

## Authorship in Burroughs's Red Night Trilogy and Bowles's Translation of Moroccan Storytellers

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**Abstract:** In his article "Authorship in Burroughs's Red Night Trilogy and Bowles's Translation of Moroccan Storytellers" Benjamin J. Heal discusses Paul Bowles's and William S. Burroughs's varying interrogation of the constructed nature of authorship. In his study Heal focuses on the publication history of Burroughs's *Cities of the Red Night* (1981), which was written with considerable collaborative influence and Bowles's translation of illiterate Moroccan storytellers, where his influence over the production and editing of the texts is blurred as are the roles of author and translator. Through an examination of Bowles's and Burroughs's authorship strategies in parallel with an explication of the post-structuralist authorship theories of Barthes and Foucault, Heal presents an analysis of the extent of Bowles's and Burroughs's critique of the Western construction of "authorship."

## Benjamin J. HEAL

### Authorship in Burroughs's Red Night Trilogy and Bowles's Translation of Moroccan Storytellers

The parallels between Paul Bowles's and William S. Burroughs's texts are often presented in biographical terms due to the impact of Tangier on both their lives and their work. The obvious differences between their writing styles has meant that their texts are rarely examined together, and their approach to authorship has unfortunately never been examined comparatively. While their approaches differ, the questions they raise are similar, and can be seen to prefigure the poststructuralist authorship debates of the 1960s. Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* (1959) is often cited as a significant progenitor of the postmodern novels of the 1960s, characterized by reflexive narratives that question their own authority (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 1). After *Naked Lunch*, Burroughs continued throughout the 1960s to explore notions of authorship with cut-up experiments and collaborative works, including *The Yage Letters* (1963) with Allen Ginsberg, *The Exterminator* with Brion Gysin (1960), *Time* (1965) also with Gysin, and *So Who Owns Death TV?* (1967) with Carl Weissner and Claude Pelieu. He would likely have been aware of Roland Barthes's "The Death of the Author" as the first English translation was included in a 1967 issue of *Aspen*, a multimedia magazine that also featured spoken-word extracts of Burroughs's cut-up novel *Nova Express* (1964). This examination of Burroughs's texts using Barthes's theory is particularly significant given that Burroughs's experiments were carried out prior to Barthes's explicit theorizing; unlike later postmodern writers who were responding directly to Barthes's and Foucault's texts. An explanation for this crossover is that Surrealism, particularly the language games explored in the 1930s, had a major impact on both Barthes's and Burroughs's work, so although largely unaware of each other their work presents resonances, part of a transatlantic crossing of ideas, that contributed to the development of much contemporary literary theory. Bowles also has connections with the traits of Postmodernism. Familiar with metafiction through his translation of Jorge-Luis Borges's "Las Ruinas Circulares," Bowles's use of Surrealist automatism in his early short stories actively questions authorship. His later translation of Moroccan storytellers is particularly noteworthy as it can also be seen to directly challenge notions of authorship.

Without referencing "The Death of the Author," Robin Lydenberg's pioneering *Word Cultures* makes the point that Burroughs's work foreshadows several key elements of contemporary critical theory. As noted, "foreshadows" is not quite correct; rather, Burroughs's experiments resonate with and complement Barthes's theory. In "The Death of the Author," Barthes states that writing is a "neutral, composite, oblique space" (*Image, Music, Text* 142), arguing that a fixed, definitive or biographical reading of a text is impossible. Complementing this in experimental, practical terms is Burroughs's cut-up maxim "rub out the word" (*The Ticket That Exploded* 164). Because Burroughs's cut-up texts are constructed mostly from other texts they have a neutral, composite and authorless quality, and the drastic re-editing of parts of the Cut-up Trilogy, *The Soft Machine* (1961, 1966, 1968), *The Ticket that Exploded* (1962, 1967), and *Nova Express*, also points to the impossibility of a fixed reading. Much of Bowles and Burroughs's oeuvre oscillates between positions of authorial invisibility and transparency, including self-portraits in their novels while denying knowledge of writing certain material. Barthes also highlights the ethnographic history of storytelling that existed without the figure of the author, instead a "mediator, shaman or relator" tells the story. The writers' performance may be admired, but not their genius for having invented the story, the way modern conceptions present the individualized concept of the author. Bowles's translation, English transcriptions of recordings of stories told by the illiterate Moroccan storytellers Mohammed Mrabet, Larbi Layachi, Ahmed Yacoubi and Abdeslam Boulaich in Darija or Arabic dialect (Thomas, "On Translating Paul (and Jane and Mrabet)" 36), result in texts that revisit this history, and as such interrogate, much as Burroughs's approach does, the capitalist ideological conception of the individualized author, an action recommended by Michel Foucault in his essay, "What is an Author" (186).

Despite a significant period of time (13 years) passing between the completion of the Cut-up Trilogy and Burroughs's later Red Night Trilogy of *Cities of the Red Night* (1981), *The Place of Dead Roads* (1983) and *The Western Lands* (1987), the question of authorship remains central. The main themes of *The Western Lands* are death and authorship, and it examines writing through its author self-portrait, William Seward Hall, who suffers writer's block, and is converted through a dream into an Egyptian scribe, Neferti (99). The scribe lacks the status of the author, a figure imbued with a God like power over their text; rather, the scribe is employed by others to write, and is an artisan rather than an artist. The ancient scribe holds key knowledge for Burroughs's protagonist, invoking the mythology of the author as a gatekeeper of secret or divine knowledge. Burroughs contends, "a writer or artist ...

is simply someone who tunes into certain cosmic events. He is a medium" (*Painting & Guns* 44). Burroughs's position on authorship shifts through time in *The Western Lands*, from the classical position in which the scribe is a manifestation of God, to a medieval position where the text derives from the creativity and authority of God. Within the frame of *The Western Lands* there is a third definition of author, presented as a film director, who Mackay argues signifies the "bureaucratic and institutional control" of authorship (Hadjiafxendi and Mackay 127), a transition that reflects Barthes's conceptualization of the history of authorship.

Foucault supports Barthes's problematizing of the nature of authorship by asking further questions, including what it is that constitutes a "work," and therefore what constitutes the single name author to which the work is attributed. Foucault discusses the process of "individualization," defined as the transfer of histories of concepts, ideas and literary traditions into the singular unit of the author and the work ("What Is an Author" 174). The categorization of creative products is exposed and problematized consistently by Burroughs in several ways. Firstly, his use of collaboration throughout much of his work, from his earliest co-authored short story "Twilight's Last Gleamings" (1938) through to his multimedia work with musicians and filmmakers in the 1990s, as Davis Schneiderman states in his examination of Burroughs's resistance to "mainstream" writing, in the context of plagiarism: 'Burroughs's collaborations with musicians, visual artists, and writers were often (but not exclusively) attempts to escape from the stigma of Authorial constraint, to allow chance to shape prose production, towards, "making the words talk on their own." (Burroughs, "Preface" 17).' (Schneiderman "Everybody's Got Something to Hide except for Me and My Lawsuit: William S. Burroughs, Dj Danger Mouse, and the Politics of "Grey Tuesday" 196). Secondly, Burroughs used a variation of Surrealist automatism, writing without conscious control, he refers to as the "routine" form, used most notably in *Naked Lunch*, and which he describes in a 1952 letter as coming to him 'like dictated' (Burroughs *The Letters of William S. Burroughs, 1945-1959* 164). Thirdly, Burroughs's afore-mentioned use of the cut-up. Despite these obfuscations of authorial authority, overwhelmingly his texts are marketed under his singular name.

This tension is also exposed in Bowles's Moroccan translations, where Bowles's name is often placed on the cover with equal prominence with the Moroccan storytellers. Bowles's publishers' commercial strategy also highlights the Eurocentrism of the author-theory of Barthes and Foucault in their ignoring of translator (and other) mediation, and the status of non-Western, non-literate storytellers, a situation that underlines the contemporaneous global cultural dominance of the Western publishing industry. This dynamic of translation and Western power is addressed by Bhabha's notion of cultural hybridity. Since the translation blurs any trace of an "original," instead there exists a "third-space," inadequately theorized and understood in contemporary criticism (Rutherford 211). Bowles's translations stem from his genuine primitivist interest in, and belief in the purity of, the Moroccan oral storytelling tradition of what are often traditional folk stories, however, in order to publish these works Bowles's only option for publication was through his Western publishers (Moroccan publishing alternatives were not possible because of the political situation). The first such work was Larbi Layachi's *A Life Full of Holes* (1964), published in the US by Grove Press (also the first US publisher of Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*) under the pseudonym 'Driss ben Hamed Charhadi' to prevent any repercussions from the Moroccan state on both Layachi and Bowles. By doing so the notion of an original text or singular author is lost to the hybrid text, the result of a complex process of recording, transcription, translation, editing and publication.

Bowles's move to translation, driven by a combination of factors, can arguably be seen as a redefined author position, albeit an unstable and problematic one. Brian T. Edwards notes the ever-changing roles attributed to Bowles and Mrabet by their publishers, with perhaps the most accurate being: "Translated from the Moghrebi and edited in collaboration with Mohammed Mrabet" (*Morocco Bound* 237). Barthes's reformulated author is defined in terms that resonate with translation: "Having buried the Author, the modern scriptor can thus no longer believe ... that this hand is too slow for his thought or passion and that consequently, making a law of necessity, he must emphasize this delay and indefinitely 'polish' his form" (*Image, Music, Text* 146). In becoming a translator, which Borges regarded the "most self-effacing of literary tasks" (Levine, "Borges on Translation" 49), Bowles assumed this role of "SCRIPTOR," indefinitely polishing his "form" by translating the thoughts and passions of others into his own distinctive prose. Translation seen as a synthesis of writing, a collaborative effort across languages, cultures and epochs, recalls Burroughs's notion of the "third mind," that two minds together produce a third, superior mind, particularly in relation to the cut-up technique 'a composite of many writers living and dead' (*Nova Express* "Foreword Note"), and also Bhabha's aforementioned "third space" where notions of both the "original" and the "author" are blurred. Mikhail Bakhtin also refers to a "third," "one as yet unfolded" emerging from the complex dialogical exchange of trans-

lation (*The Dialogic Imagination* 324). Bowles referred to his own later stories as "synthetic," as he states "I neither reinvent folktales nor recount actual happenings as the Moroccans do" (Typescript Letter, Paul Bowles - Neil Campbell, 27 August 1980, Paul Bowles Collection, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas). Rather, his stories merge the two elements, while his translation forms a synthesis between the "reinvented folktales" and "actual happenings" and his own prose voice.

Borges regarded translation as intrinsic to the reading process, driven by aesthetic considerations. Borges's strategy in his own translations was to improve and enrich the originals, while improving his own writing skills. Translation "scaffolds Borges's fictions in our now increased and detailed awareness of the presence of other writers' works in Borges's texts" (Levine, *Borges on Translation* 45). Borges, in discussing translation, also points to there being, "no such thing as a definitive text" (45), as does Burroughs's denial of a fixed text through the repeated re-editing of the Cut-up Trilogy. While not necessarily presupposing a theoretical position, Burroughs's de facto denial anticipates Barthes by reasserting the primacy of language, and the question of origins, through the separation of inscription and expression (see *Image, Music, Text* 46). By changing the "author" into a "scribe," that is one who writes professionally as a form of trade, and removing the title of genius often attributed to the "author," Barthes proposes a text freed from the requirements of form, enabling a more experimental literature as presented by Postmodernism, including reconfigured forms of authorship such as the compositional and plagiaristic forms of the cut-ups. In this sense writing is also stripped of its expressive capacity and exists only as language, language that must question its own origins.

In "The Death of the Author," Barthes also calls for a critical approach to literature that avoids overreliance on analyses of author-biography and intention in favor of an analytic, "disentangling" approach. An examination of the reception of Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* and Cut-up Trilogy reveals precisely the critical response Barthes opposes, and highlights the difficulty some critics have with Burroughs's problematizing of authorship. John Willett's 1963 review of *Naked Lunch* and *The Ticket That Exploded*, titled "UGH..." begins: "'Now I, William Seward, will unlock my word hoard,' warns Mr Burroughs toward the end of *The Naked Lunch*" (*Times Literary Supplement* 919). Willett places these words into the author's mouth, without any reference to narrator or character in the context of the work. Mary McCarthy's 1963 review of *Naked Lunch* "Dejeuner sur l'Herbe" (*New York Review of Books*), similarly confuses Burroughs with his narrator, 'Control, as Burroughs says, underlining it, *can never be a means to anything but more control—like drugs*'. Preconceptions derived from often incorrect or misleading biographical information, or conflating narrator with author have formed part of the critical response to Burroughs's work. Such preconceptions are also present for Bowles texts, and their reception also demonstrates a similar reliance on author biography. Such responses reinforce Foucault's conception of the discourse of author-function, that the author's name performs a classificatory function which, 'permits one to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others' ("What Is an Author" 178). The significant differentiation between Bowles and Burroughs's earlier and later texts shows this classificatory function to be significant as one of their points of convergence. As Foucault states, "The author-function is ... characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society' (179). Bowles and Burroughs's works examined here can be seen as attempts to distance themselves from author-function discourse, in part as a response to the, as noted, unwelcome biographical approach of much critical reaction to their texts, through Burroughs's further engagement in author-blurring strategies and Bowles's translation work. These reconstructions of authorship provide evidence in practice that contributes to Barthes and Foucault's authorship dialogue, particularly the latter's notion of the author-function as a problematic and limiting factor in the production of meaning and proliferation of ideas (186). Beyond this, Bowles and Burroughs's work demonstrates Foucault's postulation that the author-function does not precede the text, but rather it is a cultural construction and simulation, an imaginary, often invisible necessity of the Western capitalist system of cultural production. Bowles and Burroughs's interventions in standard notions of authorship reveal the author-function as it really is, and act as attempts to produce the type of fiction Foucault calls for, that is not limited by the figure of the author (186).

While theories of "multiple authorship" are now widely accepted (Stillinger *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*), Burroughs deliberately sought to attack singular notions of authorship from the practical position of author rather than theorist. In a note held at Columbia University, Burroughs states that: "A writer speaks through his characters, or rather they speak through him. As a Hindu Agent once said to me, 'You may call Hassan I Sabbah to write for you. You will stay to write for Hassan I Sabbah' Who runs may read. I will invoke a Chinese precedent, bow three times, and disappear into my characters" ("A Brief Statement on the Naked Lunch the Soft Machine and the Nova Express"). This passage notes the problematic function of the author and the author's complex rela-

tionship with his characters, which it presents as an unending oscillation. The final wish to "disappear into my characters" recalls Bowles and Burroughs's desire for authorial invisibility through their strategies of self-erasure, experimental and collaborative techniques. Burroughs was aware novels are not necessarily in the form the author intends, and was also not averse to getting assistance in completing works. For example, as Oliver Harris notes in his introduction, *Junkie* (1953) had to be re-edited due to the publisher's considerations (*Junky: The Definitive Text of "Junk"* xxvi, xxvii), while *Naked Lunch* was first typed into manuscript form by Alan Ansen, Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac.

Collaboration, both by using texts written by other writers and publishing cut-up texts composed by different writers, is a core aspect of the cut-up project (Burroughs and Gysin, *The Third Mind* 96). The "Foreword Note" to *Nova Express* also makes its collaborative nature apparent: "The section called 'This Horrible Case' was written in collaboration with Mr. Ian Sommerville, a mathematician—Mr. Sommerville also contributed the technical notes in the section called 'Chinese Laundry'—An extension of Brion Gysin's cut-up method which I call the fold-in method has been used in this book which is consequently a composite of many writers living and dead" (lvi). Note the similarity between the final line of this, from 1964, and the acknowledgment to characters in *Cities of the Red Night*: 'to all the characters and their real-life counterparts living and dead' (5) Burroughs's approach with the Cut-up Trilogy was to cut-up (or fold-in), reassemble and edit texts, for *Cities of the Red Night* this had changed to allow others to do the assembly and make editorial decisions. Following his return to the United States in 1974, Burroughs began working on the Red Night trilogy, subsequently developing a writer's block. His new companion and assistant, James Grauerholz, was asked by Burroughs to edit the manuscript for *Cities of the Red Night*. While other texts, notably *Nova Express* and *The Ticket That Exploded* acknowledge collaboration on various sections; *Cities of the Red Night* is the first to make such extensive acknowledgments regarding the whole. This suggests Burroughs regarded the third party contributions to *Cities of the Red Night* as having more of an effect on the final text. It is also possible that he wished to highlight this loss of authorial control and introduce it as an element in the narrative.

The specific details of the production of *Cities of the Red Night* have many resonances with Foucault's discussion of author-function and author discourse. Grauerholz had an influence as early as the first draft: "Well, Burroughs wrote the manuscript in bits and pieces while he was writing lots of other things at that time ... and along the way I would occasionally edit and tighten up and ... neaten certain sections" (Zurbrugg 22). He also states that his changes are to spelling, usage queries and sentence structure. At this stage Grauerholz's role is still little more than a copy-editor. At some point this changed: "He gave it to me and said, 'Here, just take it, take this draft, this copy, and just do whatever you think' ... I did just a little bit of rearranging, and did a lot of cutting ... And then the manuscript was shown to Brion Gysin, who made the very important suggestion to put the 'Return to Port Roger'" at the end ... And then, of course, Dick Seaver and William went over it word by word, perfecting the usage, and agreeing in detail about one long section to reinsert" (23). Grauerholz's role can be seen as more significant than any of Burroughs's previous collaborators that did not receive the status of co-author. His response also shows how far Burroughs's notion of authorship had changed; from the careful arranger of cut-up texts to merely having a final say regarding changes others have made. Although Burroughs's publisher, Seaver, eventually ran out of patience with Burroughs's slew of revisions, Burroughs was given almost complete editorial freedom with the Cut-up Trilogy, in contrast with *Cities of the Red Night*, where, Seaver made editorial requests, and returned the first submission. (Miles, *William Burroughs: El Hombre Invisible* 213). Burroughs's position as author was diminished to the point that he was no longer in authorial or editorial control. The situation with *Cities of the Red Night* had become one where publishing agents were able to supersede the discursive genius of the author to make substantive editorial changes. This erasure of the author and loss of authorial control takes Burroughs back to somewhere near his position of *El Hombre Invisible*. It also denotes a figurative example of the "death of the author" in the face of the commercial concerns of creating a more readable, and hence marketable text; a reverse of Barthes's "birth of the reader" (*Image, Music, Text* 148), in this case the reader is presented with another variation of Burroughs's authorial experimentation, existing more as a sign, or brand to sell a product.

The themes of *Cities of the Red Night* also suggest failure through complicity. While offering possible ways to oppose power, the text also, as John Guzlowski points out, "suggests that they may not be totally desirable or effective," evidenced by protagonist Audrey/Kim Carsons' initial struggle against authority giving way to becoming "connected to this century's ultimate controllers, the Nazis" ( "The Family in the Fiction of William Burroughs" 25). The invocation of the Nazis and the protagonist's "collaboration" can be seen as a metaphor for Burroughs's own return from experimentation towards more "straight narrative," in order to secure both the completion of the work and its publication, as he

states in a 1978 interview with Gérard-Georges Lemaire: "For one thing, I have to make a living" (*Burroughs Live* 401). Although this shift is strategic in that it enabled the book to be published, it is significant as a change from the denial of authorial intention noted (retracted in the 1991 edition) in the "Deposition: Testimony Concerning a Sickness" of *Naked Lunch*, which states, "I have no precise memory of writing the notes which have now been published under the title *Naked Lunch*" (199).

In a 1952 interview Bowles states that "I found myself writing a novel, by which time of course it was too late to pretend to be another person ... I still think it would be fun to have a nom de plume. Yet perhaps it would be bad psychologically: one might feel less implicated, less responsible toward one's self" (Breit, "Talk with Paul Bowles"). His argument is that work committed under a pseudonym is somehow less authentic, that it does not represent the author's personality. The problem for Bowles is that his name already had some kudos thanks to his work on Broadway, and the publishers he approached would certainly have wished to benefit from that, as can be seen in the reviews of *The Sheltering Sky* (1949) (Williams, "An Allegory of Man and His Sahara"). A further example of his desire to be kept at a distance from his texts is that Bowles rarely uses first-person narration: "I don't want to be associated with my stories. I've always remained at a distance from them..." (Choukri, *Paul Bowles in Tangier* 161). This contradicts the existence of identifiable and acknowledged portraits of Bowles as central characters in his works, most notably Port, the restless traveller and composer in *The Sheltering Sky*, the use of which only encourages author-biographical readings. Portraits of Bowles's also appear in his translations of Mrabet's stories, such as Mr David, an Englishman in *Love with a Few Hairs* (1967), and Mr James, a US-American in Tangier featured in the story "What Happened in Granada" (*The Boy Who Set the Fire & Other Stories*). Their existence suggests that Bowles believed it would be useful to have his mediating presence as a character in the stories, fuelling speculation regarding his authorial involvement in the translations. Bowles's translations were primarily aimed at a Western audience, with the above translations published by Grove Press and City Lights Books respectively, known for publishing works by radical, incendiary and Beat writers. Bowles was also aware that after independence in 1956 the Moroccan state was actively suppressing any cultural representations that depicted Moroccans as primitive or uncivilized (Michael K. Walonen 51). Bowles and his publishers likely knew that any publicity in the face of such suppression would boost sales in the West.

Bowles's translation can be seen, as Borges contends, as a form of collaboration (Levine, "Borges on Translation" 54). Having translated Sartre's *Huis Clos* and several stories for *View* magazine in the 1940s, Bowles returned to translating in the mid 1960s, and had close translating relationships with the illiterate Moroccan storytellers Boulaich, Yacoubi, Layachi, and Mrabet. He also translated the autobiography of the self-educated, literate Moroccan writer Mohamed Choukri. As noted above, there is some speculation regarding whether the storyteller translations are Bowles's own stories (Stewart, *Paul Bowles* 117). For example, Choukri believed that the translations were far from literal, and had been revised extensively (*Paul Bowles in Tangier* 43). In an interview conducted by Karim Debbagh in his incomplete documentary "Paul Bowles: Creating a Legend," Choukri also contends that many of the translated stories are based on folk tales the storytellers have heard in cafes or elsewhere (Schlauch and Alberti *Halfmoon*), making their authorship even further removed from the notion of "individual genius." The oral storytelling tradition has a long history in Morocco that parallels, to some extent, the Western notion of the individual genius in that the storyteller is a revered figure (unlike the scribe), possessing special knowledge. The Bowles translation/collaborations reconstruct traditional notions of individual authorship, both in the context of the Moroccan oral tradition and Western constructions of the singular author, though from a far more covert and altogether different position to Burroughs. Bowles's most productive translating relationship was with Mrabet, with fourteen books being published. Because of their ambiguous authorial nature it is understandable that expatriate Moroccan novelist Tahar Ben Jelloun took offence at their work and declaimed Mrabet as a fabrication of Bowles's mind (Bevan, "Drawing from the Well: Paul Bowles, Mohammed Mrabet and the Notion of Authorship" 2). This erasure of Mrabet again recalls Barthes's "The Death of the Author," but moreover it highlights the role of the translator and the relationship between the translator and "author." In Bowles and Mrabet's case, since the stories are oral there is no "original" written text, only tape recordings that have apparently been lost (Lacey, "The Writers/Storytellers of Morocco and Paul Bowles"). Mrabet (the author) therefore *is* a textual fabrication of Bowles, since without Bowles's translation Mrabet's texts would not exist. It is unlikely that Bowles simply made up the stories himself, as there is archival evidence to support his transcription. "Notebook 8" held at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, shows Bowles's referencing of tape counter numbers, and notes stating which material was on which tape. However, Bowles's editing work on the typescripts of the translation is notably different to that of his own work, as there are significant changes and emendations to

the typescripts, supporting Choukri's above remark regarding the amount of influence he had over their structuring.

Despite Bowles downplaying his role as "collaborator" stating that "I only get the authors to talk, you see" (*Conversations with Paul Bowles* 53) is endorsing the position of notable translators such as Norman Shapiro, who believe a good translation should not appear translated (see Venuti 1), Bowles's translations immediately and prominently reveal their status on their covers, a practice rare with most translation. Several critics such as Gena Dagel Caponi and Mary Martin Rountree accept Bowles's account, that his role was a transparent one, Caponi noting that with his translation "Paul Bowles finally achieved his goal as a writer: to write without existing" (Caponi, *Paul Bowles* 131), restating Bowles's desire for the "writer" to be invisible. The extent of Bowles's role in editing *A Life Full of Holes* (1964) is exposed in a 1966 letter from James Leo Herlihy, in which he states: "I was much interested in all you had to say about Larbi and reactions to his book and your own role in it. It came almost as a relief to learn that you had supplied the selectivity" (Typescript Letter, James Leo Herlihy to Paul Bowles, 19 December, folder 27. MSS 163. Paul Bowles Papers, Special Collections, University of Delaware). Bowles's role in these texts had been redefined several times by the publishers, ranging from, "Taped and translated from the Mogrebi by Paul Bowles" to "Translated from the Mogrebi and edited by Paul Bowles in collaboration with Mohammed Mrabet," an oscillation that problematizes the definitions of translator, author, editor and collaborator (Edwards, *Morocco Bound* 237-38). Bowles holds his translations of illiterate storytellers in high regard due to their purity, and the understanding of native tradition that gave their stories their unique qualities (*Conversations with Paul Bowles* 216), seemingly unaware of his complicity, as a Western mediating presence, in creating hybrid texts. Bowles was concerned with preserving and sharing traditional Moroccan culture with the West, which he felt provided a counterpoint to the presiding Western cultural paradigms (Stewart, *Paul Bowles* 112).

While collaboration is used by Bowles and Burroughs as a means to critique authorship, the theme of collaboration (in its World War II sense) presented in *Cities of the Red Night*, and anticipated by the statement "to live is to collaborate" in *Nova Express* almost 20 years earlier (5), highlights the writer's inevitable complicity in what he opposes, a position theorized by Theodore Adorno in his 1951 essay "Cultural Criticism and Society" (*Prisms* 17-34). Adorno discusses collaboration in relation to "cultural criticism" which is seen as a "flagrant contradiction" (19). Throughout this article I assert that Bowles and Burroughs are acting as cultural critics, attacking the constructed nature of authorship, but as Adorno states the cultural critic, "is necessarily of the same essence as that to which he fancies himself superior" (19). The inevitable ideological failure of Burroughs's text because of its complicity with its target, returns to the image of Bowles's complicity in mediating the Moroccan storyteller through a Western lens, despite his desire to capture and retain the purity of traditional Moroccan culture. Bowles's translation represents, as Richard F. Patteson states, "transcultural discourse suffused with a sense of alterity" ("Paul Bowles/Mohammed Mrabet" 189). These texts feature narratives which show language and truth can never be the same, and the paradoxical situation that (until recently) the stories only existed in the written form of another culture (189). They exist in a liminal space, neither Mrabet or Bowles's novel, examples of texts that exist in Bhabha's third space of cultural hybridity. Burroughs and Gysin determine the "third mind" to be "heterogeneous, an illustration of collaborative consciousness not always agreed upon by all contributors" (Hadjiafxendi and Mackay, *Authorship in Context* 115), a statement which resonates with the matrix of roles and collaborations at play in all these works.

In conclusion, my discussion reveals Bowles's and Burroughs's awareness of their own status and complicity in their explorations in authorship. There are clear differences in their approaches to authorship, for example the cut-up is very different from translation, yet there remains a similarity, in that they are both forms of collaboration, both more editorial than compositional, and both constitute a complex form of erasure/reconstruction of the author (respectively as cut-up creator and translator). At their core these experiments, which arguably draw on a European avant-garde sensibility both writers share, reveal the same tensions regarding the constructed nature of both the author and the work that Barthes and Foucault's essays expose. The complexity of Bowles and Burroughs's reconstructions of author-status displays a variety of roles and techniques that problematize their supposed mastery over their material, and hence the meaning underlying the work, therefore their status as "authors" is increasingly exposed as being constructed by forces external to them.

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