

ALEX CIOROGAR

**FROM SINGULARITY TO MULTIPLICITY.  
THE POWER CYCLE OF AUTHORSHIP,  
BETWEEN SUBMISSION AND SUBVERSION**

The present article is dedicated to the guiding theme of “Collective Authorship” in its diverse contexts and notional meanings. Mapping the intellectual stakes and conceptual propositions of recent scholarship represents one of the main aims of my paper. I’ve selected only those works which elegantly combine empirical research with strong theoretical reflections. Focusing on two important junctures (the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the 1960s), the historical perspective is complemented by a state of the art review covering several disciplinary fields: I will examine sociological investigations concerning the history of collective authorship; analytical philosophy papers dealing with action theories and authorial agencies; studies from the fields of rhetorics and composition; and, last but not least, I will briefly probe some of the most pressing issues pertaining to copyright and/or intellectual property<sup>1</sup>. It is also important to note that I will not be covering electronic or digital forms of collective authorship. As I will hopefully demonstrate, *authorship studies* are undergoing major changes today, marking the shift from the romantic understanding of the author towards the construction of what I’ve called an authorial ecosystem which, in its turn, can be understood as being part of a larger (and circular) dynamic entity.

Ryszard W. Kluszczyński justly observed that “collaboration, participation, and community are currently becoming the central categories of reflection on art, culture and social organization”<sup>2</sup>. The reasons behind why recent scholarship has focused on creative collaboration or collective work are twofold. In the last three decades, academics working in far-flung fields have spent an enormous amount of time and effort investigating contemporary artistic practices which, by and large, are relational<sup>3</sup>. Understandably, this movement has had an important impact,

---

<sup>1</sup> The research domains have been selected from the generous list compiled by Marjorie Stone and Judith Thomson in *Literary Couplings. Writing Couples, Collaborators, and the Construction of Authorship*, London, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006, pp. 3-35.

<sup>2</sup> Ryszard W. Kluszczyński, “Re-Writing the History of Media Art: From Personal Cinema to Artistic Collaboration”, *LEONARDO*, XL, 2007, 5, p. 471.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, one only needs to take a glance at Nicolas Bourriaud’s rather successful books: *Relational Aesthetics*. Translated by Simon Pleasance, Fronza Woods and Mathieu Copeland, Les presses du réel, 2002; *Postproduction*, Berlin – New York, Lukas & Sternberg, 2005; *The Radicant*, Berlin – New York, Lukas & Sternberg, 2009; Claire Bishop (*Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, New York, Verso, 2012; *Participation*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2006), Grant H. Kester (*Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*,

influencing the main research trends in literary studies, which, as we will see, are bent on rethinking the idea and history of collective authorship<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, recent epistemological turns<sup>5</sup> have greatly modified the interests and practices of scholars. The overwhelming powers of technological advancements and, consequently, the new forms of collaborative research in the Humanities are both equally responsible for this renewed passion for multiple authorship in the Academia<sup>6</sup>. Last but not least, the poststructural critique of the self and its pervasiveness is – in some measure – responsible for a left-wing, postmodern resurgence of collectivity and anonymity.

### *The Premodern Understanding of Collective Authorship*

Ancient thinkers valued authors, first and foremost, for their didactic and social functions. Creativity was never assigned to one individual alone: inspiration was possession and the source of inventiveness was always relocated beyond the individual subject into full transcendence<sup>7</sup>. The plea for the mythological identity of the author (as Isabelle Diu and Elisabeth Parinet define it<sup>8</sup>) can be reinterpreted as the admittance of the fact that nobody can create anything without the help of *the other*<sup>9</sup>. Thus, the implicit realization that one cannot fully assume authorship – one does not or cannot compete with divine creation – is an indirect confession of the fact that literary production will always be collaborative (the gesture of infinitely pointing to another source or origin being highly suggestive of this).

A similar conception dominated the written culture “du Moyen Âge, qu’il s’agissait de textes théologiques, ou d’ouvrages de fiction, se caractérise donc par la

Oakland, University of California Press, 2004) and Charles Green (*The Third Hand. Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism*, London, University of Minnesota Press, 2001) are also worth mentioning here.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Badenhausen, *T.S. Eliot and The Art of Collaboration*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Hastily heading towards new forms of positivism, rationalism, materialism, and pragmatism: *world literature studies, quantitative analysis, literary Darwinism, digital humanities, ecocriticism, or the Anthropocene*.

<sup>6</sup> See Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence. Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy*, New York – London, New York University Press, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Bénichou, *Le Sacre de l'écrivain. 1750-1830. Essai sur l'avènement d'un pouvoir spirituel laïque dans la France moderne*, Paris, NRF Éditions Gallimard, 1996, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> Isabelle Diu, Elisabeth Parinet, *Histoire des auteurs*, Paris, Éditions Perrin, 2013, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Starobinski, *Gesturile fundamentale ale criticii [The Fundamental Gestures of Criticism]*. Translation and preface by Angela Martin, foreword by Mircea Martin, București, Art, 2014, p. 97: “Ancient tradition, at least since Homer, has attributed a capital role to the poet’s friend: he is the first to see the text which was forged during a long period of time. He has the right to make observations regarding its form, he will be the first to recognize its beauty, he will mark its defects and demand they be corrected: at need, he will counsel the poet that the work should not be published. He becomes not only the first reader of the work but its downright co-author”.

prédominance de l'anonymat ou de la pensée collective"<sup>10</sup>. Indeed, Jean Starobinski identified it as the "ritualistic phase" of literature: collective creation where one cannot clearly distinguish between creator and public. Although he was mainly referring to Classical Antiquity, the realization that "no one owns the function of actual *author*", as Starobinski rightly noted<sup>11</sup>, is also valid for the medieval stage in authorship history. Likewise, it has been recently argued, for instance, that the corporate element of writing existed from medieval times up until the Renaissance<sup>12</sup> (the 16<sup>th</sup> century).

Investigating written documents and manuscripts, Grace Ioppolo has demonstrated that early modern dramatists "collaborated in various ways and degrees in the theatrical production and performance of their plays, and that for early modern dramatists and their theatrical colleagues, authorship was a continual process, not a determinate action"<sup>13</sup>. It is important to appreciate that, far from belonging to a logic of distinction, the attention and the importance *the other* receives in the process of creation represents an authentic lesson of true literary humbleness. Most importantly, we can conclude that both the construction and identity of authorship are constituted through the ritualistic negotiation between *the self* and *the other* as they engage each other in the ongoing process/conversation of text-production.

#### *The Sociological Perspective on Collective Authorship*

Alain Viala, in his seminal book published in 1985, *Naissance de l'écrivain. Sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique*, examines the French literary scene by retracing the steps in the concrete formation of what the sociologist has coined as *the first French literary field* (the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century): "Je le désigne comme le premier champ littéraire". Viala showed that the genesis and the processes which led to the field's empowerment were strictly social in nature (no exceptions) or, in Thomas Wynn's simple yet illuminating words, "collaboration marks the emergence of the author". The appearance, for instance, of the Academy, this "ensemble of personalities", as Viala calls it, represented one of the base elements which facilitated the birth of the professionalized author-writer. Being responsible for providing spaces of sociability, dialogue and collective reflection, the Academy quickly became the symbolic "factory" of Authors, maintaining a series of processes dedicated to the continual formation of its

---

<sup>10</sup> Isabelle Diu, Elisabeth Parinet, *Histoire*, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> Jean Starobinski, *Gesturile*, p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Martha Woodmansee, "On the Author Effect: Recovering Collectivity", in Martha Woodmansee, Peter Jaszi (eds.), *The Construction of Authorship. Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (1994), Durham – London, Duke University Press, 2006, p. 17.

<sup>13</sup> Grace Ioppolo, *Dramatists and Their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and Heywood. Authorship, Authority, and the Playhouse*, New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 1.

members<sup>14</sup>: mutual recognition and support through advice, counsels, and critiques<sup>15</sup>.

The researcher further develops his argument showing that, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, two different conceptions of literary property coexisted: one that advantaged the editor, while the other predictably favoured the author<sup>16</sup>. The adoption of an institutional stance (determining the relations between the literary field and the overall society), transforms Viala's archeological effort into a descriptive catalog of the first (French) literary organizations: the press, literary saloons, the academies. His investigation becomes truly revealing when distinguishing between two sets of hierarchical principles governing the social dimension of the literary field: heteronomous ranking principles (the ways in which the newly formed general public influenced the processes of creation) and autonomous ranking principles (the extra-literary constraints: mainly political and religious)<sup>17</sup>. In spite of its hegemonic structure, the mechanism behind the social dimension of the literary field was finally influenced by two other remaining factors: the personal relations criteria and geographical repartition<sup>18</sup>.

It appears that the 17<sup>th</sup> century marked a crucial moment in the history of authorship, a paradoxical moment when literature – as an institution and socially valuable field of practice – became one of the many public phenomena governed by extra-literary powers (political and religious). Gaining in prestige and popularity, the ruling class tolerated the new and relative autonomy of the literary field. Of course, this was by no means a new situation (suffice it to recall Mecena's example as a patron), but thanks to Viala's demonstration (made possible by the use of sociological instruments), the apparatus responsible for this type of control and collaboration<sup>19</sup> was virtually exposed: the system became – visually and metaphorically – transparent for the first time and, consequently, open to relentless-postmodern scrutiny. This is the first moment when the more or less centralized political and religious powers of France could firmly participate (alongside the newly formed general public and its preferences) to the institutional,

---

<sup>14</sup> Alain Viala, *Naissance de l'écrivain. Sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique*, Paris, Minuit, 1985, p. 42.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 43.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 97.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 185.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 258.

<sup>19</sup> Grant H. Kester, *The One and the Many. Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*, Durham – London, Duke University Press, 2011, pp. 1-2: "We must begin, of course, by coming to terms with collaboration itself. Its primary meaning is straightforward enough: 'to work together' or 'in conjunction with' another, to engage in a 'united labor.' It is shadowed, however, by a second meaning: collaboration as betrayal, to 'cooperate treasonably, as with an enemy occupation force.' This ambivalence, the semantic slippage between positive and negative connotations, is, I think, fitting".

political, and economical construction of modern authorship and literature. While the art of writing became a socially recognized social function/ role, literature emerged, in its turn, as a new commodity, an object of both symbolic and economic exchange.

The public recognition of writer-authors was unfortunately won at a great price: the underground control on which the success of several writers depended (Viala actually describes two sets of strategies used by writers: *la réussite* and *le succès*<sup>20</sup>) and the continuous process of individualisation proved to be the perfect cover for various hidden interests. By promoting the image of the individual writer, governmental instances (in Foucault's understanding) succeeded in overshadowing of the inner workings of real-life authorship (*i.e.* the collaborative involvement of external powers). Inauspiciously, the celebration of the death of anonymity – and the formal birth of the author – was a pretext to push the collective dimension of writing into the background, since it turned out to be unsuitable for those in high places.

Of course, an important question quickly arises. What happens with authorial anonymity and collectivity in a totalitarian regime? Or, better yet, what happens with individual forms of authorship or with the public recognition of writers when facing an extreme or radical intrusion of external/ ideological forces? Let's start by reading Katharine Holt's view on the matter, by citing her description of different types of authorship: "I will define the practice as the collaboration of a group of authors in the production of a single work or series of works and I will propose three subcategories: strong, weak, and unacknowledged. The strong form of collective authorship, in this schema, involves collaboration on multiple aspects of a work and group authorial credit, while the unacknowledged form involves unspecified amounts of collaboration and no group authorial credit. In between these two extremes, as I have defined them, is the weak form, where collaboration occurs on one or more aspect of a work and credit is divided (not necessarily equally) among the individual participating authors"<sup>21</sup>. She claims that the existence of avant-garde manifestoes (such as the futurists or the imagists) in the early Soviet period cannot obscure the majority of stalinist texts (altered by editors, Party officials or even Stalin himself), even though both of them staked everything on collective types of creative production.

Arguably, the collective dimension of literary composition led to the birth of the modern figure of the author but anonymity didn't entirely disappear especially if we look at repressive systems. Consequently, we can say that democratic regimes tend to view collective writing practices as revolutionary, while

---

<sup>20</sup> Alain Viala, *Naissance*, p. 183.

<sup>21</sup> Katharine Holt, "Platonov and Collective Authorship", *Russian Literature*, LXXIII, 2013, I-II, p. 58, doi:10.1016/j.ruslit.2013.01.005.

totalitarian establishments always seem to find a way in instrumentalizing collaborative authorship. Generally speaking, autonomous administrations perceive collective writing practices as threatening the legitimacy of their political institutions through effective aesthetic/ rhetorical strategies, stirring up unwanted feelings in the populace. Antithetically, authorial multiplicity typically succumbs – in dictatorial establishments – to political schemes by way of institutionally aestheticized discourses (like censorship or propaganda) which demand the imposition of certain perspectives pretending, at the same time, they were actually forged by/ through the will of the people.

*The Emergence and Inner Contradictions of the Individual Author*

Authorship wasn't a stable profession until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Writers, it has been argued, still depended on the patronage system. This also meant that "the circulation of texts depended on limited production systems and an elite class of readers"<sup>22</sup>. One year before Alain Viala published his book, Martha Woodmansee showed that, even in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the modern notion of the author did not exist: "If the writer appears here as only one of the craftsmen responsible for the finished product, that is because he was viewed, and by and large still viewed himself, in much the same terms as they - that is, as master of a craft, master of a body of rules, or techniques, preserved and handed down in rhetoric and poetics, for the transmission of ideas handed down by tradition"<sup>23</sup>. In this context, "tradition" becomes a safe-zone for the collective dimension of authorship. Collaborating with Academy members was – among other things – "an effective means by which an eighteenth-century author might aspire to social recognition and legitimacy"<sup>24</sup>. However, this situation will indeed alter at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when rhetorics will no longer belong to the outside world, becoming a privileged method of exposing and constructing the poet's inner, original self. What's more, "the withdrawal of the state from the control of the book market and the abjuration of censorship entailed the need for new legislation restricting the principle of freedom of speech"<sup>25</sup>. I will further trace the contradictions between the Romantic myth of the individual author and the writing practices of professional authors within the market system of production.

The new technological developments (the steam printing press, new modes of transportation) and a new middle class commercial market (making the aristocratic

---

<sup>22</sup> Brady Laura Ann, *Collaborative Literary Writing: Issues of Authorship and Authority*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Martha Woodmansee, "On the Author Effect", p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Wynn, "Collaboration and Authorship in Eighteenth-Century French Theater", *The Romantic Review*, CIII, 2012, 3-4, November, p. 466.

<sup>25</sup> Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writer's Responsibility in France: From Flaubert to Sartre", *French Politics Culture & Society*, XXV, 2007, 1, March, p. 1. DOI: 10.3167/fpcs.2007.250101.

readership virtually obsolete) transformed the author's relationship to society and, most importantly, "replaced patronage with capitalism"<sup>26</sup>. However, an important point needs to be made here. Recently, strong voices have risen against this all pervasive state of affairs. Geoffrey Turnovsky's work<sup>27</sup>, for instance, has been hugely influential: he "counters the argument that the rise of a commercial book trade provided writers with a welcome alternative to a court patronage system"<sup>28</sup>. Turnovsky also revised Bourdieu's ideas "regarding the nonautonomous and autonomous zones", redefining them as "discursive artifacts"<sup>29</sup>. It is true that 19<sup>th</sup> century writers rejected the technological and economic conditions that made their livelihood as authors possible, constructing the image of the Romantic artist<sup>30</sup>. Nonetheless, analyzing the Coleridges, the Shelleys, and the Wordsworths, Michelle Levy has shown that family authorship – which rested both on patronage and manuscript culture – reflected a political struggle in Romantic identity between private communities and public construction of individual geniuses, thus revealing the sociable nature of Romantic authorship and the collaborative nature of Romantic literary culture<sup>31</sup>. The inability to acknowledge cross-gendered or inter-generational authorship further reflected the ways in which the expectations of the print marketplace collided with the real practices of literary production<sup>32</sup>. However, as already stated, "at the very moment when the state relinquished its attempts to control the book market, writers appropriated the notion of responsibility, relieving it of its juridical meaning, in order to define their own ethical principles, their duties, and their rights towards society"<sup>33</sup>. Focusing on the independence from moral and political constraints (leaving Bourdieu's economic constraints behind), Gisèle Sapiro showed how these socially oriented ethical principles contributed to the emergence of an autonomous literary field, as we have already seen with Viala.

Rolf G. Renner's contribution to the debate appears to be more nuanced since he argues that the paradigm of individual creativity has been deconstructed since

---

<sup>26</sup> Brady Laura Ann, *Collaborative*, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Geoffrey Turnovsky, *The Literary Market: Authorship and Modernity in the Old Regime*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Pamela Cheek, "Review: *The Literary Market: Authorship and Modernity in the Old Regime*. By Geoffrey Turnovsky. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010", *Modern Language Quarterly*, LXXIII, 2012, 4, p. 606.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 606.

<sup>30</sup> Brady Laura Ann, *Collaborative*, p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> Michelle Levy, *Family Authorship and Romantic Print Culture*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> Michelle Levy, *Family Authorship*, p. 7.

<sup>33</sup> Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writer's Responsibility", pp. 2-3.

its birth by the philological analysis of collective authorship<sup>34</sup>. Thus, with the publication of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Goethe instated Homer as the ideal and origin of the creative genius, marking, as Renner writes, both the birth of aesthetics and the emergence of the new romantic subjectivity<sup>35</sup>. In opposition, Friedrich August Wolf showed, by publishing his *Prolegomena ad Homerum* in 1795, that the silence of Homer was the undeniable proof that the Homeric texts had no clear origin because they belonged to an oral tradition<sup>36</sup>. Supposedly, the Homeric texts are the result of a grand collective effort and, in time, their “editors” have become their rightful co-authors<sup>37</sup>.

Although they were still searching for authorial charisma, late Romantic writers revised their accounts of agency and authorship – challenging their own high Romanticism claims for the author’s singular imagination – by attributing a person’s identity or a writer’s imagination to a much larger organization (such as the state)<sup>38</sup>. The Romantic definition of the poet was partially abandoned, as Anne Fray has shown (drawing on the late works of Foucault or Benedict Anderson’s *imagined communities*), in her ground-breaking study, *British State Romanticism. Authorship, Agency, and Bureaucratic Nationalism*, published in 2010, by rethinking the visionary individual authorial agency. It was rebranded as a modest function of a “system into which he inserts himself”<sup>39</sup>, a system which increasingly penetrated “individual lives”<sup>40</sup>.

The romantic author received his final blow, as Florian Vassen has convincingly shown, when the same Goethe sent a letter, in 1832, to Frédéric Soret acknowledging the existence of something that could be called the collective understanding of authorship<sup>41</sup>. In Goldmann’s footsteps, it is safe to say that Goethe succumbed to the truth that a writer’s tastes, needs, wishes or tendencies will never belong to his or her creative individuality alone, but to the general

---

<sup>34</sup> Rolf G. Renner, “Subversion of Creativity and the Dialectics of the Collective”, in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity. Collaborative Work in the Sciences, Literature and the Arts*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi Press, 2011, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> There are, of course, other opinions. For instance, Grant H. Kester, *The One*, p. 3: “the figure of the singular, auratic artist, reinforced by notions of artistic genius first formalized by Kant, remains the bulwark of the long history of modernism, and the epistemological template for much contemporary criticism”.

<sup>36</sup> For a full examination of the Homeric question see Walter J. Ong’s *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word*, London – New York, Routledge, 2012, pp. 17-20.

<sup>37</sup> Rolf G. Renner, “Subversion”, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> Anne Fray, *British State Romanticism. Authorship, Agency, and Bureaucratic Nationalism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2010, pp. 2-3.

<sup>39</sup> Anne Fray, *British State Romanticism*, p. 15.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> Florian Vassen, “From Author to Spectator: Collective Creativity as a Theatrical Play of Artists and Spectators”, in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity*, p. 300.

public as well<sup>42</sup>. This move was actually preceded by an equally famous act of realization. In 1761, Voltaire relates to Charles de Fyot, as Thomas Wynn has argued, how collaboration always comes into play in the process of literary production. Here are Wynn's conclusions: "literary creation is not a unique and isolated moment. When each stage of the text's genesis is taken into account, it is clear that two seemingly opposed models of writing—singular and collective—can coexist"<sup>43</sup>. It is now clear that, while the social dimension of literary writing never disappeared, the subtle shift from anonymity to public recognition was responsible for the consolidation and modernisation of the literary field, even though, as we have seen, a considerable price had to be paid. The definition of authorship constantly oscillates between a "sense of social responsibility and the idea of «art for art's sake»"<sup>44</sup>. The latter (art for art's sake) was developed as a response to the limits that political and religious authorities tried to impose upon literary creation, while the former (the notion of the writer's social responsibility) was theorized by conservative intellectuals in order to place boundaries on the range of discourse.

More radically, Rolf Parr believes that all types of creativity are and have always been interactive and, consequently, collective. In his view, the singular author plays the role of concealing the inner contradictions and complexities of authentic authorship<sup>45</sup>. In fact, Margaret Chon has proved that collective authorship "is an intransigent shape-shifter"<sup>46</sup>. Thus, the practices of collective writing cannot even be dissociated from individual ones<sup>47</sup>. What we can do, Parr suggests, is to distinguish between different conceptions of authorship: "between the real process of creativity and production [...] and the staged performance of authorship on the judicial and economic fields of society"<sup>48</sup>. I will be examining a series of similar conceptual pairs in the last section of the paper, while also putting forward a notional distinction of our own.

---

<sup>42</sup> Alain Brunn, *L'auteur*, Paris, Flammarion, 2001, p. 164.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Wynn, "Collaboration and Authorship", p. 470.

<sup>44</sup> Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writer's Responsibility", p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Rolf Parr, "Autorschaft. Eine kurze Sozialgeschichte der literarischen Intelligenz", in *Deutschland zwischen 1860 und 1930*, Heidelberg, Synchron, 2008.

<sup>46</sup> Margaret Chon, "The Romantic Collective Author", *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law*, XIV, 2012, 4, p. 838.

<sup>47</sup> Brady Laura Ann, *Collaborative*, pp. 18-19: "Within the field of literature, one of the effects of this contradiction has been a lasting tension between the Romantic ideological construction of the author as an isolated individual, and the collective practices of mechanized and commercial literary production which created the interdependent profession of authorship".

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Ernst, "From Avant-Garde to Capitalistic Teamwork: Collective Writing between Subversion and Submission", in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity*, p. 234.

*The Problems of Defining Modern Authorship*

In the meantime, however, let us investigate the 20<sup>th</sup> century status of collective authorship. This is a moment when the anonymity of the author recaptures the center-stage of literary studies, due to the attacks French theory launched upon the subject's claims to originality and creativity: "l'auteur n'invente rien, il ne fait que bricoler des textes et obéir aux lois de la langue ou du genre"<sup>49</sup>. Although it was not publicly admitted, the institutional death of the author (and the accompanying birth of the reader) represented an essential first step in the process of restaging the relational dimension of literary production<sup>50</sup>. Significantly, the scope of joint artistic endeavors is, as Ryszard W. Kluszczyński has argued, the construction of avant-garde strategies oriented against the hostile environment of traditional institutions (the happenings of the 1960s, for instance)<sup>51</sup>. Collaboratively written texts reconstruct the power relations of production, challenging the oligarchical structure prescribed by the paradigm of individual authorship. Interestingly noted, "the revolutionary ambitions of the surrealist avant-garde, who wanted to turn poetry into a subversive arm against society, disturbed the classical division between art for art's sake and moral responsibility"<sup>52</sup>. It is also worth remembering that technical improvements proved crucial to authors engaged in avant-garde, innovative, experimental, and counter-cultural work, spearheading literary trends that favored "collaboration and perhaps most notably, immediacy"<sup>53</sup>. While Michael P. Farrell's description of the seven stages of collaborative circles (while admittedly fascinating) fails in grasping the dynamics of the cultural field within which creative work is embedded<sup>54</sup>, it is fair to assume that Jacques Dubois's work still acts as the central theoretical framework for institutional analysis<sup>55</sup>.

Nevertheless, after May '68, only two books succeeded in capturing the full imagination of researchers: Jack Stillinger's *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (1991) and Jerome McGann's *A Critique of Modern Textual*

<sup>49</sup> Maurice Couturier, *La Figure de l'auteur*, Paris, Seuil, 1995, p. 12.

<sup>50</sup> Grant H. Kester, *The One*, pp. 9-10: "collaborative art practices complicate conventional notions of aesthetic autonomy".

<sup>51</sup> Ryszard W. Kluszczyński, "Re-Writing", p. 473.

<sup>52</sup> Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writer's Responsibility", pp. 8-9.

<sup>53</sup> Kate Eichhorn, "Late Print Culture's Social Media Revolution: Authorship, Collaboration and Copy Machines", *Authorship*, I, 2013, 4, Summer, p. 6. <http://www.authorship.ugent.be>.

<sup>54</sup> Michael P. Farrell, *Collaborative Circles: Friendship Dynamics and Creative Work*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001.

<sup>55</sup> Jacques Dubois, *L'institution de la littérature. Introduction à une sociologie*, Bruxelles, Labor, 1990.

*Criticism* (1983)<sup>56</sup>. The former didn't provide a brand new definition or theory of multiple authorship. Instead, he effectively analyzed a set of earlier writing processes<sup>57</sup>. The latter argued that the authority of any text lies in a systematic synergy between the author and the publisher. After a series of *close readings*, Stillinger concluded, as I have already suggested, that the myth of the solitary genius is an extremely advantageous convention for all those involved in the production and reception of books, a myth that is an integral part of our current cultural practices, especially when it comes to interpretation<sup>58</sup>. Intentionalists (E.D. Hirsch, Knapp & Michaels), anti-intentionalists (Wimsatt and Beardsley), and even controversial figures such as Roland Barthes or Michel Foucault – all of them, Stillinger argued, were using and abusing the same myth of the solitary author<sup>59</sup>. Even though it seemed to want to get rid of the myth of the solitary genius, Stillinger's argument finally settles in simply adding another point in the complex diagram of subjective creativity.

This myth continues to be invoked, as Peter Jaszi has shown, in the field of law<sup>60</sup>. While creative production tends to become more collective, the law invokes the figure of the romantic author even more persistently<sup>61</sup>. Interestingly, Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede have revealed that the judicial enactment of authorship and Stillinger's convenient convention have, in fact, completely disappeared with the bizarre exception of the Humanities<sup>62</sup>. One thing is certain. The illusion of autonomy is still very strong among the writers. They certainly forget that the literary field structured "itself around the opposition between autonomy and heteronomy"<sup>63</sup>. The bundle of agents acting in the field of literature are reticent when it comes to participating in the construction of any kind of cultural relativism: "at the heteronomous pole of the intellectual field, writers related the defense of morals to the strength of the nation state – a concern that lies at the

---

<sup>56</sup> Marjorie Stone, Judith Thompson, "Taking Joint Stock. A Critical Survey of Scholarship on Literary Couples and Collaborations", in Marjorie Stone, Judith Thomson (eds.), *Literary Couplings*, p. 316.

<sup>57</sup> Unlike Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author. Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998.

<sup>58</sup> Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*, New York – Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 187.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 193.

<sup>60</sup> Peter Jaszi, "On the Author Effect: Contemporary Copyright and Collective Creativity", in Martha Woodmansee, Peter Jaszi (eds.), *The Construction of Authorship*, p. 29.

<sup>61</sup> We should also draw attention to Grant H. Kester, *The One*, p. 15: "the history of artistic identity, pointing to certain fault lines in the constitution of modern subjectivity" which was constructed "around notions of property and possessive individualism".

<sup>62</sup> Marjorie Stone, Judith Thompson, "Taking Joint Stock. A Critical Survey of Scholarship on Literary Couples and Collaborations", in Marjorie Stone, Judith Thomson (eds.), *Literary Couplings*, p. 313.

<sup>63</sup> Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writer's Responsibility", p. 2.

heart of the political dimension of an author's penal responsibility [...]. At the autonomous pole, «intellectuals» conceived a set of professional values to affirm their symbolic power and reconceptualize their responsibility along political lines”<sup>64</sup>.

However, it is true that the global cultural community is constantly fighting for the legal rights of creative producers (both economically and ethically) in a hyper-capitalized world<sup>65</sup>. It certainly appears that the functioning of authorship is a cyclical phenomenon: whenever writing practices deem themselves subversive, threatening the autonomy of the literary establishment by staging some sort of cultural revolution, authorship instantly shifts to participatory actions and altruistic outlooks (*subversive or communal authorship*). Contrarily, acquiescent creative processes generally lead to individual forms of authorship (*submissive or private authorship*) and to a conservative understanding of literature. However, as we have seen, this only holds true inside the confines of a democratic regime.

#### *The Analytical Perspective on Collective Authorship*

As previously stated, I will review various conceptions that could account for the differences between the actual process of production and authorship personas. A cursory survey suggests that there are at least two major types of definitions: agentless and agent-based rationales (of course, agentless forms of authorship are rare to non-existent).

Darren Hudson Hick, an analytical philosopher working in the field of action theories, recently published an article provoking a small yet sturdy debate on the topic of collective authorship<sup>66</sup>. In his view, the author is the person responsible for the form and content of a work of art (he includes aesthetic and moral qualities). Discretely hinting to Poe's *Philosophy of Composition*, Hick defined responsibility as the power to select and arrange the constitutive elements of a given work<sup>67</sup>. Rather banal, Hick avers that multiple authorship can be simply identified when the work is composed of easily identifiable units. If, on the other hand, the work is naturally composed as a single unit, we may speak of co-authorship<sup>68</sup>. In order to further stress his position, Hick invoked the *Copyright Act of 1976* showing that the law similarly defines a *joint work* as one made by two or more authors having the intention of blending their work into a single, independent unit. Conversely, a *collective work* is composed of a number of independent

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

<sup>65</sup> The SoA (*The Society of Authors*), for instance, claims that it “protects the rights and furthers the interests of all types of authors”, <http://www.societyofauthors.org>. Accessed 01.06.2016.

<sup>66</sup> Darren Hudson Hick, “Authorship, Co-Authorship, and Multiple Authorship”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXII, 2014, 2, Spring.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 151.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 153.

contributions (an anthology, for instance). Thus, the ethical dimension of authorship (the authors' responsible behaviors) could be used as a rather illusive gauge in order to discern between genuine labor and theatrical renderings. It could also be construed as an alternative model of authorship where writers need to assume responsibility for a text, while also negotiating their differences and balancing out authority issues.

Bacharach and Tollefsen<sup>69</sup> have put forward a simple but well-thought reply. As we have seen, Hick used responsibility as the sole criteria for defining works of multiple or co-authorship (without attacking his conceptual distinctions, Anton Killin also published a response<sup>70</sup>, showing that Hick's case study was a false instance of co-authorship). Bacharach and Tollefsen redefined the two categories on the basis of the type of interaction existing between those involved in a project, borrowing some of the basic principles of TPB (theory of planned behavior). Although he replies, Hick unconvincingly refashioned his former arguments<sup>71</sup>.

Working in the fields of rhetorics and composition, Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford offer a surprising definition of multiple authorship completely devoid of any human subject: "any activities that lead to a completed written document"<sup>72</sup>. On the opposite end, I will recall Thomas Hines modestly arguing that multiple authorship can be identified wherever and whenever artists work "together to produce a joint creation"<sup>73</sup>. We need, at this point, to distinguish between cooperation (hierarchically split into non-coordinated, independent tasks) and collaboration: a coordinated, synchronous activity containing a set of cognitive processes heterarchically divided into intertwined layers, having the goal of constructing and maintaining a shared conception of a problem<sup>74</sup> (both of them are, however, agent-based explanations). Finally, Britta Hermann acknowledges the existence of individual and collective authorship but she equates it to the Searlian differentiation between strong (the genial, solitary author) and weak authorship (collective, anonymous authorship<sup>75</sup>). In this framework, both cooperation and collaboration would be articulating different forms of weak authoriality. Seth

---

<sup>69</sup> Sondra Bacharach, Deborah Tollefsen, "Co-Authorship, Multiple Authorship, and Posthumous Authorship: A Reply to Hick", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXIII, 2015, 3, Summer, pp. 331-334.

<sup>70</sup> Anton Killin, "Works, Authors, Co-Authorship, and Power: A Response to Hick", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXIII, 2015, 3, Summer, pp. 334-337.

<sup>71</sup> Darren Hudson Hick, "The Co-Author Is Dead; Long Live the Co-Author: A Reply to Killin, Bacharach, and Tollefsen", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXIII, 2015, 3, Summer, pp. 337-341.

<sup>72</sup> Judith Thompson, Marjorie Stone, "Contexts and Heterotexts. A Theoretical and Historical Introduction", in Marjorie Stone, Judith Thompson (eds.), *Literary Couplings*, p. 22.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 22.

<sup>74</sup> Ryszard W. Kluszczyński, "Re-Writing", p. 473.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas Ernst, "From Avant-Garde", in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity*, p. 234.

Whidden's work could be understood as further developing this perspective of weak authorship<sup>76</sup>. He distinguishes between two types of collaborative writing: collaboration *in praesentia* and *in absentia*. It is true, however, that this also represents a problem: being a very ambitious project, Whidden understands collaboration as any type of intertextuality or citation: "by positing a conceptual model whose reach is so vast in its scope, a degree of precision may be lost in our understanding of that which fundamentally distinguishes a literary work of shared labor (a "collaboration" in its etymological sense), from one that considers another's work or life in a sustained literary project, such as a literary homage or an elegy, or perhaps even some forms of biography"<sup>77</sup>. Thomas Wynn showed how collective authorship – this technique of strategic sociability, as he called it – can occur at any moment in the process of composition (initial suggestion, joint composition, welcomed feedback), stressing that it must always be consensual (valid, voluntary, and invited), "for otherwise it is not collaboration but plagiarism or unwelcome intervention"<sup>78</sup>.

It is worth arguing that authorship acts as an interface for the effective functioning of creative practices. Consequently, the interconnection between factual writing patterns and dramatic perpetrations of authorship hinges, as we have shown, on moral, legal, and sovereignty issues. Moreover, I would assert that the two types of authorship identified above (*submissive* and *subversive*) are also determined by the ways in which all the agents involved in the construction of authoriality relate to the legal, economic, social, and technological dimensions of the literary field. There is, as I have shown, a direct relationship between left-wing and right-wing ideologies and different forms of authorship: while the former could be described as revolutionary and, consequently, interested in corporate types of manifestation (*subversive authorship*), the latter appears to be much more conservative, focusing on individual power mongering and the cultivation of elitist modes of public expression (*submissive authorship*).

### Conclusions

The socially constructed nature of human subjectivity has long been recognized as an undeniable truth. Hopefully, the recognition of multiple authorship won't cause too much turbulence either. Academics usually identify the works of Roland Barthes<sup>79</sup> and Michel Foucault<sup>80</sup> as the exclusive starting points

<sup>76</sup> Seth Whidden (ed.), *Models of Collaboration in Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Several Authors, One Pen*, Farnham – Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2009, pp. 5-9.

<sup>77</sup> See Suzanne F. Braswell's review of *Models of Collaboration in Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Several Authors, One Pen*, *H-France Review*, XI, 2010, 4, January, p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> Thomas Wynn, "Collaboration and Authorship", p. 471.

<sup>79</sup> Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", in *Image. Music. Text*. Translated by Stephen Heath, New York, Hill and Wang, 1977.

in the process of investigating different aspects of authorship (even those who argue against them<sup>81</sup>). These routes should readily be abandoned: electing a number of authors as the founding fathers of a certain paradigm of authorship is obviously contrary to the belief that the idea of the solitary genius must be dealt away with. However, it is important to remember that, in its collective form, the author plays the same roles as the individual author (genius and arbiter – derived from the collaborative processes leading up to final products). Accordingly, Margaret Chon believes we shouldn't idealize collaborative creation. Instead, she suggests, we should de-romanticise collective authorship, because it could lead us to more inclusive and reliable forms of knowledge. Authorship would then be able to trust the shoulders of giants on which it stands<sup>82</sup>.

As I have shown, the Enlightenment and the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century represent critical moments in the history of authorship. On the first hand, the modernisation of the literary field – autonomy and fame – unfortunately imposed the idea of the solitary author in the disadvantage of multiple authorship. On the second hand, the death of the author indicated a slow but definite return to older forms of authorship. Most importantly, I would stress the importance of the re-externalisation of rhetorics through the constitution of a new creative commons (conceptual poetry, post-internet movements, appropriation poems) and the reoccurrence of collectivity and anonymity (*Wikipedia* is the general example here). By analyzing the morphology of these two moments, I have clearly determined that authorial obscurity and celebrity are deeply intertwined with topics such as the formation of power discourses and the development of legitimation codes. It is safe to say that recent evaluations of collective authorship represent a necessary (yet far from timely) alignment with the post-theoretical claims of the last 15 years.

Notwithstanding, “the current moment is defined by a complex and contradictory mixture of cultural and geopolitical forces”<sup>83</sup>. Fashioned as a myth or as a concrete practice, authorship – an ambiguous notion, permanently hesitating between public recognition and anonymity – is undergoing fundamental changes today. Determined by the relation between the intentions or responsibilities of a certain group and their members' attitudes towards literary works, collective authorship deliberately distorts the figure of the solitary writer. Thus, the authorial

---

<sup>80</sup> Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?”. Translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, in Donald, F. Bouchard (ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, Ithaca – New York, Cornell University Press, 1977.

<sup>81</sup> For instance, Michelene Wandor, *The Author Is Not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else: Creative Writing Reconceived*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

<sup>82</sup> Margaret Chon, “The Romantic Collective Author”, *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law*, XIV, 2012, 4, p. 848.

<sup>83</sup> Grant H. Kester, *The One*, p. 5.

feature of a literary work is the result of a continuous and wide gamut of interaction between creative subjects, the reading public and other third parties. Although we are witnessing “the rise of a powerful neoliberal economic order dedicated to eliminating all forms of collective or public resistance (institutional, ideological, and organizational) to the primacy of capital”<sup>84</sup>, the authorial shift from singularity to multiplicity appears to converge with forceful transformations in the roles and structures of political powers and economic interests involved both in the literary field and the literary book market. As I have proclaimed, the displacement of authorship (from singularity to multiplicity) entails considerable adjacent-dichotomous transformations: from notoriety to anonymity, from individuality to collectivity, from myth to practice, from institutionalization to ritualization, and, finally, from submissive attitudes to subversive states of mind and action. The institutional stance of collaborative authorship is symptomatic of its borderline position. It is, as we have seen, commonly affiliated with business, technical or scientific writing. However, multiple authorship represents an alternative or adaptable model of administrating authority where habits and protocols no longer illustrate the norm. While reimagining its own history (reinventing the canon or undermining generic conventions), subversive or communal authorship will always work against established literary institutions. Submissive authorship, on the other hand, cannot be described as progressive or reformist. Reactionary, I believe, is the right word to use.

In thinking about multiple or collective authorship, I was actually wondering how (do) literary communities work. Of course, several answers to this question have been already put forward over the centuries. However, my goal was, on the one hand, to see how authorship functions, from a historical perspective, in literary groups, thus adopting a functionalist approach. On the other hand, I particularly focused on highlighting the common features of collective authorship by analyzing the tactics of different investigative methods which dealt with the same phenomena. I’ve found that, from its birth, authorship served as a enormously productive site for the constantly negotiated boundaries between individual and communal literary practices. Its development, alongside that of other modern institutions and professions, was heavily influenced by a number of external factors (political, ethic, economic, social, and technological). In the end, it is important to remember that, while displaying several modes of allowing individual writers to artistically engage contemporary public events (in their never-ending process of elaborating authorial identities), multiple authorship always serves two types of goals: aesthetic and political. Aesthetic ideologies strive in transcending the limits that outside forces impose on literary creation by drawing attention to the symbolic power of writing, while socially engaged authors will always try to

---

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

restrict other aesthetic discourses in interfering with what they believe to be the political power of literature.

Finally, what seems to emerge is not a story about how collaborative authorship could possibly take its revenge on the solitary figure of the Romantic genius. No. It is clear as blue sky that we need to focus on how different forms of aesthetic authorship carry social, political, and economic functions. In order to fully appreciate the important roles played by other forces involved in the construction and unfolding of today's globally digitized literary field, we will need to further develop an ecology of contemporary authorship.

#### WORKS CITED

- BACHARACH, Sondra, Deborah TOLLEFSEN, "Co-Authorship, Multiple Authorship, and Posthumous Authorship: A Reply to Hick", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXIII, 2015, 3, Summer, pp. 331 – 334.
- BADENHAUSEN, Richard, *T. S. Eliot and The Art of Collaboration*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- BARTHES, Roland, "The Death of the Author", in *Image. Music. Text*. Translated by Stephen Heath, New York, Hill and Wang, 1977.
- BÉNICHOU, Paul, *Le sacre de l'écrivain. 1750-1830. Essai sur l'avènement d'un pouvoir spirituel laïque dans la France moderne*, Paris, Gallimard, 1996.
- BISHOP, Claire, *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, London – New York, Verso, 2012.
- BISHOP, Claire, *Participation*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2006.
- BOURRIAUD, Nicolas, *Postproduction*, Berlin – New York, Lukas & Sternberg, 2005.
- BOURRIAUD, Nicolas, *Relational Aesthetics*. Translated by Simon Pleasance, Fronza Woods, Mathieu Copeland, Dijon, Les presses du réel, 2002.
- BOURRIAUD, Nicolas, *The Radicant*, Berlin – New York, Lukas & Sternberg, 2009.
- BRADY, Laura Ann, *Collaborative literary writing: Issues of authorship and authority*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988.
- BRASWELL, Suzanne F., "Review of *Models of Collaboration in Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Several Authors*", *H-France Review*, XI, 2010, 4, January, pp. 1-4.
- BRUNN, Alain, *L'auteur*, Paris, Flammarion, 2001.
- BURKE, Sean, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998.
- CHON, Margaret, "The Romantic Collective Author", *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law*, XIV, 2012, 4, pp. 829-849.
- COUTURIER, Maurice, *La Figure de l'auteur*, Paris, Seuil, 1995.
- DIU, Isabelle, Elisabeth PARINET, *Histoire des auteurs*, Paris, Editions Perrin, 2013.
- DUBOIS, Jacques, *L'institution de la littérature. Introduction à une sociologie*, Bruxelles, Labor, 1990.
- EICHHORN, Kate, "Late Print Culture's Social Media Revolution: Authorship, Collaboration and Copy Machines", *Authorship*, I, 2013, 4, Summer, p. 6. <http://www.authorship.ugent.be>.
- ERNST, Thomas, "From Avant-Garde to Capitalistic Teamwork: Collective Writing between Subversion and Submission", in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity*.

- Collaborative Work in the Sciences, Literature and the Arts*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2011.
- FARRELL, Michael P., *Collaborative Circles: Friendship Dynamics and Creative Work*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- FISCHER, Gerhard, Florian VASSEN (eds.), *Collective Creativity. Collaborative Work in the Sciences, Literature and the Arts*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2011.
- FITZPATRICK, Kathleen, *Planned Obsolescence. Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy*, New York – London, New York University Press, 2011.
- FOUCAULT, Michel, “What is an Author?”. Translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, in F. Bouchard Donald (ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1977.
- FRAY, Anne, *British State Romanticism. Authorship, Agency, and Bureaucratic Nationalism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2010.
- GREEN, Charles, *The Third Hand. Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism*, London, The University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- HOLT, Katharine, “Platonov and Collective Authorship”, *Russian Literature*, LXXIII, 2013, I-II, pp. 57-83, doi:10.1016/j.ruslit.2013.01.005.
- HUDSON HICK, Darren, “Authorship, Co-Authorship, and Multiple Authorship”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXII, 2014, 2, Spring, pp. 147 - 156.
- HUDSON HICK, Darren, “The Co-Author Is Dead; Long Live the Co-Author: A Reply to Killin, Bacharach, and Tollefsen”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXIII, 2015, 3, Summer, pp. 337 – 341.
- IOPPOLO, Grace, *Dramatists and Their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and Heywood. Authorship, Authority, and the Playhouse*, New York, Routledge, 2006.
- JASZI, Peter, “On the Author Effect: Contemporary Copyright and Collective Creativity”, in Martha Woodmansee, Peter Jaszi (eds.), *The Construction of Authorship. Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (1994), Durham – London, Duke University Press, 2006.
- KESTER, Grant H., *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, Oakland, University of California Press, 2004.
- KESTER, Grant H., *The One and the Many. Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*, Durham – London, Duke University Press, 2011.
- KILLIN, Anton, “Works, Authors, Co-Authorship, and Power: A Response to Hick”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, LXXIII, 2015, 3, Summer, pp. 334 – 337.
- KLUSZCZYNSKI, Ryszard W., “Re-Writing the History of Media Art: From Personal Cinema to Artistic Collaboration”, *LEONARDO*, XL, 2007, 5, pp. 469–474.
- LEVY, Michelle, *Family Authorship and Romantic Print Culture*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- PARR Rolf, “Autorschaft. Eine kurze Sozialgeschichte der literarischen Intelligenz”, in *Deutschland zwischen 1860 und 1930*, Heidelberg, Synchron, 2008.
- RENNER, Rolf G., “Subversion of Creativity and the Dialectics of the Collective”, in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity. Collaborative Work in the Sciences, Literature and the Arts*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2011.
- SAPIRO, Gisèle, “The Writer's Responsibility in France: From Flaubert to Sartre”, *French Politics Culture & Society*, XXV, 2007, 1, March pp. 1-29. DOI: 10.3167/fpcs.2007.250101.
- STAROBINKI, Jean, *Gesturile fundamentale ale criticii [The Fundamental Gestures of Criticism]*. Translation and preface by Angela Martin, foreword by Mircea Martin, București, Art, 2014.
- STILLINGER, Jack, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*, New York – Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991.
- STONE, Marjorie, Judith THOMPSON, “Taking Joint Stock. A Critical Survey of Scholarship on Literary Couples and Collaborations”, in Marjorie Stone, Judith Thompson (eds.), *Literary*

- Couplings. Writing Couples, Collaborators, and the Construction of Authorship*, London, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.
- STONE, Marjorie, Judith THOMPSON (eds.), *Literary Couplings. Writing Couples, Collaborators, and the Construction of Authorship*, London, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.
- THOMPSON, Judith, Marjorie STONE, “Contexts and Heterotexts. A Theoretical and Historical Introduction”, in Marjorie Stone, Judith Thompson (eds.), *Literary Couplings. Writing Couples, Collaborators, and the Construction of Authorship*, London, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.
- TURNOVSKY, Geoffrey, *The Literary Market: Authorship and Modernity in the Old Regime*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.
- VASSEN, Florian, “From Author to Spectator: Collective Creativity as a Theatrical Play of Artists and Spectators”, in Gerhard Fischer, Florian Vassen (eds.), *Collective Creativity. Collaborative Work in the Sciences, Literature and the Arts*, Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi, 2011.
- VIALA, Alain, *Naissance de l'écrivain. Sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique*, Paris, Minuit, 1985.
- WANDOR, Michelene, *The Author Is Not Dead. Merely Somewhere Else: Creative Writing Reconceived*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- WHIDDEN, Seth (ed.), *Models of Collaboration in Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Several Authors, One Pen*, Farnham – Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2009.
- WOODMANSEE, Martha, “On the Author Effect: Recovering Collectivity”, in Martha Woodmansee, Peter Jaszi (eds.), *The Construction of Authorship. Textual appropriation in Law and Literature* (1994), Durham – London, Duke University Press, 2006.
- WOODMANSEE, Martha, Peter JASZI (eds.), *The Construction of Authorship. Textual appropriation in Law and Literature* (1994), Durham – London, Duke University Press, 2006.
- WYNN, Thomas, “Collaboration and Authorship in Eighteenth-Century French Theater”, *The Romantic Review*, CIII, 2012, 3-4, November.

## FROM SINGULARITY TO MULTIPLICITY: THE POWER CYCLE OF AUTHORSHIP. BETWEEN SUBMISSION AND SUBVERSION

(Abstract)

The present article is dedicated to the guiding theme of “Collective Authorship” in its diverse contexts and notional meanings. Mapping the intellectual stakes and conceptual propositions of recent scholarship represents one of the main aims of the paper. Focusing on two important junctures, the historical perspective is complemented by a state of the art review covering several disciplinary fields. Finally, I will define two types of authorship: submissive and subversive. *Authorship studies* are undergoing major changes today, marking the shift from the romantic understanding of the author towards the construction of what I’ve called an authorial ecosystem which, in its turn, can be understood as being part of a larger (and circular) dynamic entity.

*Keywords:* submissive authorship, subversive authorship, collective authorship, community, collaboration, cooperation, multiplicity, anonymity, power cycle.

DE LA SINGULARITATE LA MULTIPLICITATE: DIMENSIUNEA  
CIRCULARA A PUTERII AUCTORIALE. ÎNTRE SUPUNERE ȘI  
SUBVERSIUNE

(Rezumat)

Articolul de față e dedicat „auctorialității colaborative”. Investigarea mizelor și propunerilor conceptuale ale cercetărilor recente reprezintă unul din scopurile centrale ale lucrării. Concentrându-mă asupra a două momente cruciale, perspectiva istorică e completată de o trecere în revistă a stadiului actual al cercetării, acoperind mai multe spații disciplinare. În final, propun două definiții tipologice: auctorialitatea submisivă și cea subversivă. Studiile despre autor suferă schimbări profunde azi, remarcabilă fiind trecerea de la înțelegerea romantică a autorului la ceea ce am numit un ecosistem auctorial care, la rândul lui, poate fi înțeles ca făcând parte dintr-un mai larg ecosistem cultural (extrem de dinamic, ba chiar circular).

*Cuvinte-cheie:* auctorialitate submisivă, auctorialitate subversivă, auctorialitate colectivă, comunitate, colaborare, cooperare, multiplicitate, anonimitate, ciclul puterii.