and the culturally constipated too afraid to dig the natural rhythms of their own minds” (Brinkley xxiii). Harcourt, Brace rejected Kerouac’s manuscript and it was not until 1957 that *On the Road* would be published by Viking.

Kerouac claimed that Malcolm Cowley, his editor at Viking, “riddled the original style of the manuscript” (Berrigan 109). He argued that he had “no power to stand by [...] [his] style for better or for worse” (Berrigan 107). Kerouac made it seem as if it was Cowley and the editorial board at Viking Press who cut several scenes from the original story whereas he was solely upset because his long sentences were broken up (Cunnell 31). “It is these changes to his sentences, rather than the cutting of scenes, which Kerouac would most strongly object to after the novel was published” (Cunnell 31). Cowley demystified Kerouac’s *On the Road* legend partially by revealing that:

Jack did something that he would never admit to later. He did a good deal of revision [...]. Oh, he would never, never admit to that, because it was his feeling that the stuff ought to come out like toothpaste from a tube and not be changed, and that every word that passed from his typewriter was holy. On the contrary, he revised, and revised well” (Cowley qtd. in Gifford and Lee 240 - 241)

Kerouac was an ingenious storyteller who challenged the subtle distinction between reality and art by transforming reality into fiction and making his fiction a reflection of his reality. A lot of real life occurrences turned into mythical stories that were carefully narrated by Kerouac and his fellow Beat members. It is almost as if Kerouac purposefully created the myth surrounding the genealogy of *On the Road* in order to create an ambiguous continuum between his fast-paced novel and the reality in which he penned down the novel. Even though Kerouac's story about the "Joan Anderson Letter" took on mythical proportions, the influence that the letter had in the genealogy of *On the Road* should not be discarded. Whereas Cassady's letter did influence *On the Road*, the letter was not the onset of Kerouac's first attempt at getting his road narrative on paper. He had already written three versions of *On the Road* before receiving Cassady's infamous letter. The publication history of *On the Road* was thus characterized by a lot more "apprenticeship, craft, and daring practice" and a lot less "sweat, immediacy, and instinct" than Kerouac led on to believe (Cunnell 2).

One of the reasons why this myth is still not debunked is because the "Joan Anderson Letter" was, until 2012, considered to be lost. Kerouac lent the letter to Allen Ginsberg in 1955 who then lent it to the poet Gerd Stern (Moore 244). Stern lived on a boat in California in 1955 and supposedly lost the "Joan Anderson Letter" overboard (Berrigan 108). This story, however, was another of the Beats' ambiguous tales. On the 27th of December 2014, Jerry Cimino founder of the Beat Museum in San Francisco, invited poet Gerd Stern and Mike McQuate to talk about the discovery of the long-lost "Joan Anderson Letter"¹. In the interview Stern explained that he took the letter to Ace Books to get it published but Ace Books rejected Cassady's letter. Stern gave the letter back to Ginsberg who then sent it to Golden Goose Press. Unfortunately the letter made it into the pile of unread submissions. When Golden Goose Press ceased to exist in 1954 – 1955 Emerson, one of the founders, moved the complete archive to another office space and later gave it to Jack Spinosa who shared an office with Emerson. Jean Spinosa, Jack Spinosa's daughter, found the letter together with Mike McQuate in 2012 when she dug through the archive that her deceased father left behind².

¹ Interview with Gerd Stern and Mike McQuate: The Beat Museum. "The Joan Anderson Letter (WA Report form the BEAT Museum)." *YouTube*, uploaded by Mister WA, 30 December 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8Nrnnp_4GkI.

² Wills, David S. "Reconsidering the Importance of the Joan Anderson Letter – The Present." *Beatdom*, <http://www.beatdom.com/reconsidering-the-importance-of-the-joan-anderson-letter/>. Accessed 2 January 2017.

Before Kerouac lent the “Joan Anderson Letter” to Ginsberg, he probably copied a third of the letter that would be later published in John Bryan’s magazine *Notes from Underground* #1 (Moore 244). Even though Cassady’s notorious letter influenced the genealogy of *On the Road*, the importance of the letter should, however, be reconsidered since the “Joan Anderson Letter” was not the only letter that had an important impact on the genealogy of Kerouac’s road novel.

On the 17th of December, 1950, Cassady wrote a letter that would later be called the “Joan Anderson Letter”. In the letter, Cassady tells the story of “two overlapping affairs” (J. Johnson 382). The story is about Joan Anderson, a girl who had a significant influence on Cassady. Cassady visits Joan in the hospital after she tried to commit suicide. When she is fully recovered, Joan invites Cassady over for dinner with her on Christmas Eve, 1945. When Cassady saw her he knew: “I was right back where I started; I felt again that choking surge flooding me as when first I’d seen her. I started talking to myself, determined to whip the poolhall rut and drag my stinking ass out of the hole” (Moore 246). Cassady decides to better himself. One of the dinner guests offers Cassady a job at a taxi company. Cassady decides that he needs decent clothes for his first workday and he makes a quick trip to the clothes depot. On his way back to Joan’s he passes a tavern and sees “his younger blood-brother inside drinking beer alone” (Moore 248). “I had made good time and the hard habit of lushing that I was then addicted to pushed through the door to bum a quickie off him” (Moore 248). Cassady’s brother calls Cassady’s girlfriend, Mary Ann Frelander or Cherry Mary whom Cassady met after being released from Colorado State Reformatory on June 23rd, 1945. Mary’s mother was listening on the phone extension. She called the police, gave them Cassady’s whereabouts and had him arrested. He was released weeks later but “Joan had disappeared completely” (Moore 255).

When Kerouac received the letter on December 27, 1950, he “was astonished that Neal had found a way to write about intensely real things like miscarriages and dwarfish cabdrivers, which were too sordid, grisly, or improbable for most literature” (Nicosia 337). Kerouac considered these things to be very important to the story he wanted to tell yet he had not learned how to incorporate and organize those real things into a cohesive story (Nicosia 337). It was not so much the character development, the themes imbedded in the story or the plotline that affected Kerouac’s writing process; it was Cassady’s fast-paced narrative technique and his conscious decision to transform real life occurrences into a narrative:

For Jack, Neal's letter was like a mirror. Looking into it, he could suddenly see where his own power truly lay – in his extraordinarily acute memory, which he had been muffling with his fictional disguises, and the images, associations, and language swirling around his own recollections, which he could begin to capture only if he wrote as himself rather than as Freddie Boncœur, Chad Gavin, or Red Moultrie (J. Johnson 383).

When Kerouac received Cassady's infamous letter, he was working on the third *proto-version* of his road novel. According to Joyce Johnson, author and former girlfriend of Kerouac, Kerouac was "uniquely equipped to work directly from life" but he "had resisted doing so all through his apprenticeship years in his twenties, when he was determined to master the art of creative imaginative fiction" (6). His aspiration to become a renowned author of fiction like Thomas Wolfe blinded him from the fact that he had an excellent memory, a "vast, roomy warehouse" wherein he stored all the stories that formed his past. After reading the "Joan Anderson Letter", it became clear to Kerouac that he could use his memory to strengthen his storytelling instead of inventing a completely fictional narrative. After reading Cassady's letter, he wrote Cassady a series of confessional letters about his past in which he "unleashed the [...] first-person voice that had been bottled up inside him" (J. Johnson 6). Ginsberg explains that Kerouac's series of confessional letters was the start of a prose that was "the long confessional of two buddies telling each other everything that happened, every detail, every cunt-hair in the grass included, every tiny eyeball flick of orange neon flashed past in Chicago by the bus station; all the back of the brain imagery" (Ginsberg qtd. in *Charters*, "Selected Letters" 275). According to Ginsberg, the prose that Kerouac wanted to capture in his novels:

Required sentences that did not necessarily follow exact classic-type syntactical order, but which allowed for interruption with dashes, allowed for the sentences to break in half, take another direction (with parentheses that might go on for paragraphs). It allowed for individual sentences that might not come to their period except after several pages of self reminiscence, of interruption and the piling on of detail, so that what you arrive at was a sort of stream of consciousness visioned around a specific

subject [...] and a specific view point (Ginsberg qtd. in Charters, "Selected Letters" 275)

Cassady's "Joan Anderson Letter" can be analyzed as a form of precursory authorship since it influenced Kerouac to such a degree that Kerouac made the conscious decision to tell his story of the road in a confessional first-person voice and to confide in his memory and incorporate real life occurrences and to integrate sordid and raw details into his narrative.

Even though the "Joan Anderson Letter" had a major influence on the manuscript history of *On the Road*, it certainly was not the only form of precursory authorship that shaped Kerouac's second novel nor did the letter have, contrary to the fast-paced time frame of the myth, an instantaneous influence on Kerouac's writing process. Kerouac sent Cassady his last installment in the series of confessional letter in the first week of January 1951 but he only started to rewrite his third *proto-version* of *On the Road* in April of that year.

3.2.2.2 A TURBULENT HISTORY

Contrary to what Kerouac might have led his readers believe, *On the Road* was not the product of a spontaneous literary epiphany; it was the result of various rewritings of storylines, of experimentation with different narrative perspectives, of exploring different genres and of incorporating advice and feedback from Kerouac's inner circle. Hunt argues that "[t]he manuscript history of *On the Road* [...] is in large part the story of Kerouac's attempt to resolve his conflicting sense of writing as a naturalistic and romantic activity, and to develop a way of writing that would simultaneously analyze the external social world and celebrate the self's ability to transcend that world imaginatively" ("Crooked Road" 78).

The manuscript history of *On the Road* is characterized by five distinct periods and each period is defined by a different manuscript. Kerouac created three *proto-versions* of *On the Road* between 1948 and 195, namely the "Ray Smith Novel of Fall 1948", "the Red Moultrie/Vern [later Dean] Pomery Jr. versions of 1949 and the "Gone on the Road" novel of 1950 (Cunnell 4). All three of these versions were written according to the art of the classic novel (Cunnell 4). Although these *proto-versions* have never been published, Kerouac's journal entries make it possible to partially reconstruct the manuscript history (Hunt,

“Crooked Road” 83). The fourth and the fifth manuscript are *On the Road: The Original Scroll*, which was written in 1951 and published in 2007, and *On the Road*, which was a rework of the 1951 edition and was published in 1957.

Kerouac neared the completion of his first novel *The Town and the City* in the summer of 1948 (Cunnell 3). The manuscript for Kerouac’s first novel got accepted on March 29, 1949 (Cunnell 9). Robert Giroux, Kerouac’s editor at Harcourt, Brace flew over to Denver to work with Kerouac on the manuscript (Cunnell 9-10). Kerouac was already working on a second novel when he was still writing *The Town and the City*. Kerouac first mentions his idea for a second novel in a diary entry dated August 23rd, 1948 (Brinkley 123). The novel would be called *On the Road* and would be about “two guys hitch-hiking to California in search of something they don’t *really* find, and losing themselves on the road, and coming all the way back hopeful of something *else*” (Brinkley 123).

The first *proto-version* of *On the Road*, the “Ray Smith Novel of Fall 1948”, was stylistically comparable to *The Town and the City* (Hunt, “Crooked Road” 83). The “Ray Smith Novel of Fall 1948” is about Ray Smith who travels from New York to California after he discovers that his girlfriend has left him for someone else (Cunnell 6). Smith accidentally ends up in Bear Mountain, New York instead of California and meets Warren Beauchamp, a Franco-American man, who convinces Smith to follow him back to New York (Cunnell 6). The story ends with Smith and Beauchamp in Harlem where they end up sleeping on Smith’s ex-girlfriend’s couch (Cunnell 6).

“Kerouac’s first novel [*The Town and the City*] is the result of a young artist attempting to express his vision of his contemporary post- World War II society. Kerouac faced a new, discordant, and paradoxically conformist and rebellious time, while his writer’s tools enabled him only to capture his time in the traditional – though powerfully romantic and lyrical – mode of the past society” (Theado, “Understanding” 38). Upon revising his *The Town and the City* manuscript, Kerouac thought his first novel was too gullible and “paid insufficient attention to the demands of the outer world, the consequence of actions, and realistic limitations” (Hunt, “Crooked Road” 83). Kerouac became aware of “a duality in the view of the world”, a duality he wanted to capture in his writing but felt like he struggled to find a balance between his need to focus on the external world and his desire to explore the internal world or the supernatural (Hunt, “Crooked Road” 83; 86).

Instead of trying to unite both views, he rejects his internal worldview and centers his first *proto-version* of *On the Road* on the outside world (Hunt, “Crooked Road” 83). This decision was partly inspired by a letter that William Burroughs sent Allen Ginsberg explaining his new philosophy called *factualism* (Hunt, “Crooked Road” 84). Kerouac either read Burroughs’s letter or heard about *factualism* from Burroughs or Ginsberg because he wrote about “Burroughs’s Factualism reality” in a diary entry dated November 29th, 1948 (Brinkley 176). In the letter to Ginsberg, Burroughs describes *factualism* as a philosophy wherein “[a]ll arguments, all nonsensical considerations as to what people ‘should do’ are irrelevant [because] there is only fact on all levels, and the more one argues, verbalizes, moralizes the less he will see and feel of fact” (O. Harris 24). Burroughs’s letter to Ginsberg can be seen as a form of *precursory authorship* because it shaped Kerouac’s first *proto-version* of his road novel and influenced the turnaround from a spiritual or internal story to a story that solely focused on the external world and even leaned towards naturalism.

After writing 32,500 words of the first *proto-version* however, Kerouac started to doubt his *factualist* approach. In a diary entry dated November 29th 1948 Kerouac wrote that he had “a feeling of emptiness ... *not* boredom, just emptiness and even falseness. These are not the reverent feelings during Town & City... My whole feeling and knowledge now is concentrated on people and not beyond them in the realms of ‘spirituality’” (Brinkley 377). By December 1948, Kerouac abandoned the *factualist* version of *On the Road* because the story did not resonate with his authorial intentions (Hunt, “Crooked Road” 87).

By March 1949 Kerouac attempted to write the second *proto-version* called the “Red Moultrie/Vern [later Dean] Pomery Jr. versions of 1949” which was going to be a supernatural or romantic founded quest (Hunt, “Crooked Road” 89). The new story’s hero is Red Moultrie, a merchant seaman who ends up in jail (Cunnell 9). Moultrie plans to travel to Montana, Colorado and San Francisco with his friend Vern Pomery Jr. as soon as he is released to find both his and Vern’s father (Brinkley 409 – 410). They are joined by Smitty, a character based on Pip from *Great Expectations*, who is also the narrator (1861) (Brinkley 410). After they return from their trip, Moultrie goes back to the valley to look for his wife (Brinkley 414). During his trips with Pomery, Red “seeks to be redeemed [and] [...] looks to regain the richness of which should have been his inheritance” (Hunt, “Crooked Road” 90).

Kerouac abandons the plot of his second *proto-version* to give a detailed description of the five stages that Red’s soul will go through over the course of the journey that he will

commence when he gets out of jail (Brinkley 416). During his stay in jail and for the first part of his road journey, Red's soul is pure but when he gets involved with drugs, his soul shows signs of apathy (Hunt, "Crooked Road" 92). The third stage represents a crisis which will be generated by the fact that Red wins a large sum of money in Montana (Hunt, "Crooked Road" 92). At first, Red's soul derails but he manages "to regain his initial sanity and purity" (Hunt, "Crooked Road" 92). In the fifth stage, Red will retrieve his lost joy (Hunt, "Crooked Road" 92). According to Hunt, the five stages of Red's soul show a similar development to the stages that the Redcrosse Knight from Spencer's *The Faerie Queene* (1590) goes through, a work which Kerouac was familiar with (Hunt, "Crooked Road" 92). In a diary entry dated May 1st, 1949 Kerouac wrote that he read *The Faerie Queene* (Brinkley 187). Just like the Redcrosse Knight's soul is pure when he begins his journey in order to fulfill Gloriana's assignment, Red's soul is pure when he begins his journey on the road. The Knight, however, makes the mistake of entering the den of Error. He wins the fight with Error but his soul is troubled. He is then lured into a trap by Archimago, seduced by the evil witch Duessa and locked up by the Giant Orgoglio. It is only when Una leads the Knight to the House of Holiness that his soul is purged and becomes pure again. Just like the Redcrosse Knight's soul becomes troubled when he enters Error's den, Red's soul is corrupted when he comes into contact with drugs. Both characters experience a crisis but manage to obtain their pure soul once again. Spencer's epic poem can thus be analyzed as a form of precursory authorship because it helped to structure Red's spiritual quest.

"Kerouac's notes for the Red version of *On the Road* show a deepening sense of the symbolic possibilities of his material, but they also show his uncertainty about how to organize them into a novel" (Hunt, "Crooked Road" 91). Kerouac was also still worried that the story appeared too *factualist* (Hunt, "Crooked Road" 93). "[H]e had not figured out how to shift the action to the growth of the characters' perception and their own internal world" (Hunt, "Crooked Road" 93). On the 29th of September, 1949 he confessed that he was stuck with *On the Road* and that he had no idea what to do.

Kerouac started the idea for a third *proto-version* of *On the Road* in February 1950 (Hunt, "Crooked Road" 97). He wanted to incorporate naturalistic material to accentuate the metaphysical elements in the story (Hunt, "Crooked Road" 98). It seemed like Kerouac was on his way to finding a balance between his dualistic worldview.

“Gone on the Road” is about Smith, a short-order cook, who wakes up in a boardinghouse in Iowa and is completely disoriented (Cunnell 18). He decides to travel back to Denver where his wife Laura lives (Cunnell 18). On his way to Denver, he meets a “license-plate thief” who is on his way to a Notre Dame football game hitchhiking by day and stealing cars by night (Cunnell 18). His name is Dean Pomeroy (Cunnell 18). This third *proto-version* “further dramatizes Kerouac’s interior struggle to find his own voice and free his creative self from an imprisoning and intimidating European literary tradition” (Cunnell 18 – 19). Kerouac states that he wanted to free himself from “the laws of the “novel” as laid down by Austens & Fieldings into an area of greater spiritual pith [...] where the Wm. Blakes & Melvilles [...] dwell” (Brinkley 242). It was only when Kerouac wrote the 1951 edition that he found a balance between the natural and the spiritual.

The 1951 edition of *On the Road* was not solely the product of multiple rewritings that ultimately culminated in a three-week writing frenzy inspired by Cassady’s “Joan Anderson Letter”, Kerouac’s writing process was also influenced by some of Cassady’s other letters. Kerouac and Cassady met each other in 1946 through Hal Chase and started writing each other letters in 1947. In March 1947, six months before Kerouac started writing his first *proto-version*, Cassady sent him a letter in which he points out that:

The process of writing forces you into a form and therefore, you just say things rather than feel them, and the honest attempt to express these feelings is too much so you just, lazily, dash off a newsy letter, or a pat formal stylized letter, or a wild artificially stimulating one and so on. Those things are for anyone to do, but not us, so to play safe force yourself to think and then write rather than, think what to write about and what to say as you write (Moore 28).

Cassady’s encouragement to focus on feeling instead of style and form was a recurrent theme in his letters to Kerouac. Cassady felt that Kerouac was too preoccupied with imitating the traditional writing style of established authors. In a letter from January 1948, Cassady says that:

I have always held that when one writes one should forget all rules, literary styles, and other such pretensions [...] Rather, I think, one should write, as nearly as possible, as if he were the first person on earth and was humbly and sincerely putting on paper that which he saw and experienced, loved and lost; what his passing thoughts were and his sorrows and desires; and these things should be said with careful avoidance of common phrases, trite usage of hackneyed words and the like (Moore 69 – 70).

Cassady pushes Kerouac to find his own unique voice, an authorial voice that is not defined by pre-established literary rules, a confessional voice that arises from the author's soul and not from his reason. Kerouac most likely took Cassady's advice to heart because on the 17th of November 1948, he wrote in his journal that he experienced a trance of writing (Brinkley 169). Kerouac had freed himself from his "previous verbal-emotional prison" (Brinkley 169). He liberated his writing from the imposed literary rules and styles and premeditated thoughts. Cassady's letters from March 1947 and January 1948 can be analyzed as a form of precursory authorship. Whereas the "Joan Anderson Letter" inspired Kerouac to tell his story in a confessional first-person register and to incorporate autobiographical material, these letters inspired Kerouac to let go of his traditional literary framework and encouraged him to "just write" in order to find his unique authorial voice (Moore 29).

3.2.2.3 EDITORIAL HISTORY

After Harcourt, Brace rejected Kerouac's 1951 edition of *On the Road*, John Clellon Holmes, author and fellow Beat member, gave the manuscript to his literary agent Rae Everett who "returned it with a great deal of carping criticism" (McNally 135). Publishing house Little, Brown also turned Kerouac's road novel down in 1954 because it lacked craftsmanship (Gussow 294). In March 1953, Kerouac and Malcolm Cowley, editor at Viking, first met after Phyllis Jackson, Kerouac's literary agent at the time, sent Cowley a copy of *On the Road* (Gussow 295). Cowley was interested in *On the Road* but his colleagues at Viking were not impressed with Kerouac's manuscript (Gussow 295). "Cowley's evident admiration for Kerouac's writing and his concern for Kerouac's career stand in striking contrast to the editorial neglect Kerouac had received to this point" (Gussow 295). In July 1955 Cowley contacted Kerouac's new literary agent Sterling Lord and asked to have another look at *On*

the Road (Gussow 302). “Viking had recently hired Keith Jennison, a young editor who was familiar with Kerouac’s work, and when he read the manuscript he quickly became convinced that Cowley was right in wanting to publish it” (Gussow 302). Although Cowley now had Jennison’s support, it took him until mid-December 1956 to get Viking to accept *On the Road* for publication (Gussow 307 – 308).

On the 22nd of May, 1951, Kerouac wrote a letter to Cassady in which he explained that he had finished the 1951 edition of *On the Road* and had been revising the manuscript for over a month (Charters, “Selected Letters” 317). According to Maher, Kerouac had typed his manuscript “onto separate pages in an attempt to make its appearance more conventional and thus more appealing to publishers” (240). These revisions precede Cowley’s editorial advice.

Cowley warned Kerouac that Viking’s agreement to publish *On the Road* depended on “three ifs”: “if we can figure out what the right changes will be (cuts and rearrangements); if we can be sure that the book won’t be suppressed for immorality; and if it won’t get us into libel suits” (Cowley qtd. in Cunnell 42). Cowley worried Kerouac’s characters, who were named after real people, might accuse Kerouac of libel and obscenity so he strongly encouraged Kerouac to change their names as well as their prominent character traits (Cunnell 518 – 519). In a letter to Cowley, dated September 20th 1955, Kerouac assured Cowley that he had already “made provisions to avoid personal injury in the cases [...] of people in respectable and public positions” (Charters, “Selected Letters” 518). Cowley was concerned that Kerouac did not take the libel issues seriously and gave the manuscript to a lawyer who was hired by Viking to check for further possible libel issues (Cunnell 43 – 44). Cowley told Kerouac that “just changing the names of the characters and changing a few of their physical characteristics aren’t enough to prevent a libel suit if the character can still be recognized by the details that we name... I had better warn you again that this question of libel is serious” (Cowley qtd. in Cunnell 44). He also advised Kerouac to get his character to sign a libel release (Cunnell 44).

The biggest part of the editorial process, namely the cutting and rearrangement of scenes, happened after Kerouac had officially signed the contract at Viking in 1956. “Cowley’s intent [...] was to have Kerouac rearrange his narrative of lived experience into something more closely resembling a ‘story’” (Gussow 303). The 1951 edition lacked a defined plot. “It seemed [...] that in the original draft the story kept swinging back and forth across the continental United States like a pendulum” (Cowley qtd. in Brinkley xxv). Instead of involving Kerouac in the revision of the storyline, Cowley never sent Kerouac the galleys

because he was “[w]orried that Kerouac would reinsert excised passages back into *On the Road*” (Brinkley xxv). The manuscript was divided into chapters, paragraphs were inserted and “dashes and ellipses often became commas [and] [c]ommas often became semicolons and colons” and scenes were deleted (Vlagopoulos 66). It is, however, difficult to find out which scenes were deleted by Kerouac in 1951 and which were deleted by Cowley in 1956 because *On the Road: The Original Scroll*, which was edited by Howard Cunnell and published in 2007, is a close representation of the manuscript that Kerouac produced in April 1951. In other words, the revisions that Kerouac made in May 1951 are not included in the published version of the scroll.

Kerouac’s 1951 revisions as well as his attempt to remove the libelous elements in the story can be considered as a form of revisionary authorship. Kerouac is thus executive author and declarative author as well as partly revisionary author of *On the Road*. Cowley can be considered revisionary author as well as, depending on which changes were made by Kerouac and which were made by Cowley between April 1951 and 1957, partly executive author because he rearranged the separate trips in the 1951 edition into “a long but unified story [...] that deals with a group of lifelike characters in a plausible situation and leads to a change in their relationship” (Cowley qtd. in Gussow 303).

4. CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have argued that *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac can be analyzed as the literary product of collaborative authorship. Collaborative authorship is usually defined as two or more authors actively working together in the creation of a literary work. I have, however, adopted a broader definition of collaborative authorship. By shifting the focus from the act of writing itself to the networks of influences that arise from the act of writing and that shape the genesis of the work, collaborative authorship can be defined as a dialogue of multiple influences. As Silverbeg states:

What's most important is that more than one author has a defining role in the shaping of the text, so that the final work always results from some form of dialogue. This conversation might be highly structured and constrained by particular rules ... or wholly spontaneous and improvisational, but in either case the relationship itself has a defining effect on the work (Silverbeg qtd. in Colin and Sachsenmaier 103).

I have approached collaborative authorship from two different angles. For the first approach or the philosophical approach, I discussed and analyzed Barthes's "The Death of the Author" and Foucault's "What Is an Author?". I used these poststructuralist theories to explicate the idea that the author and his literary work are embedded in the cultural contexts present at the time of the creation of that work. Collaborative authorship, approached from a philosophical perspective, should thus be understood as an active dialogue between the author and the literary and non-literary or cultural contexts present at the time of creation.

The genealogy of *On the Road* was not a straight highway but a road with many obstacles and turns. It was a grueling process that was characterized by various character sketches, by the writing and rewriting of several plot lines and by a continuous search to find a balance between the desire to both capture the external world and the more spiritual charged internal world. A big part of this process was also dedicated to the development of a fast-paced, confessional and writing technique. With the invention of spontaneous prose, Kerouac tried to mimic a spontaneous conversation. When he was asked about his spontaneous method in an interview with Fernand Seguin for Radio Canada, Kerouac explained that: "When you start a story, and

when you go to a bar, and you start to tell a story to the men, you don't stop to erase your mistakes, huh? You continue, and you continue, and you continue" (Seguin 272). Kerouac also tried to capture the fast pace of the lived experience in itself by synchronizing the pace of the lived experience with the pace of the prose captured in his novel.

Because Kerouac drew on his own experiences and memories to tell the story of the road, *On the Road* can be seen as a transparent representation of the contexts in which the genealogy of the novel was embedded. In my analysis I have discussed how *On the Road* can be read as a polyphonic framework. Just like Sal Paradise only briefly tells the reader about his poignant past and immediately starts telling the story of the road, Kerouac does not dwell on the postwar context of social conformism, mass consumption and bureaucratic secrecy but offers a counterculture answer to the 1940s and 1950s troubles. Sal's and Dean's fast-paced and free-spirited travels full of kicks are thus a reflection of the non-conformist postwar culture, a growing counterculture which heavily influenced the genealogy of *On the Road*.

Kerouac explained that he invented spontaneous prose in order to break free from "the conventional English sentence which seemed to me so ironbound in its rules, so inadmissible with reference to the actual format of my mind as I had learned to probe it in the modern spirit of Freud and Jung, that I couldn't express myself through that form any more" (Charters, "Portable Kerouac" 486). Even though it was Kerouac's intention to break free from the literary tradition, spontaneous prose was not a new invention. It was a continuation of the literary tradition and especially of Wordsworth's, Whitman's and Williams's literary legacy. *On the Road* is thus the literary product of the dialogue that arose between Kerouac, the growing American counterculture and the literary tradition.

For the second approach, or the methodical viewpoint on collaborative authorship, I have discussed and analyzed Love's four functions of authorship in order to demonstrate that a literary work is the result of multiple authorial functions instead of one "single, coherent activity" (Love 39). Uncovering the genealogy of a literary work will help to examine in how far these functions were performed by one single person or by several different people. Whereas collaborative authorship from a philosophical viewpoint was characterized as a dialogue between the author and the literary and non-literary or cultural contexts present at the time of creation, collaborative authorship from a methodical viewpoint can be defined as "a series of functions performed during the creation of a work" (Love 39). In other words, collaborative authorship from a philosophical perspective can be defined as a series of voices

that shape the genesis of a work and collaborative authorship from a methodical perspective can be described as a series of functions that are responsible for the creation of a work.

The two most prominent authorial functions in *On the Road*, aside from Kerouac's function as executive and declarative author, were Neal Cassady's executive authorship and Malcolm Cowley's revisionary authorship. Cassady's "Joan Anderson Letter" as well as his letters from March 1947 and January 1948 influenced Kerouac so much so that he decided to let go of the traditional literary framework and write the fourth version of his road novel or *On the Road: The Original Scroll* in a confessional first-person perspective. Cowley's editorial revisions eliminated any libelous elements from Kerouac's text as well as transformed Kerouac's manuscript into a coherent story.

This dissertation should be considered as a starting step to extensive research about Beat authorship and especially the collaborative nature of Beat authorship. Because the "Joan Anderson Letter" has not yet been fully published to this day, my analysis is only based on a short section of the letter that was copied by Kerouac and published in Dave Moore's *Neal Cassady: Collected Letters, 1944 – 1967*. Even though this short section is a good representation of the fast-paced, confessional and autobiographical style that inspired Kerouac to rewrite his road story, it does not represent the full "Joan Anderson Letter". My analysis should thus be revised or even reconsidered once the complete version of Cassady's letter is published.

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