

Twin authors

How to write novels in tadem

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La estética clásica halaga la imagen de un autor autónomo que se expresa a sí mismo creando una obra de arte. Esta definición es manifiestamente puesta a prueba por autores que crean su obra en cooperación con un autor afín. Resulta vital una estrecha relación en el sentido de que los partícipes se complementen respecto de sus habilidades e intenciones. Dichos autores representan un fenómeno poco común, pero ellos demuestran que es prácticamente posible repartir un proyecto literario y escribir novelas en tándem. En 1997 abordé a algunos coautores. Tales autores, señalados en mi informe, están convencidos de que sacan mayor provecho escribiendo novelas en tándem que haciéndolo en forma individual. Todos los autores consultados informaron que escribir en tándem requiere una mutua proyección y una armonía interna profunda. Sin embargo, una desventaja decisiva con respecto a la cooperación literaria, radica en el hecho de que se aplica predominantemente a una literatura de género que es regida por estándares fijos.

Classical aesthetics cherishes the image of a self-contained author who expresses himself by creating a work of art. This definition is markedly challenged by authors who create their work in co-operation with a congenial partner. A close relationship appears to be vital, in the sense that the partners complement each other in their skills and views. Twin authors are a rare phenomenon, but they show that it is practically possible to split up a literary project and to write novels in tandem. In 1997, I approached some joint authors. The twin authors listed in my account are convinced that they profit more from composing novels in tandem than from writing individually. All authors processed reported that writing in tandem required a pervasive internal harmony and mutual calculability. However, a decisive disadvantage of literary co-operation lies in the fact it predominantly applies to a genre literature which is governed by fixed standards.

INTRODUCTION

“Writing a book is actually the most solitary work you can embark upon, and a great many authors could not even imagine sharing it with someone else”¹ Maj Sjöwall aware how unusual her activities were, when she worked out mystery novels together with her husband Per Wahlöö. The concept of artistic creativity seems to oppose the co-operation between authors. The classical idea of authorship

¹ Sjöwall, Maj. Untitled report (unpublished). To facilitate readability I have translated most of the quotations where they are written in foreign languages. The originals are in Italian, German, Swedish and French respectively.

is that an author expresses his or her personality by producing novels, dramas or poems. The author imprints his style and personal taste on the phrases he assembles. Any other person interfering in his process would disturb and muddle the clear conception the author intends to carry out.

However, there are authors who embrace the idea that creativity and cooperation are not mutually exclusive. One of them is the German novelist Reinhard Jahn, who argues that the figure of the lone, self-sufficient author is a mere fiction: "The work in a team sharply contrasts with the image of an 'author of genius', who creates his work from the first to the last phase alone. But a closer examination shows that this author has probably never existed. In every case he was supported by friends, relatives, companions, publishers, editors who relieved him of larger or lesser parts of his work or gave him stimuli in their conversations or criticized him. The author has always been a mere catalyst who gives form to the numerous ideas, opinions, views, stories, and proposals he had received as material for his plot"².

The wide-ranging influences affecting the composition of a work should, however, not make us overlook the fact that the process of developing an idea is an individual act in as far as no one can think in the brain of another person. In their original state unspecified mental particles are travelling in the fluid of the mind, and it is only when they coagulate to words that another person gains access to them. The palpable elements and ideas arise from them and have to be converted into communicable signs, before a colleague can lay hand on them. The development of a story proceeds on two levels, the level of words being the cruder one. Once the plot has been pinned down, a collaborator can tackle the further development and refinement of a novel.

If a story follows a given scheme, it can be carried out in teamwork. The group of authors need not necessarily consist of two, but can comprise a more extensive unit. In 1995 Heiner Boehnke, a professor of literature at Frankfurt University, probed the limits of literary collaboration by inducing his students to write a novel together. The 103 students who signed up for his experiment were divided into 12 groups, each of them writing a chapter of the novel. A final editing committee harmonized the different writing styles. What came out was a mystery story called *Bockenheimer Boullabaisse*³. The author was named as one Heiner Trudt, the name being an anagram of the German word for one hundred three (*hundertdrei*). The book was published by Eichborn Verlag in early 1997 and was soon acclaimed as a remarkable example of experimental literature.

This was also the time when I started my investigation of joint authors. I approached several writers who had worked or were still working together with partners. The questions I posed in my letters read like this:

² Jahn, Reinhard. *Krimischreiben im Team* (unpublished). p. 1.

³ Bockenheim is a suburb of Frankfurt.

Do you work out your novels in complete equality, or does one of you play the strongest part, determining the conceptions? How do your linguistic and creative abilities differ? How do you compose a novel/a short story from the conception until the final version? What prompted you to work on a novel together? If any disagreements occur during the process of compiling your work, how do you settle them? Have each of you the same working load?

I directed these questions to Boris Strugackiy, Thomas Narcejac, Leo P. Ard, Reinhard Jahn, Maj Sjöwall, Carlo Fruttero and Franco Lucentini. All of the authors sent replies except for Boris Strugackiy. Carlo Fruttero informed me that he had discussed my request with his fellow- author Franco Lucentini. They came to the conclusion that they could not go into my questions, because the matter was too extensive to be dismissed in a few words. Fruttero asserted: "Writing in tandem is a most complicated matter, and explaining it seriously in written form would take months of work. Each of your questions would require innumerable pages of replies with examples, citations, notes, references etc. Who has the time for all this?"⁴.

In order to round off the results of my inquiries I assembled additional material on the working habits of some late author who wrote novels in tandem. Thus my list of twin authors was completed by the Goncourt brothers and the American mystery writers Manfred Lee and Frederic Dannay. In the first part of my paper I am going to introduce the couples I focused my research on. In the second part I want to point out the common features characterizing twin authors. In that connection it will be necessary to examine what overall patterns are effective in the literary collaboration. In a final remark I intend to contrast the advantages and drawbacks of twin authorship with the fortes of traditional lone writings.

I. PRESENTATION OF AUTHORS

The brothers Edmond (1822-1896) and Jules de Goncourt (1830-1870) worked together from their youth on. A substantial fortune they had inherited from their mother relieved them of the necessity to work for a living and enabled them to indulge in artistic activities. They began their careers as painters, but soon switched to dramaturgy and art criticism. In 1850 they published their first drama, followed by a novel the year after. "It was only tardily and gradually that the novel took first place in their lives and work"⁵. Occasionally they also produced scholarly accounts of historical topics, such as the French revolution. The fruitful collaboration of the Goncourt was disrupted by the early death of the younger brother.

Like the Goncourts the American novelists Frederic Danny (1905-1982) and Manfred Lee (1905-1971) were closed relatives. They were first cousins and spent a

⁴ Fruttero, Carlo. *Letter* 20 June 1997.

⁵ Baldick, Robert. *The Goncourts*. London: Bowes & Bowes, 1960. p.15

great part of their youth together⁶. Later on they took over jobs in the advertising industry though in different companies. One day in 1928 they heard that a magazine had announced a detective story contest. They decided to participate in the competition and worked out a mystery novel in the following three months. It was submitted under the joint pseudonym Ellery Queen and indeed won them the prize. The novel, entitled *The Roman Hat Mystery*, was printed the following year. It was the first in a series of 33 Dannay and Lee produced in tandem. In the 1930s they published four additional mysteries under the cover name of Barnaby Ross before returning to the successful brand name of "Ellery Queen". For ten years the authors concealed their real identity from the public. It did not occur to their readers that the novels the detective and the author Ellery Queen published year after were the result of teamwork. The authors' hide-and-seek-game was in danger of being disclosed when in 1932 Columbia University invited Ellery Queen to give lecture on mystery writing. Dannay and Lee tossed a coin to determine who would give the courses. Lee lost subsequently lectured at Columbia, wearing a mask all the time. A while later the cousins set off for a lecture trip across the United States. During their presentations Dannay posed as Ellery Queen, and Lee played Barnaby Ross, both concealed behind masks. The cousins carried their burlesque to extremes when Ellery Queen was summoned to set up a ranking list of contemporary mystery novels. Queen did not hesitate to place a novel of his alter ego Barnaby Ross at the top of the list. The masquerade came to an end when in 1938 Queen's publishers unveiled the identity of his successful authors⁷.

Unlike Ellery Queen the French novelist *Pierre Boileau* (1906 – 1989) and *Thomas Narcejac* (b.1908) originally worked alone. When they met, Boileau had already published seven mystery novels and a number of short stories⁸. Narcejac approached the matter on the theoretical level. He surveyed and compared the various types of mysteries and as a result published a collection of essays entitled *Ésthetique du roman policier* (1946). Three years later there appeared his treatise on the "roman noir": *La Fin d'un bluff, le roman noir*. In 1946 Boileau phoned Narcejac asking him whether he had a mystery story in stock⁹. Narcejac confessed that he had indeed written a novel in 1934 during his military service. Since then it had rested in his drawer, as he had not found a publisher¹⁰. Boileau asked his friend for the typescript, looked it through and encouraged him to go on writing fiction. Narcejac followed his advice and produced a second novel in collaboration with the French author Terry Stewart¹¹. This successful experiment induced Boileau to venture a si-

⁶ *The life story of Dannay and Lee* is related in: *Current Biography 1940*. Maxine Block (ed). New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1940. pp. 665-7; *Contemporary Authors New Revisions Series* Vol. 2. Ann Evory (ed). Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1981. pp. 406-8; *Contemporary Authors New Revisions Series*. Vol. 31. Susan M. Trosky (ed). Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1992. pp. 109; M. Nevins, Francis. *Royal Bloodline: Ellery Queen, Authors and Detective*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1974.

⁷ This is what the "Current Biography" of 1940 reports (ibid p. 666). According to Queen's biographer Francis Nevins the two identities behind the authors were revealed in a brief paragraph of *Publishers Weekly* in 1936 (Ibid. p. 6).

⁸ All details are taken from the autobiographical dialogue "Tandem" by Boileau-Narcejac (Paris: Denoël, 1986).

⁹ Ibid. 58.

¹⁰ Ibid. 56.

¹¹ Ibid. 61.

milar enterprise for which he tried to gain Narcejac as a co- author. During a meeting in June 1953 he presented Narcejac the plot of his next novel *Celle qui n'était pas* and invited him to elaborate the details of the action¹². Narcejac accepted the proposal, carried it out chapter for chapter and sent it to his companion. Boileau typed up the manuscripts, assembled the individual parts and eliminated inconsistencies. Though they rarely came together. Boileau living in Paris and Narcejac 400 kilometres away in Nantes, the text finally adopted the refined, chiselled out form Boileau had intended in his conception. The book appeared in 1954, and it was a mark of its success, when the French director Clouzot immediately turned it into a film. In the following three decades Boileau and Narcejac produced another forty novels, roughly a quarter of which were used for films. Their collaborations came gradually to an end as Boileau was falling ill with Parkinson's disease¹³ during the 1980s. He died in 1989.

The fourth writer couple to be discussed in this account are the Swedish authors Per Wahlöö (1926-1975) and Maj Sjöwall (b. 1935). Wahlöö had already published some narrative literature when he met Maj Sjöwall in the early sixties. After they had married they worked out the plan of composing a cycle of ten mystery novels entitled *Roman om ett brott*¹⁴. When realizing this project, they not only aimed at creating action and suspense but were also eager to provide a portrait of the Swedish society in the Palme era. Per Wahlöö died soon after he and his wife had completed the last novel in 1975.

Among the German authors who write in tandem *Reinhard Jahn* (b.1955) and *Walter Wehner* (b. 1949) should be mentioned. Jahn, who took the pseudonym of *Hanns-Peter Karr*, originally composed radio plays, children's literature and crime stories. It was in 1986 that he met Walter Wehner, a poet and non-fiction author, during a literature contest. Both living in the Ruhr district, they decided to keep in contact and work together on literary projects. In the following years short stories and radio plays arose in collaboration. In 1994 Karr and Wehner publishing *Geierfrühling*, their first joint crime story, which was to be the first novel of a cycle of four. So far three parts of the sequence have come out.

A similar biography is apparent in the joint authors *Leo P.Ard* (b. 1953) and *Reinhard Junge* (b. 1946) who both live in Bochum in Germany. From 1986 they produced six crime novels in tandem. At present Ard is working with a third author, *Michael Illner* (b. 1962) of Berlin. Since 1992 Ard and Illner have assembled two novels and several scenarios for TV serials.

Another author duo who will be discussed in this paper are *Norbert Klugmann* (b. 1942) and *Peter Mathews* (b. 1942) of Hamburg. Both have been working together for 12 years.

¹² Ibid. 68.

¹³ Letter by Thomas Narcejac, 28 August 1997.

¹⁴ Maj Sjöwall: Untitled report p. 1.

II. ANALYSIS OF TWIN AUTHORSHIP

The prime feature of twin authors consists of **the perfect harmony in style and thinking, and the mutual calculability**. One partner must know the other to an extent that he can guess what the other would think in a given situation. "The team members need not have the same attitude to the world. They only have to know what attitude the other has", Reinhard Jahn writes¹⁵. And Thomas Narcejac emphasizes: "We complemented each other perfectly"¹⁶. For Wahlöö and Sjöwall the personal and stylistic agreement was the prerequisite of fruitful collaboration:

It's necessary for the partners not only to pursue the same ideas but also largely to share the same views on what they write about. It is also an advantage if they from the beginning have an approximately similar style. When we started our project,... we consciously worked on acquiring a style which should not be altogether personal for one of us but rather a kind of common, clear and simple style which should be applied throughout our sequence¹⁷.

When Wahlöö and Sjöwall were awarded a literature prize in Copenhagen, they made use of a device which underlined their relationship. They stepped to the microphone and took it in turn to speak. Wahlöö talked for one or two minutes, then his wife spoke for the same time, and then her husband took over again, and so on¹⁸. A similar method was applied by Dannay and Lee, who frequently gave their presentations in the form of a "mono-dialogue":

Never prompting each other by as much as glance (in one hour-long interview neither ever one addressed the other), one would begin a sentence, in the middle of which the other would hook on a subjunctive clause, with the first reappearing in the caboose of the train of their thought... A sort of intellectual Siamese twinship binds them together. Whenever they get together to cook up a mystery thriller they toss their brains into the same pot. Their minds blend so easily and naturally that a third person, talking to them, gets the slightly uneasy impression that he is conversing with one man¹⁹.

This perfect harmony was also obvious with the Goncourt brothers:

From the point of view of intellect, taste and sensibility the two men were one. In company Jules would find himself involuntarily smiling when his brother smiled, nodding when Edmond nodded; and composing notes at the end of the day, the two generally discovered that the people and things they have seen had made the same impression on them both... The two men shared the same irrational impulses; they occasionally shared the same mental and physical ills; they even shared for a while the same mistress - a midwife called Maria²⁰.

¹⁵ E- mail by Reinhard Jahn, 12 May 1997.

¹⁶ Letter by Thomas Narcejac, 28 August 1997

¹⁷ Maj Sjöwall, Untitled report.

¹⁸ Cf. *Akademitäl* by Wahlöö-Sjöwall (1973).

¹⁹ Current Biography 1940, p. 666.

²⁰ Baldick, Robert. *The Goncourts*. London: Bowes and Bowes, 1960. p.10.

The harmonious interaction between the authors is reflected by the **pervasive homogeneity of the text**. Though the individual parts of a novel are composed and assembled by two different authors, no seams can be detected nor differences in syntax and the selection of words. The German novelist Leo P. Ard asserts:

The month-long co-operation also obscures the recollections of who had the initial inspiration, invented the chief character and worked out the plot. The novel becomes a *Gesamkunstwerk* which is fed by many small suggestions, whose originator is no longer detectable because of the many corrections and additions. After several revisions the styles of the two authors have assimilated to the extent that even an attentive reader will not find out which passages have been written by which author²¹.

Per Wahlöö had the same experience: "Many people try to guess or work out which of us wrote what, but strangely enough they get it wrong in almost every case"²².

Occasionally the authors reveal differences in their characters and capacities, **differences which complement each other** and contribute to a successful collaboration. Thus it is reported that the Goncourt brothers profited greatly from the diversity of their interests and skills. "Jules. . . was acknowledged by his brother to be better stylist of the two, who polished and repolished an epithet or a phrase while Edmond worked out the plan of a novel", writes Robert Baldick²³. "Where Jules was volatile and quick-witted, constantly giving off flashes of brilliant ironic humour, Edmond was both less gifted and more reserved, more serious, perhaps warmer-hearted, certainly very conscious of his responsibilities to his brother, to his art and to posterity"²⁴.

A similar relationship is obvious in the collaboration between Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac. Boileau was a rational straightforward thinker who constructed the plot of a novel, while Narcejac worked out the atmosphere and the characters. "Boileau was essentially interested in the mechanism of situations, while I focused on the psychology of the actors". Narcejac writes in retrospect²⁵. A journalist once remarked that the tandem Boileau Narcejac consisted of "a watchmaker and a musician"²⁶. Propelled by his lively imagination, Narcejac worked out the chapters according to the draft his friend had designed. Boileau in turn managed the hard work of deciphering his companion's handwriting and taped the texts, while correcting all errors. Sometimes it happened that Narcejac inadvertently altered the social status or the air colour of a person. Such slips normally escaped Narcejac's notice, because he hated rereading his manuscript.

²¹ Letter by Leo P. Ard, 1 August 1997.

²² Wahlöö-Sjöwall. *Akademitäl* (unpublished), 1973.

²³ Baldick 12.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 10.

²⁵ Letter by Thomas Narcejac, 28 August 1997.

²⁶ *Ibid.* ("un horloger et un musicien").

Narcejac ascribed to his friend "un esprit ordonné", while he portrays himself as "distraction incarnée"²⁷

Among our two authors Boileau and Narcejac were the only waive **preparatory research**, relying entirely on their imagination. They immersed themselves in the flow of ideas and extracted everything that seemed to be apt for their next story. Inspiration was their staple source of ideas, whereas other authors have processed journalistic research before starting to write. The German mystery writers Peter Mathews and Norbert Klugmann emphasize that it is vital to underpin the plot with specific inquiries because otherwise it would appear unrealistic. "We collect facts, read, copy, phone with specialists. Plain journalistic research. Sometimes we get hold of odds and ends, sometimes we come across a nice anecdote or a complete file. This work enables us to develop our creativity on a secure foundation"²⁸.

Reinhard Jahn and Walter Wehner also draw on wide-ranging investigations when preparing their stories. Wehner mentions some specific instances:

Once we wanted to inquire about bunkers. Thus I visited the relevant colleague in the city administration. He put the map onto the table, and suddenly had to go to the lavatory. This happened to take longer than normal that day - and subsequently we knew everything we wanted to know about bunkers. Besides we have acquaintances in the police and the TV companies who confirm whether or not we have done something correctly. And sometimes we have invented something which exists already. For instance this hotdog stand at the city harbour. When we investigated the place, there was exactly the hotdog stand we had imagined... In so far we do not invent that much but only describe what could be²⁹.

The most scrupulous researches were undertaken by Swedish couple Per Wahlöö and Maj Sjöwall. They travelled to London and New York to consult specialists in criminology working for the local police authorities³⁰. They stayed in Budapest for four weeks to capture the atmosphere of the town. Per Wahlöö remembers:

Our second book, *Mannen som gick upp i rök*, was set partly in Budapest. We had been there previously, and we were writing our book we stayed there for a month and wrote the major part of the book on the spot. We allowed Martin Beck (i.e. the leading character) to live in our hotel room, and when we were not writing or sleeping we went for walks to recognize the places we had seen on our previous trip. The only difference consisted in the fact we were there in the middle of an icy-cold winter, while Martin Beck had to sweat in a dreadful heat-wave³¹.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Mathews, P. and Norbert Klugmann. *Der dritte Mann*, Die Woche, 28 June 1996, p.38.

²⁹ Einblick Das Kölner Stadt- und Unimagazin Karr und Wehner, <http://www.koeln.online.de/einblick/magazin/archiv/karr.html>, p. 3.

³⁰ Ejgil Soholm, To forfattere - én stil, Aarhus Stiftstidende, 10 February 1977.

³¹ Wahlöö-Sjöwall, *Akademitäl*.

In the early 1970s the author couple moved from Stockholm to Malmö, where Wahlöö had found a position as a journalist. Their novels, however, went on acting in Stockholm. Since the authors made their characters perform at authentic places, it was necessary to describe the venues as realistically as possible. To avoid mistakes they repeatedly visited the Swedish capital and inspected the places in question. For the preparation of their novel *The Abminable Man* (*Den vedervärdige mannen från Säffle*) they paid no fewer than eighteen visits to Stockholm. Lest their recollections should become blurred, they took a total of 463 photographs.

It was a peculiarity of Sjöwall and Wahlöö that they shaped their characters to real persons. "We took none of these models from the police staff with one exception most of them had totally different professions. We found them among our friends or people we had met by chance. For example we adjusted the figure of Gunvald Larsson to a taxi driver who drove us home one night" writes Maj Sjöwall³². She and her husband regarded the use of real persons as the prerequisite for describing characters vividly and consistently.

This issue come down to the question of whether twin authors predominantly drawn on fictional or non-fictional sources. While Boileau and Narcejac were reluctant to exploit real events for their stories, Norbert Klugmann and Peter Mathews readily search the newspapers for stories they could use as a core of a future novel³³. The brothers Goncourt were reported to integrate specific events and real persons into their stories. Ellery Queen in turn relied on his personal imagination rather than on press accounts. The sources twin authors take their material from do not present a homogeneous picture.

Having accumulated their material, the authors work out a script. Wahlöö and Sjöwall used to divide the outlines of their novels into 30 chapters which they distributed between the two of them. The authors followed a similar scheme. When Boileau and Narcejac started a new novel, Boileau set up a first outline of some 500 words and passed it on to his friend, who marshalled the persons and the locations. Edmond and Jules Goncourt split their treatment into manageable pieces. Then they wrote the beginning and the end of the story, before they distributed the remaining chapters. Most authors report that preparatory work consumes the bulk of their times. Jahn (Karr) and Wehner invest nine months in the planning of a novel and a mere three months in its realization.

Fundamental similarities are observable in the process of compiling a story. Frederic Dannay and Manfred Lee worked on their novels up to twelve hours a day and met in their New York office once a week. This pattern of weekly meetings is also applied by Peter Mathews and Norbert Klugmann, as well as by Reinhard Jahn (Hanns-Peter Karr) and Walter Wehner. It is striking, however, that the authors in question have never worked together in the literal sense that is, formulating

³² Maj Sjöwall, Untitled report p. 3.

³³ Klugmann, N. and Peter Mathews. *Der dritte Mann*, Die Woche, 28 June 1996, p. 38.

simultaneously the same text and the same clauses. Even the Goncourt brothers withdrew to separate rooms in order to commit their ideas to paper. Leo P. Ard considers it altogether impossible to co-operate with a partner: "I have never written a text along with a co-author. Sitting before the screen in tandem, the air for breathing becomes scarce. I consider it unthinkable to formulate jointly. The only exception is the final revision when we peruse the text once more"³⁴.

A particularly close relationship was apparent in the co-operation between Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö. In her speech for the Danish Academy of Arts (1973) Maj Sjöwall gives a lively description of how she and her husband passed the day during the intensive stage of their work:

Mostly we write at home at our desk when we have books, maps, photographs and other materials in our reach. We always write at night, using candles for illumination, and we always write by hand. None of us has had to adjust to this working style: we have done so since we met.

While we are writing, we smoke exceedingly and drink gallons of tea, but never alcohol or beer; and we eat only so much that we keep ourselves alive until the book is finished. At 6 or 7 o'clock in the morning we lie down, read the newspaper and sleep until 2 o'clock in the afternoon, when we rise and tackle any housework that needs to be done. In the evening we sit down at the typewriters and type up each others's manuscript. Normally we are not very diligent sportmen, but when we are writing, we try to keep ourselves in form by biking, swimming, playing table tennis and going on foot instead of using a taxi. We only reluctantly interrupt our work, and so we press on night after night until the book is finished³⁵.

CONCLUSION

Sjöwall and Wahlöö asserted that the advantages of working in tandem outweigh all disadvantages which might occur. A partner gives you the assurance that you have not made mistakes and internal contradictions in the construction of your story. Or, as Leo P. Ard puts it: "The heads are smarter than one... In particular when you are working on crime novels, you are prone to the danger of getting stuck by making the story too complicated and difficult for your readers to understand. You are too deeply involved in your figures and your plot to be able to discover inconsistencies and false reasoning in time" Furthermore the intellectual exchange with a congenial partner stimulates the flow of ideas. By working in tandem you can escape from "a creative bottle-neck and a temporary loss of ideas", writes Ard. "It got on my nerves sitting alone before the typewriter day and night without being able to communicate with others"³⁶.

³⁴ Letter by Leo P. Ard, 1 August 1997.

³⁵ Maj Sjöwall, *Akademital* p. 4.

³⁶ Letter by Leo P. Ard, 1 August 1997.

All authors listed in this survey were deeply convinced that writing in tandem is an asset. For the Goncourt brothers, Ellery Queen, Boileau - Narcejac and Sjöwall Wahlöö the collaboration endured throughout their lives, and when one partner died, the author regularly remained in a deep intellectual crisis. Nevertheless there is little evidence that the habit of working with companions will proliferate among authors. Finding a partner who is equipped with the same views and skills is too rare phenomenon that one could recommend an author to start his career by working alongside a colleague. Furthermore writing in tandem almost exclusively applies to genre literature, i.e. literature which follows fixed standardized patterns. Except for Fruttero-Lucentini and the Goncourt brothers, the authors in question have confined themselves to crime novels. The texts they have produced make use of a simple unsophisticated style which at times comes close to colloquial language³⁷. If a reader expects a high degree of originality and a kind of poetic flair, he will find it in the novel of an individual author rather than in the crime stories of double authors. The later use existing patterns, while only the former is able to design new artistic forms. Hence dual authors do not invalidate the rule that an artefact is the expression of the personality of an individual artist. Like twins in real life, twin authors are the exceptions who confirm a well-known rule.

³⁷ An exception is made by Sjöwall and Wahlöö who aimed at writing in a "cultivated style" ("Der är naturligt för oss att uttrycka oss skönlitterärt och därvidlag gör vi sa gott vi kan", *Akademital*).