

Lucien Carr and the Origins of the Beat Generation

The Beat Generation was an American literary movement, most prominent during the 1950s and 1960s, that strove to regain a sense of independence and humanism in a society that, the Beat writers believed, ignored these essential virtues. While there were no heads or leaders of this movement, general consensus is that the ‘fathers’ of the Beat were Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William Burroughs. It is surprising, then, that most scholars of the Beat fail to recognize the philosophical contribution of Lucien Carr, the man who, in 1944, introduced these three writers and brought them into philosophical dialogue with each other.¹ As Ginsberg himself explained, “as long as I have thought of us as artists, it has been Claude [Carr]² who I thought of as central to any active inter-inspiring school or community or creation.”³ Through Carr, Kerouac, Ginsberg, Burroughs, and select others formed what Ginsberg termed the ‘Libertine Circle.’ Carr used the Circle as his stage, where he acted out his philosophy, which he labeled the ‘New Vision.’ Through his wild behavior he personified the New Vision and made it the center of attention of the Libertine Circle. When the Circle was destroyed by tragedy, and Carr abandoned his philosophical and artistic pursuits, Kerouac and Ginsberg applied Carr’s lessons to a more socially-aware context; the Libertine Circle died and was replaced by the Beat Generation.

The New Vision

By the time Lucien Carr, a St. Louis native, had arrived at Columbia in 1943, he had already worked out significant parts of the New Vision.⁴ The philosophy was about, and in response to, the decline of Western culture and civilization, and the limiting values that the West imposes on the concept of humanity. Many of the foundational ideas which helped form the New Vision were from books not included in the Western canon, books which were very different in nature from those assigned by the Columbia professors. “It was a very rich reading list, which we were not getting in college, just the opposite of

¹ The most notable exception to this is Aaron Latham who penned an article, which portrayed the murder of David Kammerer by Lucien Carr as a formative moment in the Beat Generation (Latham, Aaron. “The Columbia Murder That Gave Birth to the Beats.” *New York Magazine* Vol. 9 No. 16 (April 19, 1976), 41-53).

Others include Ann Douglas, who has claimed that Lucien Carr was a “muse” to Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Burroughs (Douglas, Ann. “City Where the Beats Were Moved to Howl.” *New York Times* (December 26, 1997) E43, E49)

For his part, Carr appears to have intentionally avoided any fame or credit.

² Lucien’s nickname amongst Kerouac and Ginsberg appears to have been Claude de Maubris, a fictional French count. Carr is referred to as Claude de Maubris in many letters, and texts, including Kerouac’s fictionalized autobiography, *Vanity of Duluoz*. (Kerouac, Jack. *Vanity of Duluoz* New York: Penguin Books, 1994).

³ Ginsberg in Watson, Steve. *The Birth of the Beat Generation: Visionaries, Rebels, and Hipsters, 1944-1960*. New York: Pantheon, 1995, 35.

⁴ Kerouac, *Duluoz*, 211.

college, because college was the American Empire, and this was the decline of Empire.”⁵ The readings centered around the end of civilization, escape, and change. This transcendental philosophy “speaks of the end of the culture and the beginning of the high civilization, which is a degenerate sophistication and exfoliation of the primary culture simultaneous with the rise of a second religiousness.”⁶ It was an optimistic endeavor, one which did not seek the destruction of culture, but which saw it as inevitable, and sought a method of coping.

Carr’s New Vision for society began with a complete deconstruction of contemporary conceptions of reality, which he achieved by questioning every aspect of social belief systems. The New Vision lay “in a highly conscious comprehension of universal motives, and in a realistic acceptance of an unromantic universe of flat meaninglessness.”⁷ The “New Vision assumed the death of square morality,” because what humans view as ‘moral’ is in fact counter to the very notion of humanity. In place of morality, the New Vision advocated “belief in creativity.”⁸ Once one accepted the mundane nature of reality, one could proceed to attempt escape from it, through creative acts. In this way, the New Vision “celebrated the transcendental act of making art more than beauty the product.”⁹ Carr sought to replace formal, suffocating virtues with an unfaltering faith in the superior power of creativity.

Many of the New Vision’s foundations were not unique. Indeed, Ginsberg later described the New Vision as a “Rimbaud-like enterprise,”¹⁰ which can be summarized by the following precepts: creativity, stemming from uninhibited and uncensored self-expression, is an essential element of humanity; the consciousness of one who is creative, the artist, must be expanded through non-rational means, including the derangement of the senses, the consumption of drugs, and the encouragement of hallucinatory visions and dreams; art, due to its creative power, supercedes the dictates of conventional morality.¹¹ It follows that to the New Vision, the “highest and most creative world is a world of artists.”¹² It is a world to which the normal boundaries of acceptable behavior do not apply because such limits detract from the beauty, meaning, and power of creativity. The

⁵ Ginsberg in Watson, *Birth*, 39.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ginsberg, journal entry, April 1945, in McNally, Dennis. *Desolate Angel: Jack Kerouac, the Beat Generation, and America*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980, 66.

⁸ Ginsberg in Watson, *Birth*, 39.

⁹ Kerouac note in Ginsberg journal undated entry, in McNally, *Desolate*, 66.

Art more than beauty implies that the creative act, and not as much the product of the act, is what is important.

¹⁰ Foster, Edward Halsey. *Understanding the Beats*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 1992, 5. This refers to the 19th century French Romantic poet, Arthur Rimbaud.

¹¹ Ginsberg in Watson, *Birth*, 40.

Ginsberg explains how these precepts would become central to the Beat Generation.

¹² Ibid.

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artist, free from society's limiting perception of reality, can open himself to transcendental beauty. Or, as Rimbaud put it, "when will we go, beyond the beaches and the mountains, to greet the birth of the new task, the new wisdom, the fight of tyrants and demons, the end of superstition; to adore – the first ones! – Christmas on Earth?"¹³ The New Vision was an attempt to revisit the old romantic vision of artists from a modern perspective.

Carr had been well-acquainted with the poetry of Rimbaud before beginning his studies at Columbia,¹⁴ and it motivated him to seek escape from his cursed "humankindness."¹⁵ Rimbaud was chiefly concerned with the nature of personal growth within the context of society, and the conflict that this relationship necessarily spawns.¹⁶ One can attain relief from this situation through transcendence. The process of transcending perception is motivated by the search for "self-knowledge," knowledge of one's own soul. To attain this, one must become a *voyant*,¹⁷ one who seeks a transcendent state "through a long, immense and reasoned deranging of *all his senses*."¹⁸ Through "love," "suffering," and "madness," "he tries to find himself, he exhausts in himself all the poisons, to keep only their quintessences."¹⁹ The poet needs "all his faith" and "superhuman strength" for this quest to become "among all men the great invalid, the great criminal, the great accursed one – and the supreme Savant! – for he arrives at the *unknown*!"²⁰

From his experiences, the *voyant* will discover a new language "of the soul for the soul, epitomizing everything, scents, sounds, colors, through seizing through and reaching forth."²¹ Although the poet will die – indeed, his visions might drive him to a premature death – his knowledge will not be lost because he has developed this language, through which he can communicate his discoveries to others: "other horrible workers will come;

¹³ Rimbaud in McNally, *Desolate Angel*, 66.

¹⁴ Watson, *Birth*, 34.

'Rimbaud' was, according to Ginsberg, one of the eight words required to speak Carr's language. The others were: fruit, phallus, clitoris, cacoethes, feces, foetus, womb.

Other examples of Carr's affinity for Rimbaud are numerous. For example, when Carr and Jack Kerouac joined the Merchant Marine, Carr signed on as 'Arthur Rimbaud.'

In *Vanity of Duluoz*, Kerouac cites Rimbaud as the first of five writers to whom Carr looked in his search for a New Vision.

McNally (p 68) reports that Carr wanted to go to Paris, to "walk Montmartre like Rimbaud."

¹⁵ Kerouac letter to Ginsberg, October, 1944, Charters, Ann. *Jack Kerouac: Selected Letters 1940-56*. New York: Viking, 1995, 80.

¹⁶ Ahearn, Edward J. *Rimbaud: Visions and Habitations*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983, 1.

¹⁷ voyant - (French) a seer, implies prophetic powers as well as conspicuousness and showiness

¹⁸ Rimbaud, Arthur. *Season in Hell*. ed. Peschel, Enid Rhodes. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973, 9.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

they will begin in the horizons where the other collapsed.”²² If the poet would follow these indications, “poetry will no longer suit action to a rhythm; it *will be in the vanguard*,” and the *voyant* “would be truly a *multiplier of progress!*”²³

Rimbaud developed this philosophy through the early part of his traumatic life. As a teenager, he left home and became the lover of his mentor, the married poet Paul Verlaine, many years Rimbaud’s senior. For some time they lived together in London and Belgium, to avoid various legal proceedings at home in France. Eventually, Rimbaud announced that he was going to leave him. Verlaine, emotionally devastated, shot Rimbaud, but the bullet only damaged his wrist. Rimbaud fled back to his mother in Charleroi in Eastern France, and completed *A Season in Hell* at the age of 18. Within the next year, Rimbaud feared his craving for psychedelic visions was damaging his health. He became discouraged, believing that what he craved was unattainable, and abandoned his poetry.²⁴ He traveled and lived abroad so frequently, and became such a recluse that he was frequently referred to as “the late Arthur Rimbaud” while he was still alive.²⁵

There are many similarities between Rimbaud’s philosophy and life, and the ideas contained in another text that greatly influenced the New Vision, Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*.²⁶ The protagonist of this novel is a poor student named Raskolnikov (from the stem ‘raskol,’ which means split, or schism), who creates a philosophy, based strongly on both the Hegelian and Nietzschean concepts of a superman. Raskolnikov’s “theory” features these main aspects: all men are either “ordinary” or “extraordinary”; the latter are defined by their contribution to society – they must add something new, some “new word” to society; the “extraordinary” men have not only the right, but the *duty* to transgress laws in order to have their “new word” heard; whereas ordinary men must obey the laws, because laws are created specifically for them. Raskolnikov believes that his contribution of this “new” theory qualifies him as an “extraordinary” man above society (even his name separates him from humanity).

Raskolnikov becomes convinced that, whereas he suffers in poverty, a wealthy, elderly pawnbroker with whom he has dealings is a useless drain on society. His cramped, dilapidated quarters drive his frustration further. As an extraordinary man, it is his responsibility to murder the old woman, and he proceeds to the act. The murder is a test to determine if he truly is extraordinary, existing beyond the laws.²⁷

²² Ibid., 7-8.

²³ Ibid., 9.

²⁴ Ibid., 15.

²⁵ Rimbaud, Arthur. *Illuminations*. trans. Mathieu, Bertrand. Brockport, NY: Boa Editions, 1979, 14.

²⁶ Charters, Kerouac, 53.

Indeed Carr, fresh out of prison in 1946, went to see the film version of *Crime and Punishment* with Kerouac (McNally, *Desolate*, 89).

²⁷ Kraeger, Linda, Joe Barnhart. *Dostoevsky on Evil and Atonement: the ontology of personalism in his major fiction*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992, 141.

But, the opportunity to kill the pawnbroker arises before he has finalized his system – his direction had not yet been complete – and he does not escape without suspicion. Inspector Petrovitch, investigating the murder, believes that Raskolnikov is guilty, but he can not prove it. Petrovitch's persistent questioning forces Raskolnikov to spend several days debating whether or not he should confess. If his philosophy is flawed, as Raskolnikov fears, then he *must* turn himself in. The internal debate, while intense, is emotionally detached. There is no guilt or feeling involved in this internal dialogue; it is based entirely on the validity of his theory. He eventually confesses to the murder and is sentenced to prison. In prison, he soon discovers that his hatred will kill him, and this realization prompts his conclusion that living a boring life is better than death, precisely because it is life. Accordingly, he converts to Christianity and all indications are that he goes on to lead a humble, satisfied life.

From Rimbaud's and Raskolnikov's indications, Carr had a goal – transcendence from the mundane reality of human society, through encouraging his creative powers. Unfortunately, neither Rimbaud nor Raskolnikov provided a proven method to perform this task. Both Rimbaud and Raskolnikov had to abandon their pursuits because of the fatal risk they were running. Carr used the New Vision as a means of realizing a new method to transcendence, a method which had eluded previous romantics. He spent the 1943-44 academic year developing the New Vision, attempting to find the method through discussions with his friends at Columbia.

The Libertine Circle

Among the first people Carr met at Columbia was his classmate Allen Ginsberg. Ginsberg, a “spindly Jewish kid with horn-rimmed glasses and tremendous ears sticking out, seventeen years old, burning black eyes, a strangely deep voice,”²⁸ had come to Columbia “to know how the wild ones lived.”²⁹ He described Carr as “the most angelic-looking kid” he had ever seen, as though “he drank the wind and took a mess of shadows for his meat.”³⁰ Ginsberg was taken by the strength of Carr's character, and his desire for the iconoclastic.³¹ To Allen, who wanted “to know everything about books and writers and art and painting, who knew nothing about the serious things in life such as wenching and drinking,”³² Lucien was a ‘genius of life,’³³ precisely what he'd come to Columbia to discover.

²⁸ Lehman, David. “‘Kaddish’ for Allen Ginsberg ‘48” *Columbia College Today* (Fall 1997), 21.

²⁹ Latham, Aaron. “Birth of a Beatnik” *New York Times Magazine* (January 4, 1998), 42.

³⁰ Watson, *Birth*, 34.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 35.

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Carr had an immediate impact on Ginsberg. Only three years earlier, at the age of 14, Ginsberg wrote in his journal that he would become “a genius of some kind or other, probably in literature.”³⁴ But, at the time when Carr first met him, Ginsberg, the child of a Communist household, wanted to apply his talents to social causes by becoming a labor organizer. Carr knew immediately that this was an inappropriate calling for his friend. To prove it, Lucien took Allen to a blue-collar bar on 125th Street and told him “you’ve never worked a day in your life. You’d feel like a self-conscious idiot if you went in there.”³⁵ At that moment, Ginsberg decided to become a writer, a decision which he attributed to Lucien.³⁶

They began discussing and developing the New Vision together. From the discussions and readings, Ginsberg began to look to Rimbaud’s prescription for the systematic derangement of the senses as a prerequisite for the would-be seer, the source of the self-declared “Angelical ravings,”³⁷ that would feature prominently in his work. A child of a socially and politically aware household, he used these discussions as a basis for combining his philosophical and political views into one coherent whole, based on their common “humanitarian” nature. Art was “political in the highest sense ... art for art’s sake is a delusion.”³⁸ Ginsberg sought a social application of this system; the art of personal transcendence extends far beyond the personal realm.

Carr sought a different path; his desire was more selfish. He believed that Ginsberg’s idealistic aspirations were motivated by his “virginal naivete” and “inexperience with life.”³⁹ Carr took the inquiry of the New Vision more seriously and delved deeper. “Lucien, driven by his disgust at the trap of life ... wanted to go beyond personality or intellect or the soul.”⁴⁰ If the knowledge a *voyant* gains is useful to society, then so be it, but Carr sought transcendence for himself.

At the conclusion of the academic year, both Carr and Ginsberg remained on Columbia’s campus for the summer. One night early that summer Carr was in the West End bar, “talkin (sic) like Rimbaud.”⁴¹ There he ran into his friend, Edie Parker, a Barnard student, who was with her boyfriend, Jack Kerouac, recently returned from service in the Merchant Marine. Edie introduced them.

³⁴ Ginsberg Journal, 5/22/41, in McNally, *Desolate*, 63.

³⁵ Interview with Ginsberg, in *Ibid.*, 67.

³⁶ Tytell, John. *Naked Angels: The Lives and Literature of the Beat Generation*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976, 81.

³⁷ Lehman, “Kaddish”, 19.

³⁸ Ginsberg in Watson, *Birth*, 40.

³⁹ Tytell, *Naked*, 85.

⁴⁰ McNally, *Desolate*, 65.

⁴¹ Kerouac, Jack. *Visions of Cody*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972, 198.

Kerouac's first reaction of Carr was that he was "a mischievous little prick."⁴² Within hours, however, Kerouac was entranced by Carr's "absolute physical male and spiritual, too, beauty." He was "slant-eyed, green eyes, complete intelligence, language pouring out of him. Shakespeare reborn almost ... even this old dreamy hardhearted seaman and footballer, Jack [Kerouac], got to like him and drop tears over him."⁴³

They quickly became good friends. That night, drunk after the West End they rolled each other down Broadway in a barrel, singing songs loudly in the early morning. The next night they sat out in the rain, in a gutter pouring black ink over each other's hair.⁴⁴ Hanging out with Carr made Kerouac feel that "colors are being splashed over my soul."⁴⁵ Carr had an immediate effect on Kerouac's writing; "he was seein (sic) flaws in me [Kerouac] I shoulda seen myself."⁴⁶ Kerouac was highly motivated as a writer, and Carr recognized this.⁴⁷ The main problem, as he saw it, was that Kerouac could "not think what to write;"⁴⁸ Kerouac was lost for content.

Kerouac had been aware of this problem, and it fueled his intense desire for knowledge. "When something is incomprehensible to me, I try to understand it, the author's intellect and passion – to label it incoherent is an act of cowardice ... of intellectual death."⁴⁹ Kerouac had a keen sense that there is value in art, even art that others might disregard. All art conveys some meaning, and the viewer must discover it.

It was this drive for knowledge that had motivated Kerouac to leave Columbia for the Merchant Marine: "formal education is not near enough an approach to Minerva."⁵⁰ He was much "more interested in the pith of our great times than in dissecting 'Romeo and Juliet' ... these are stirring, magnificent times."⁵¹ To Kerouac, time spent at sea, battling *with* ones brothers, was the fulfillment of a "heart rending romance."⁵² Kerouac wanted education through participation, not through sterile, removed, objective investigation –

⁴² Kerouac, *Duluoz*, 195.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 196-7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁴⁷ Kerouac was intensely driven as a writer. Prior to departing for sea, Kerouac, by his own account, had spent 14 hours a day, seven days a week at the typewriter (Kerouac letter to Sebastian Sampas, undated, Kerouac Papers, New York Public Library Berg Collection).

⁴⁸ Kerouac, *Duluoz*, 197.

⁴⁹ Kerouac letter to Carl Solomon, undated, Kerouac Papers, New York Public Library Berg Collection.

⁵⁰ Kerouac letter to Bill Ryan, friend from Lowell, MA. who died in war, 1/10/43, New York Public Library Berg Collection.
Minerva is the Roman goddess of Wisdom.

⁵¹ Kerouac letter to Sebastian Sampas, 11/42, in Charters, *Kerouac*, 30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 30.

the suffocating structure of higher education. Kerouac wanted to see and experience, like Rimbaud.

By the time he had returned to Columbia, Kerouac had developed a belief system significantly similar to the New Vision. Years earlier, in his hometown, Kerouac had been a part of a small group of aspiring intellectuals, who labeled themselves the Prometheans. Their philosophy of positive social change was based on the concept of the universal brotherhood of man. They attempted to determine a vision of reality and the essential role of the artist within it. But, by the time Kerouac had returned from sea, he had broken from Prometheanism.⁵³ In a letter to fellow “Promethean” Sebastian Sampas,⁵⁴ Kerouac explained that he “still can’t understand what we thought we were doing [with Prometheanism].” The “millions” of “youth movements” in history have not achieved any importance because essentially they have all been the same – “the awakening in the minds of sincere and intelligent young men of a social conscience ... and the need for purpose in a society ostensibly without.” All these movements have, from their beginnings, been doomed to failure because they have lacked the necessary direction.

While Kerouac still recognized the virtue of “uniting in a Progressive movement” he did not feel that “this immutable fusion of many into one” was the best means of achieving it, for it is without direction, and results in “one vague jumble of an artist.”⁵⁵ The artist has no distinct direction when his power is confused with that of the group; the “unresponsive ‘Philistines’” would treat the “artist” as a “fool,”⁵⁶ and not respect his vision or insight. It is for this reason that the artist must be distinct from society. Outside of society, the artist is safe from the contamination of those who do not share the same creative power and drive for vision. While a true artist requires “a singular love and understanding of mankind and the forces of society,” he can only gain such an understanding by being “outcast” from society.⁵⁷

Kerouac’s revised Prometheanism and the New Vision were directed towards highly similar ends: giving the artist freedom to express his creativity separate from society, so that he may transcend his own limits. Despite the similarities, there was one fundamental difference between Kerouac’s personal philosophy and Carr’s New Vision: Kerouac had a social vision that Carr lacked. Kerouac believed that the purified poet, the poet who has purged all non-poetic aspects of his character, is much more useful to society than one who knows himself perfectly. “Dostoevsky understood humanity because it was more interesting and ‘poetic’ to him than his own fucking ‘soul.’”⁵⁸ The concept of a self

⁵³ Kerouac letter to Sebastian Sampas, 3/15/43, Kerouac Papers, New York Public Library Berg Collection.

⁵⁴ The correspondence between Kerouac and Sampas forms the majority of historical data of Prometheanism.

⁵⁵ Kerouac letter to Sebastian Sampas, 3/15/43, Kerouac Papers, New York Public Library Berg Collection.

⁵⁶ Kerouac letter to Sebastian Sampas, 3/25/43, in *Charters, Kerouac*, 50. This recalls how Rimbaud felt society would label the *voyant* a criminal.

⁵⁷ Kerouac letter to Sebastian Sampas, 3/25/43, in *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Kerouac letter to Sebastian Sampas, 3/25/43, in *Ibid.*

detracts from an artist's ability to see the potential of reality, and he must transcend its limits. Kerouac believed in the importance of knowledge of "mankind and the forces of society," (similar to Ginsberg's understanding of the New Vision) while Carr emphasized the search for "self-knowledge." Despite this disagreement, it is clear these systems shared values to a great degree, as Kerouac later claimed that "out of humankind materials of art, I tell myself, the new vision springs."⁵⁹ Kerouac fit right into the New Vision discussions; he and Carr spent a considerable amount of time together, discussing aesthetics and philosophy.⁶⁰

Since Kerouac and Carr spent so much time together, it was unavoidable that Kerouac would soon meet a man who had been following Carr for five years. David Kammerer, 14 years Carr's senior, had fallen in love with him when Carr had been a boy scout and Kammerer his Scout Master. Eventually, Carr's parents became weary and suspicious of the attention that Kammerer paid their boy, so they sent Lucien to Exeter. By this point, Kammerer was obsessed with Carr, and followed him to Massachusetts, where Kammerer's parties resulted in Carr's expulsion. Afterwards, Kammerer followed Carr to Bodoin College, then to Washington University, back in St. Louis. When Lucien's mother discovered a batch of 50 letters that Kammerer had sent to her son, she immediately sent him to the University of Chicago.⁶¹ But, David followed Lucien to Chicago and eventually convinced him to go on a spree of reckless behavior, which culminated in Carr's attempted suicide. He was committed for six months to the Cook County Hospital Psychiatric Ward. After his release, he and Kammerer went to Mexico together for a vacation. Soon afterwards, Carr moved to New York to enter Columbia. Kammerer followed, becoming a janitor in Greenwich Village, living near his and Carr's friend from St. Louis, William Burroughs.

Through Kammerer, Kerouac met Burroughs. Shortly afterwards, on Carr's instructions, Ginsberg introduced himself to Kerouac. The Libertine Circle was now complete: Carr, Kerouac, Ginsberg, Burroughs, and Kammerer.⁶² At the center of the Libertine Circle was Lucien.⁶³ Lucien's philosophical drive was more intense than that of the others. The Libertine Circle derived its strength from him, and Lucien used the Circle as his stage. Kerouac described Carr's role in Circle as "a rainbow flash of color coming on top of the darkness sea."⁶⁴ He was their "falling star Lucifer angel boy demon genius."⁶⁵ Lucien

⁵⁹ Kerouac to Allen Ginsberg, 10/44, in *Ibid.*, 80.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁶¹ "Guilty Plea Made by Carr in Slaying" *New York Times*, 9/16/44, page unknown.

⁶² Actually, Kerouac's girlfriend, Edie Parker, and Carr's girlfriend, Celine Young, were also party to these discussions and technically part of the Libertine Circle. However, little evidence exists on their contributions or roles.

⁶³ McNally, *Desolate*, 67.

⁶⁴ Kerouac in *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Kerouac, *Duluoz*, 200.

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earned these epithets because he did not merely advocate the New Vision – he lived it, acting it out for all to see. Lucien “never concealed the nature of his sensibilities – he wore them on his sleeve in place of a heart.”⁶⁶ He was a *voyant*, who not only saw, but conspicuously did.

Carr’s extreme behavior was illustrated by his fondness for what he and his friends called the *acte gratuit*.⁶⁷ In essence, the *acte gratuit* was an act motivated purely by a desire to transgress established norms – to fight the depersonalizing forces imposed by society, the same about which Dostoevsky wrote and against which Raskolnikov rebelled.⁶⁸ The *acte gratuit* celebrated the beauty of experiencing creation, regardless of its ends (just as the New Vision “celebrated the transcendental act of making art more than beauty the product”).⁶⁹ Each such act was a form of debauchery, “the release of man from whatever stringencies (sic) he’s applied to himself.”⁷⁰

The *acte gratuit* was a powerful tool in the search for self-knowledge, which Rimbaud prescribed. It was a means of exhausting “all the poisons, to keep only their quintessences.” Carr used these acts as a method to attain transcendence. The fact that this method had failed Rimbaud did not dissuade Carr. He sunk a yacht – not his own – just for the experience of standing on the deck of sinking ship. He chewed up a wine glass after downing its contents. He tore apart a suit Burroughs was wearing because he saw a hole in the sleeve. At a restaurant, he threw a huge steak onto the floor, just to see how the waiter would respond.⁷¹ He convinced Kammerer, who suffered from ulcers, to swallow an entire teaspoon of paprika. He attempted suicide. Although these examples were typical of Lucien’s behavior, they were not exactly unique: what made them different were that they mirrored Carr’s beliefs. It was through these acts that Carr made himself the “art” of the New Vision, and the centerpiece of the Libertine Circle.

While the other Libertines did not really seek to emulate this behavior (indeed, Kerouac believed that the *acte gratuit* was possible only because Carr had been raised in an environment of wealth and extravagance;⁷² Kerouac’s family, like Ginsberg’s, was poor), they did absorb it. Through Lucien’s behavior, Ginsberg and Kerouac came to understand

⁶⁶ Kerouac, “Claude”, in Watson, *Birth*, 36.

⁶⁷ Kerouac, *Duluoz*, 213.

The *acte gratuit* is first presented in *The Counterfeiters* by Andre Gide, in which schoolboys carry out a motiveless, dispassionate murder. This text was much admired by the St. Louis School of Burroughs, Carr, and Kammerer. (Clark, Tom. *Jack Kerouac: A Biography*. New York: Marlowe & Company, 1984, 62)

⁶⁸ Terras, Victor. *F. M. Dostoevsky Life, Work, & Criticism*. Fredericton, NB, Canada: York Press, Ltd., 1984, 24.

⁶⁹ Kerouac note in Ginsberg journal undated entry, in McNally, *Desolate*, 66.

⁷⁰ Kerouac letter to Ian [no surname], undated, in Kerouac Papers, New York Public Library Berg Collection.

⁷¹ Kerouac, *Duluoz*, 214-215.

Making art (the creative act) rather than beauty (the product of art) was a goal of the New Vision.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 214.

‘expressionism’ as uninhibited self-expression, derived from ecstatic creativity.⁷³ For Ginsberg, who had come to Columbia in search of the ‘wild ones,’ and for Kerouac who desperately sought the ‘stirring’ and the ‘magnificent’ and attempted to find meaning and content in all art, Carr – the embodiment of a transcendental art – was a powerful force, precisely what they had been searching for to fuel their writing. They took Carr’s loud behavior as inspiration for ideas.

This is not to say that Carr was the origin of Kerouac’s and Ginsberg’s belief systems. It is clear that Kerouac was battling with very similar concepts before he met Carr, and little evidence exists regarding Ginsberg’s sensibility before entering Columbia. But, it is certain that Carr’s behavior reflected a set of values in a manner that Kerouac and Ginsberg found rewarding and inspirational. As Kerouac wrote in *On The Road*, “the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing but burn, burn, burn, burn like fabulous roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars.”⁷⁴ This was Carr’s life and example.

It was at the apex of Carr’s frenzy, on August 14, 1944, that the Libertine Circle came to an abrupt end. David Kammerer was growing increasingly jealous of the time that Carr spent with Kerouac and Ginsberg.⁷⁵ “It was exactly like Rimbaud and Verlaine;” Kammerer’s attention for Carr was “a very nostalgic *Season in Hell*.”⁷⁶ Carr, living the intensity of Rimbaud’s prescriptions, could not handle the stress of Kammerer’s presence, and felt as though he was going to burst. “I feel like I’m in a pond that’s drying out and I’m about to suffocate,”⁷⁷ he confessed to Kerouac, recalling how Raskolnikov viewed his cramped quarters. Carr had become, according to his girlfriend, Celine Young, “messianic” about ridding the world of Kammerer.⁷⁸ Kerouac could sympathize. Edie’s constant requests for Jack to propose made him very uncomfortable. He felt he was not ready for a family; it would only distract him from his path of becoming an artist. The two decided to join the Merchant Marine to escape their respective captors, and head to France where they would “find symbols in the gutters of Montmartre.”⁷⁹ Kerouac and Carr began spending their days at the National Maritime Union (NMU) Hall, hoping to secure a place on a vessel bound for France. At the Hall, Lucien signed in

⁷³ Foster, *Understanding*, 14.

⁷⁴ Kerouac, Jack. *On The Road*. New York: Penguin Books, 1976, 8.

⁷⁵ Kerouac, *Duluoz*, 212.

Actually, according to Kerouac, Kammerer “was jealous ... of anybody Claude [Carr] had anything to do with.”

⁷⁶ Kerouac, *Duluoz*, 213.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁷⁸ Celine Young letter to Kerouac, 10/15/44, in McNally, *Desolate*, 73.

⁷⁹ Kerouac, *Duluoz*, 213.

as “Arthur Rimbaud,” and Jack as “Paul Verlaine.”⁸⁰ Each morning for several days Jack and Lucien returned to the Hall, and each night they returned to Columbia depressed at their failure to escape.⁸¹ Finally, on Sunday, August 13th, their luck changed when they received an assignment on the *Robert Hayes*. Carr loudly exclaimed, “at last I’ll be free of F.M. [David Kammerer].”⁸² But, due to tense ship politics and their inappropriate behavior, they were kicked off the ship before it left port.

Extremely depressed, they returned to Columbia. Carr ran to Ginsberg’s room, but Ginsberg was not there. He picked up Allen’s journal and discovered an “Essay in Character Analysis: Lucien Carr.” Carr’s ego, the essay reads, “demands intellectual recognition.” To attain this, Carr “adopts the postures and attitudes of the intellectual ... the Bohemian.” “All the appurtenances of the Bohemian become his and this pathogenic dread of non-self recognition and non-social recognition drives him to” extreme behavior, characterized by his “red shirts, wild songs, drink, women, queer shoes, loud talk, arrogance, infantilism on a high intellectual level.” Carr strove to prove himself constantly, to build up “all his superhuman strength” as Rimbaud would explain, to salvage a concept of self from his constant attempts at suffocating it. Ginsberg concluded, “either he is a genius or ... he can recognize no other alternative.” Lucien “must prove that he is a genius.”⁸³ Carr, terrified at the accuracy of this analysis, dousing the page in sweat, noted in the margin that this was Ginsberg’s “most definitive work.”⁸⁴

Later that night, Kammerer found Carr at the West End where Carr had been drinking with Kerouac, who had left earlier. Lucien and David remained at the West End until closing time, when they headed off to Riverside Park with a bottle of whiskey. In the park, Carr and Kammerer spent time drinking and talking. Kammerer professed his continued love for Carr, demanded sex, and threatened to kill Carr if he rejected him again.⁸⁵ At this point, Lucien took his Boy Scout knife from his pocket and stabbed David, his former Scout Master, three times – twice in the heart. David died quickly, and Lucien immediately realized he was in trouble. His first reaction was to dump the body in the Hudson. When the corpse would not sink, Lucien, frustrated, let it float away.

⁸⁰ Latham, “Murder”, 46.

⁸¹ Jack had already served on the *Dorchester*, so he could have received a place with ease, but they had to wait several days for an opportunity for both of them together.

⁸² Kerouac, *Duluoz*, 219.

Kerouac, in *Vanity of Duluoz*, made up names for everyone. David Kammerer was Franz Muller, or F.M.

⁸³ Ginsberg, “Essay in Character Analysis: Lucien Carr,” in Watson, *Birth*, 42.

⁸⁴ Ginsberg, “A Romanticized Version of Tragedy,” ca. 1944, in Journals, in Watson, *Birth*, 42. While Carr’s comment might seem ironic, it is supported by the fact that Carr had doused the page in sweat because, as he later told Ginsberg, “the truth hurts.” (Ginsberg, “Essay in Character Analysis: Lucien Carr,” in Watson, *Birth*, 42)

⁸⁵ The only account of the murder was provided by Carr, who had a vested interest in depicting a situation in which he acted in self-defense. No evidence exists to either prove or disprove his account, except, of course, for the obsessive behavior Kammerer had displayed for Carr over the course of five years.

Confused, Carr headed down to Burroughs' apartment; there William advised Lucien to turn himself in, which Carr knew he had to do. But first, Carr proceeded uptown and, in the early morning, awakened Jack, saying "I disposed of the old man last night." He feared he would be sentenced to the "hot seat." As Lucien felt this was possibly his last day of freedom, he and Kerouac had to spend some time together.⁸⁶

They left, disposed of the murder weapon and Kammerer's glasses, went for a drink, and headed to the Museum of Modern Art. When the day ended, Lucien knew he had to turn himself in; in reference to *La Grande Illusion*, a film which they and their girlfriends had recently seen,⁸⁷ Carr told Jack "these white gloves are chafing. Do you want them, peasant?" "Okay, hand em over," Kerouac replied.⁸⁸

With this allusion, Carr bequeathed to Kerouac and Ginsberg the unfinished task of completing the drive to transcendence. *La Grande Illusion* is a story of three Allied officers – Boeldieu, an aristocrat; Marechal, a peasant; and Rosenthal, a Jew – interned in POW camps by the Germans during World War I. The three are constantly transferred to increasingly strict camps; at their final compound, the commanding officer is Rauffenstein, a German aristocrat who has served bravely in war, and painfully suffers for it, covered in burns, with a fractured spine, and a silver chin and knee-cap. Because he has operated within the established limits for his entire life, Rauffenstein cannot understand why Boeldieu respects Marechal and Rosenthal; they do not, Rauffenstein believes, deserve the ranks they hold. Because such peasants are rising to such positions of power and authority, Rauffenstein recognizes that the war "will be the end of the Rauffensteins and the Boeldieus." But, while Rauffenstein feels this is a 'pity,' Boeldieu does not: "Perhaps there is no more need for us," Boeldieu explains. In the end, Boeldieu happily sacrifices his life as a distraction to the guards while Marechal and Rosenthal successfully escape.⁸⁹ It is time for the old guard of society to move aside, and allow the hitherto oppressed classes to ascend to authority and power. It is in the interest not only of society in general, but also of the members of the old order in particular, to move on, and let progressive change run its course.⁹⁰ In this film, white gloves are the symbol of the aristocracy, a class which has served its purpose and must move on to allow society to grow. Lucien felt that his life had served its purpose, and if he must move on, it is better to do so willingly, like Boeldieu, rather than painfully, reluctantly, and severely injured like Rauffenstein. In doing so, Carr allowed Kerouac (and Ginsberg) the opportunity to

⁸⁶ Kerouac, *Duluoz*, 222.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁸⁹ I employ the term 'comrades' in this sentence, because Boeldieu was not friendly with Marechal and Rosenthal. Boeldieu clearly felt alienated from all those who were not aristocrats.

⁹⁰ Renoir, Jean. *La Grande Illusion*. Indianapolis, IN: Kartes Video Communications, 1984. (Video)
Renoir, Jean. *La Grande Illusion*. London: Lorrimer Publishing Limited, 1968. (Screenplay)

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ascend to the fore of the battle, to continue in the quest for transcendence,⁹¹ as Rimbaud explained, the others “will begin in the horizons where the other collapsed.”

Carr turned himself into the police. During his confession, he was “astonishingly calm and self-possessed,” and spent the night at police headquarters “peacefully reading poetry,” including Rimbaud’s *A Season in Hell*.⁹² Because of Carr’s composure, the police originally believed the confession to be “the imaginings of an overstrained mind.”⁹³ However, when they located the body Carr was imprisoned. By the time he was officially booked, after unemotionally identifying Kammerer’s corpse, “his composure had worn off and he seemed dazed as he was led away to a cell.”⁹⁴ He was finally beginning to realize quite what he had done. The police then detained both Burroughs and Kerouac as material witnesses and Kerouac as a potential accessory. Carr’s attorneys eventually agreed to a plea of manslaughter (they were unsure about the potential success of a self-defense plea)⁹⁵ and he was sentenced to up to 10 years at the Elmira State Prison.⁹⁶

Ginsberg declared that “the libertine circle is destroyed with the death of Kammerer.”⁹⁷ The murder had clearly devastated the Circle: Kammerer was dead, Carr was in prison, and Kerouac had to move out to Michigan.⁹⁸ But, beyond this, the murder forced consideration of the incongruity of the New Vision. An illustration of this conflict was the press conference Ginsberg held on the nature of the New Vision.⁹⁹ Ginsberg, who had been searching for ‘humanitarian’ applications of his philosophy, had to take advantage of the attention the murder had created to spread the new word, just as Raskolnikov had explained. This paradox had been an unresolved part of the New Vision and the Libertine Circle: the conflict between the importance of personal transcendence (represented by

⁹¹ Ironically, in *La Grande Illusion*, Boeldieu sacrifices his life for the freedom of a peasant and a Jew. Kerouac, who had trouble affording Columbia, filled the role of the peasant. Ginsberg, of course, was a Jew. And Carr was of aristocratic lineage. Indeed, at one point, Carr apparently told Kerouac: “My grandfather invented the steamer trunk and I s’pose your grandfather put potatoes in em.” (Kerouac, *Duluoz*, 198)

⁹² Adams, Frank S. “Columbia Student Kills Friend And Sinks Body in Hudson River”, *New York Times*. (8/17/44) 1.

⁹³ Adams, “Columbia Student”, 1.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁹⁵ Charters, *Kerouac*, 79.

⁹⁶ Carr spent two years in prison before being released. Years later he received a full pardon from the Governor of New York. (Douglas, “City”, E49)

⁹⁷ Latham, “Murder”, 53.

⁹⁸ Kerouac’s father had refused to post bail for his son. Edie Parker’s parents put up the money, and Kerouac moved to their estate in Grosse Pointe, Michigan to work to pay them back.

⁹⁹ Latham, “Murder”, 52.

Ginsberg, feeling ignored (Carr, Kerouac, and Burroughs had all been detained), held a press conference at the police station, on the nature of the New Vision.

Carr) and the need to increase social awareness (represented by Ginsberg and Kerouac).¹⁰⁰ This tension was pushed to the breaking point with the murder, and the Circle collapsed.

If the murder was the death of the Libertine Circle, it was the birth of the Beat generation, as it prompted the composition of the first Beat texts. Ginsberg began a novel on the episode of the Kammerer murder, but the Columbia administration forbade him from completing the work. Eventually, Jack, feeling artistically stifled in the comfortable environment of suburban Michigan, returned to New York, where he and Burroughs co-authored the first Beat novel, *And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks*, the most accurate description of the Kammerer murder ever written.¹⁰¹ The book was never published because “no New York publisher would touch” it.¹⁰² It was Burroughs’ first long narrative, where he developed a style that he used in some of his later work. Kerouac, for his part, tried his “intense, frantic, and driven” style – itself, very appropriate to a description of Carr’s life – which would later become famous in *On The Road* and *Vanity of Duluo*.¹⁰³ In a very literal sense, then, the Kammerer murder was a significant spark to the beginning of the Beat generation for Ginsberg, Kerouac, and Burroughs.

The Path to the Beat

During the summer of 1944, Carr had frequently recited the following line from Rimbaud’s *Season in Hell*: “Plonger au fond du gouffre . . . ciel ou enfer qu’importe?”¹⁰⁴ By jumping into the most extreme depths, whether they be blissful or horrendous, Carr believed he could transcend the painfully limiting reality. But, when he could not escape even the tangible reality of New York and Kammerer, he grew incredibly frustrated.

His frustration peaked when he was kicked off the *Robert Hayes*. At this point of extreme vulnerability, Carr discovered Ginsberg’s character analysis of him. Carr admitted the

¹⁰⁰ This conflict is perhaps best illustrated by the following Ginsberg parody of a New Vision discussion:
Carr: I tell you that I repudiate your little loves, your little derivative morality, your hypocritical altruism, your foolish humanity obsessions, all the cares and tenets of your expedient little modern bourgeois culture.
Ginsberg: And I reply that I repudiate your priggish cynicism, your own equally coerced amorality, your escapist egotism, your foolish obsession with your narrow personal devices, all the petty appurtenances of your neurotic escapist mechanism.
(Ginsberg in Watson, *Birth*, 39-40)

¹⁰¹ Kerouac’s *The Town and The City* contains a suicide based on the Kammerer murder, but it is heavily fictionalized. *Vanity of Duluo* contains what is regarded as the most accurate account of the murder (French, Warren. *Jack Kerouac*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986, 76) but it is not the focus of the novel.

¹⁰² Douglas, “City”, E49.
However, Kerouac, Carr wanted him to burn the manuscript. (Kerouac letter to Carl Solomon, 4/7/52, Kerouac Papers, New York Public Library Berg Collection)

¹⁰³ Foster, *Understanding*, 9.

¹⁰⁴ Kerouac, *Duluo*, 217.
This line translates as “To dive into the deepest chasm . . . heaven or hell, what does it matter?”

validity of Ginsberg's assertion that he "demands intellectual recognition." Yet it ran completely counter to his belief system, which was based on shunning the limits of society. If he needed the approbation of his peers so fundamentally that he dreaded its absence, then he could never hope to attain the personal escape for which he had desperately striven.

Carr, attempting to escape the prison of life, imbibing the poisons of culture, ended up in an even more restrictive prison – a real prison – just as Raskolnikov had in the wake of murdering the pawnbroker. Carr eventually concluded, like Rimbaud, who had abandoned his poetry when he saw it was eating at his soul, that he could not continue to live with the hatred he had held for himself. For this reason, Carr, like Boeldieu, realized he could no longer serve the purpose he had; accordingly, he moved aside for his friends to assume the fore, to continue the search. Carr did so, in order that Kerouac and Ginsberg "could begin in the horizons" where he had "collapsed," moving art into "the vanguard."

Carr's lack of artistic success was not due to a lack of vision; a vibrant artist, Carr had the vision. Instead, Kerouac explained, "all Lucien himself needed was a method."¹⁰⁵ He lacked the proper tools to realize his vision. He attempted to discover a method through his extravagant behavior, but this approach failed him. Yet, neither Kerouac nor Ginsberg had a method either, and it is questionable whether they ever found one.¹⁰⁶ The difference between Carr on the one hand, and Kerouac and Ginsberg on the other, was that Carr's immaturity, lack of patience, and intensity drove him to explosive violence when he feared he could not succeed in his endeavor. As District Attorney Frank Hogan noted, "although of superior intelligence, he [Carr] was immature emotionally and had been rendered more unstable by the hounding of Kammerer."¹⁰⁷ As Ginsberg would later explain in his ground-breaking *Howl*, "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness. ... angelhead hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night."¹⁰⁸

While his friends would rise to international prominence as authors and poets, Carr, "the one the others expected to change America," would never write a single word of

¹⁰⁵ Kerouac to Allen Ginsberg, 9/6/45, in *Charters, Letters*, 94.

¹⁰⁶ One reviewer of *On The Road* commented that Kerouac was pursuing the "frenzied quest" for "it," the Beats "don't know what 'It' is, but who does?" (Hanscom, Leslie. "On The Road", *New York World-Telegram and Sun* (9/10/57), in Carr Papers, Columbia University Manuscript Library).

¹⁰⁷ Hogan, Frank S. *Annual Report of the District Attorney, County of New York, 1944*, 67, in Carr Papers, Columbia University Manuscript Library.
Frank Hogan was a Trustee of Columbia University for many years, and there is currently a dormitory on 114th Street and Broadway named in his honor.

¹⁰⁸ Ginsberg, Allen. *Howl, and other poems*, San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1996, 9.
Norman Mailer described the hipster as one who encourages "the psychopath in oneself, to explore that domain of experience where security is boredom and therefore sickness." (Mailer, Norman. "The White Negro" *Advertisements for Myself*, New York: Putnam, 1959, 339). It is clear that Carr fits the description of "angelhead hipster" quite aptly.

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poetry.¹⁰⁹ In 1948, Carr's sufferings, which had come about from his struggle to become a *voyant*, had ceased; he exclaimed to Kerouac that life "gets more & more joyous all the time."¹¹⁰ In place of the quest for self-knowledge, he accepted the limits as Raskolnikov had, seeing that even a boring, confined life is superior to any death. By doing so, he distinctly separated himself from Kerouac and Ginsberg, who continued the drive until their deaths in 1969 and 1997, respectively. In 1955 Carr chided his former co-*voyants*: they were 'full of shit and [they] can't write and live in literary illusion like idiots.'¹¹¹ In Carr's absence, Kerouac and Ginsberg were able to apply his lessons to a new, more society-oriented movement. Lucien had been consumed with the pursuit of "self-knowledge." But, while Rimbaud discusses 'progress' in terms of a social context,¹¹² Carr was concerned more with the personal journey itself, than with the potential social applications of the knowledge gained.¹¹³ In contrast, Kerouac was rooted in the notion of brotherhood (which he never completely rejected or abandoned¹¹⁴), and Ginsberg clearly emphasized the "humanitarian" aspect of the New Vision.¹¹⁵ These two opposing forces synthesized into a new movement which reflected its roots in the traditional romantic ideal and 20th century American culture. This new movement became known as the Beat. According to noted Beat scholar John Tytell:

"During the vacuum of silence that embalmed the early 1950s the Beats stridently proclaimed a *humanistic ideology* and dramatized the beginnings of a new life-style ... the *romantic* ideals and unconventional attitudes of Beat writers informed the generation of the 1960s with a vision of what was most perilous about American life ... the Beats proposed a creed of *individuality* and a commitment to the *life of the spirit* with a passion that recalls the struggles of the *American transcendentalists*."¹¹⁶

It would be incorrect to claim that Lucien Carr was the 'father' of the Beat, or that he alone spawned the movement. But, it would be equally wrong to marginalize Carr's role as merely the figure who introduced Kerouac to Ginsberg to Burroughs. Carr's position in the Libertine Circle was somewhere in between these two extremes. Carr inspired his

¹⁰⁹ Latham, "Murder", 41

¹¹⁰ Kerouac letter to Neal Cassady, 10/3/48, in Charters, *Letters*, 166.

¹¹¹ Kerouac letter to Allen Ginsberg, 6/29/55, in *Ibid.*, 490.

¹¹² Hence the necessity for a new language to *communicate* the discoveries of the *voyant*

¹¹³ Kerouac letter to Allen Ginsberg, 10/44, in Charters, *Letters*, 80.

¹¹⁴ One reason Kerouac had gone to sea was to fight along side his 'brothers.' In the letter to Sampas, Kerouac explains that he still understands the virtue of "uniting in a progressive movement."

¹¹⁵ Ginsberg in Watson, *Birth*, 40.

¹¹⁶ Tytell, John. "The Beat Generation and the Continuing American Revolution", *The American Scholar* vol. 42, no. 2 (spring 1973), in Carr Papers, Columbia University Manuscript Library. Emphasis added.

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friends with his philosophy, his intensity, and above all, his actions which embodied his beliefs. As Ginsberg later recalled of Lucien, “all our intelligence was in him.”¹¹⁷ Carr’s experience and tragedy was a glaring warning. Kerouac recognized that it was possible to pursue the path of self-realization and artistic creation, which Lucien’s lectures advocated, without the “mystical self-destruction” that Lucien embodied.¹¹⁸ Ginsberg saw the tragedy of Carr as a signpost and attempted to prepare for it: “when will I seek pain of knowledge? As Lucien has done with his ‘tortured introspective’ genius.”¹¹⁹ Carr, excessively wounded from the journey of the *voyant*, abandoned his search in 1944, bequeathing his knowledge to his friends. Ginsberg and Kerouac, inspired by Carr, the “multiplier of progress,” carried on.

¹¹⁷ Ginsberg in Watson, *Birth*, 5.

¹¹⁸ McNally, *Desolate*, 65.

¹¹⁹ Ginsberg, Allen *Journals: Mid-Fifties*, New York: HarperCollins, 1995, 96.

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Aaron Latham Notebooks, collected during research for a biography on Jack Kerouac and a magazine article on Lucien Carr and the Beats

Several Articles from The New York Times, The Daily News, The Herald Tribune, The Columbia Spectator, The New York Journal-American concerning the murder of David Kammerer and the trial and sentencing of Lucien Carr.