THE LITERATURE OF ADDICTION:
CONFESSIONS 1821-1960

by

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ABSTRACT

Ever since De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* announced the reality of opium addiction in 1821, the literature representing addiction has excited the reading public. Nevertheless, the historical continuity (or presence) of the literature of addiction has been largely overlooked.

Inevitably perhaps, the literature of addiction has taken the form of the autobiographical confession. The drug confession, however, extends the search for absolution to blatant self-advertisement, apocalyptic social commentary, and the sober collection of scientific data. Consequently, the story of addiction has displayed tremendous variety: the Romantic addict at the mercy of his own subjectivity, the genteel urban victim of the late 19th century, the outlaw, the mystic, the avant-garde artist, the black satirist of the 20th century. Only by following the historical development of the addict does the dynamic between the literary facts and the popular myths become comprehensible.

The early confessions propose addiction as not so much a social problem as a distinct human possibility. The representative addicts—De Quincey, Fitz Hugh Ludlow, and
Baudelaire—suggest the inherent nobility of purpose behind the taking of opium or hashish, no matter how they might disagree upon the moral implications of the adventure.

The popular confessions of the latter half of the 19th century, on the other hand, conceive of opium addiction as a serious disease. They uniformly deplore De Quincey's defense of opium. The opium eater himself becomes an object of pity and loathing. Moreover, miracle cures begin to appear in the popular confessions, transforming the Romantic affliction into a business opportunity. The purple rhetoric of this period contributed to the stereotypes regarding addicts and sponsored legislative measures designed to regulate the use of narcotics.

In the 20th century the European drug personality returns to the Romantic legacy. Aleister Crowley, James Lee, and Jean Cocteau all find in drugs a potential related to the archetypal function of the drug taker as prophet and healer; they claim for drugs significant rewards. These addicts sanctify the perceptions and intuitions of the drug taker and posit the withdrawal agony as the price to be paid for extraordinary modes of vision.

In America, however, the experience of drugs seems hardly so hopeful. Racial intolerance and a stern work ethic forced the addict underground. The addict became a
criminal by necessity and by decree. It is to this image of the old-time addict-thief that Burroughs gravitates toward when he repudiates upper-class American life.

It is impossible to overestimate William Burroughs' role in the housing of the addict in the literate mind. He has dedicated more of his energies to the discussion of addiction than any other single literary figure with the possible exception of De Quincey. Addiction develops in the Burroughs drug canon from a meaningful way of life to the premier health problem in the world. He synthesizes a rich history when he presents the addict as artist-scholar, invalid, mystic, scientist, criminal, and deviant. Burroughs' strangeness becomes less strange by virtue of this survey of the literary history of addiction.
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INTRODUCTION

The variety of literature occasioned by drug addiction unnerves any meaningful sense of historical continuity.

In "Burroughs and the Literature of Addiction," Frank McConnell locates "an English-American tradition of literature . . . Romantic in its origins and imaginative direction." Yet when actually accounting for this addiction literature, McConnell calls attention only to De Quincey, Coleridge, Malcolm Lowry, and William Burroughs as representative practitioners of the form. Though he notices (to dismiss as undeserving) such lame candidates as *Dorian Gray* and *The Man with the Golden Arm*—as well as the generally underrated *Junkie*—McConnell fails to notice the historical middle of the literary representation of drug addiction. Consequently, even his plausible theoretical observations—the Romantic beginnings, or the materialism of the addict—seem somewhat eviscerated, based as they are upon exclusion, oversight, or indifference. By promoting a radical affinity between Coleridge and Burroughs, for example, McConnell discounts the process of a century between the Romantic poet-philosopher and the hip, analytic underworld
character miraculously delivered by the eloquent ritual of withdrawal. For whatever reason, the continuum of addiction literature from De Quincey to Burroughs has been slurred over.

Where McConnell yokes together the aristocratic addicts despite manifest disagreements in historical context, Alethea Hayter falls out on the other side when she insists upon a strict separation between the educated, sensitive, protected artist-addict (as symbolized by Coleridge and De Quincey) and the illiterate, effaced, fugitive junkie of today. She sees tremendous differences in orientation, causing opium to produce different effects in the minds of the self-conscious and ever-anxious addict of today from its effects in the minds of the early nineteenth-century addicts. They indeed felt guilt towards God and their families and their own wasted talents, not towards society and the law; anxiety about earning their living, but not about finding the money for the drug, or how they could get supplies. Different guilts and anxieties produce different patterns in the imagination . . . .

Though Hayter's conclusion is in some sense self-evident, the tacit implication is that De Quincey's work calls for literary investigation whereas the literature dealing with modern addiction warrants nothing so much as psychological research. Though better informed than McConnell on the
subject of addiction, Hayter also fails to appreciate the development from the Romantic addict to the outlawed junkie of the 20th century.

The need is not so much to discuss the literature of addiction in theoretical terms (somehow that comes quite easily) as it is to find it, to revive the voices who defined themselves in relation to an extraordinary disease. While retaining essential features of the autobiographical confession as practiced by St. Augustine, Rousseau, and Malcolm X, the drug confession performs the singular drama of a voice surfacing for one brief moment to testify to the opium life—and then fading into obscurity (or, as with Cocteau and Burroughs, fading into the movies). This survey of the drug confession intends to salvage from relative obscurity the addicts who advanced themselves as the exemplum of addiction: Ludlow, Blair, The Habituate, Cobbe, Cole, The Editor, Lee, Black, Street, Blackstock, as well as the supremely gifted decadents—De Quincey, Baudelaire, Crowley, Cocteau, and the Master Addict himself, William Burroughs.

There exists a large body of literature influenced by the use of drugs. A distinction should be drawn, therefore, between the literature which expresses the visionary potential in hallucinogenic drugs and the
literature which dedicates itself to the sober definition of the physical and moral affliction of addiction. Acting upon this crucial distinction, Peter Haines does not include in his drug anthology work resulting from the use of the 'hard drugs' such as heroin and cocaine, as in the main it is of such a specialized nature as to need far more explanation than I have space available and also because I personally have found it uninspired and of only minor literary value.

Ironically perhaps, the literature of addiction consistently avoids the onus of "inspiration," uniformly preferring moral credibility and scientific precision: "Insofaras I succeed in Direct recording of certain areas of psychic process I may have limited function. . . . I am not an entertainer," Burroughs warns. Closer to the tractarian and the scientist than the avant-garde artist, the confessing addict does not entirely succumb to the visionary potential of opium; on the contrary, he frees himself by an act of will from the debilitating drug in order to pass judgement, and collect data, on his body and soul.

Though there is something compelling about correlating literary style and metabolism, this survey cannot pretend to divine any drug's influence upon any given composition. In the bizarre Genius and Disaster, a psychologist attempts
a drug-oriented brand of stylistics:

If it may be expressed so: purple patches of alcohol in writing always weighs heavier than opium. The purple patches of alcohol are unmistakable. But even more unmistakable are the opium stigmata, as, for example, in Kubla Khan, the alternate shiftings and drag of attack, of plan, of purpose, of setting, of character, the syncopation, the phantasmagoria and hallucination. 5

More important than this caliber of speculation is the restoration of the addict's identity as he adjusts to the bodily and social punishments of transcendence.

It is probably impossible to fully comprehend the drug taker's role in the genesis of mysterious knowledge. Norman O. Brown speculates that "the original sublimator, the historical ancestor of philosopher and prophet and poet, is the primitive shaman, with his techniques for ecstatic departure from the body, soul-levitation, soul-transmigration, and celestial navigation." 6 And doubtless hallucinogenic drugs assisted in launching the primitive medicine man toward the knowledge he sought. 7 The addict, however, is a disturbing mutation of the original holy man, now made sick by drugs instead of being released by them. Drug confessions serialize the division between the lost ethereality of the Romantic opium honeymoon and
the reality of the body (symbolized by the epileptic eruptions of withdrawal). This perversion of the influential mythic presence of the drug taker accounts for the erotic horror which has followed the addict's confession ever since De Quincey first electrified the reading public with the news of addiction.
Chapter 1

EARLY CONFESSIONS

In the 1856 version of the Confessions of an English Opium Eater, Thomas De Quincey, seventy years old, an opium user for over fifty years, sick and impoverished, asks himself the old addict's question:

What was it that did in reality make me an opium-eater? That affection which finally drove me into the habitual use of opium, what was it? Pain was it? No, but misery. Casual overcasting of sunshine was it? No, but blank desolation. Gloom was it that might have departed? No, but settled and abiding darkness.

De Quincey, looking back, establishes a connection between opium addiction and a distress so devastating as to subsume entire the physical and psychic pleasures of living; he initiates a distinctive vocabulary of addiction--heroic, hyperbolic; penitential, abject. The pains incident to addiction beggar mere catalogues of symptoms, necessitate "impassioned prose" to express the furious internal landscape born of addiction:
There it was, that for years I was persecuted by visions as ugly, and as ghastly phantoms as ever haunted the couch of an Orestes; and in this unhappier than he, that sleep which comes to all as a respite and a restoration, and to him especially as a blessed balm for his wounded heart and his haunted brain, visited me as my bitterest scourge.

At no time, however, does De Quincey single out opium as the sole factor of his distress: opium exists in a complex matrix, pivotal certainly, but not ultimately telling in itself.
To understand the first literary document manifestly occasioned by drug addiction, it is necessary to unravel "involutes," clusters of subconscious elements dredged up by De Quincey's extraordinary introspection.

In the summer of 1812 "I had suffered much in bodily health from distress of mind connected with a very melancholy event." De Quincey refers to the death of Kate Wordsworth, to whom he was closely attached. He then records that the next year "I was attacked by a most appalling irritation of the stomach, in all respects the same as that which had caused me so much suffering in youth, and accompanied by a revival of all the old dreams" (Confessions 310). Until this time, De Quincey had been a dilettante in the world of opium; for over eight years he had spaced "this luxury" at intervals of up to two or three weeks, after having originally introduced himself to opium through the insistence of rheumatic pains of the face. Nevertheless, at this point
in 1813 De Quincey became an addict ("I could resist no longer") and, despite a few short periods of abstinence, remained one for the rest of his life.

But notice the order of the preceding equation: the death of an innocent baby girl made De Quincey miserably unhappy (an event psychologically connected with his dearest sister's death as well as with the loss of Ann, the fifteen-year-old prostitute who helped De Quincey during his London ordeal) which allowed the recurrence of a gastric disorder which had resulted from "my own unpardonable folly," his escape at seventeen from the confines of school to Northern Wales and, eventually, to London. And even more, "the old dreams" renewed themselves, becoming eventually nightmares of a "lost Pariah woman," theatrical tableaux that "were drawn out by the fierce chemistry of my dreams into insufferable splendour that fretted my heart" (Confessions 327), dreams, the "immediate and proximate cause of my acutest suffering" (Confessions 326). And over this sufferer opium folded its wings. The unremitting verity of slashed innocence--melancholy--bodily distress--opium--nightmare: the circle of De Quincey's addiction.

Before De Quincey, the single-mindedness of suffering generally ignored the addictive properties of opium. De Quincey announces addiction, the reality of addiction, when he admits that "it was solely by the torture connected with
the attempt to abjure it, that it kept its hold" (Confessions 338). But beyond this, De Quincey calls attention to a particular mentality over which opium exerts an especially fatal influence. Some people can take opium and leave it, "but to that other class whose nervous sensibilities vibrate to their profoundest depths under the touch of the angelic poison . . . opium is the Amreeta cup of beatitude." De Quincey notices a predilection to opium in both physical and spiritual terms, but a predilection based upon the peculiarities of his own experience. It was necessary, therefore, to include his childhood in his discussion of his own addiction. De Quincey tentatively outlines a determinism of addiction; his experience allowed opium to be the transcendent, irresistible solution that for him it turned out to be.

Quite simply, De Quincey writes the first case history of drug addiction; the Confessions—and the surrounding information—continually affirm what is now psychologically axiomatic: the present only becomes explicable in terms of the past. De Quincey gives the addict a past, a chain of fatality, an inverted Jacob's ladder. He even donates his dreams—scenes inhabited by griffins, Thugs, pariah girls, demonic Malays, roving dacoits—Rorschach tests of the subconscious written in "impassioned prose." It is important to remember that the first anatomy of addiction (and perhaps the most influential one) presents addiction as incident
to a psychological infirmity, a signal weakness, an inability to cope. And by so doing De Quincey actually nourishes the optimism of the neo-Freudian encounter groups—the search for the "problem"—which characterizes much of the therapy dealing with addiction today.

Offhand, it seems perfect that a remarkable addict should spend the majority of his life coming to terms with his addiction in such a public way. If anything, it is the remarkableness of De Quincey that keeps him out of the popular line-up of addiction:

They [the Confessions] are a meditation on the mechanism of the imagination, an exploration of the interior life of an altogether exceptional being who happened also to be an opium eater, but from whose experiences no valid conclusions can be drawn about what will happen to an ordinary opium addict.

De Quincey himself, however, notices in writing the Confessions "the service which I may thereby render to the whole class of opium-eaters." Cocteau's journal suffers the same kind of commentary, a commentary which tends to discredit the distinctly social value of the art-confession, and obviously favors the artistic value, despite the authors' contention of a genuine reciprocity of motivation between the artistic and the social. Though the story of addiction takes on an increasingly naturalistic color the more modern it gets, the tradition does not therefore evaporate. De Quincey
invents the provocative concept of the "addictive personality," or the individual who, through a fallibility that could be discussed in psychological terms, displays a pathological susceptibility to modes of escape, be it opium, sleep, sex, or suicide.

What makes the art confession different from the normal case study is that the confessor is at the same time sinner and judge, invalid and doctor. "It is my duty, it seems, thus far to be a physician--to guarantee, so far as human foresight can guarantee, my own corporeal sanity" (Writings 415). And so with the soul. De Quincey performs internally the fugitive life of the 20th century junkie in the sense that he literally prescribes for himself; he listens down inside himself for the indispensable pleasures, and the unendurable pains. A remarkable scholar and stylist, but an addict, De Quincey domesticates the addict, gives him a home in our popular minds.

To appreciate this, De Quincey should be seen in three distinct phases: before addiction, as a confirmed addict, and as a confessor. Though the writing of the Confessions occurred when he was more or less (but always) addicted, De Quincey's reflexive memories of childhood combine with a disciplined objectivity to form a curious literary creature, at once pitiful, tactful, and shocking.
Almost conventionally, and despite the obvious drudgery of learning Greek and Latin at an early age, De Quincey assures us that he was that visionary youth of *The Prelude*, that "my constitutional infirmity of mind ran but too determinately towards the sleep of endless reverie, and of dreamy abstractions from life and its realities" (*Writings* 263). Opium, then, acts figuratively as a restorative, as it does for the narrator of "Ligeia." The mind under opium feeds upon the past and easily summons the blitheness of youth. De Quincey recalls his maiden experiences with opium, when he would walk around London, high, on Saturday night:

> For opium (like the bee, that extracts its materials indiscriminately from roses and from the soot of chimneys) can overrule all feelings into a compliance with the master key. Some of these rambles led me to great distances: for an opium-eater is too happy to observe the motion of time. (*Confessions* 305)

De Quincey clearly implies that opium originally was a means of returning to a harmony (or "un équilibre," as Cocteau would say) made impossible by the complex nature of his distress.

> But the expansion of the benigner feelings, incident to opium, is no febrile access, but a healthy restoration to that state which the mind would naturally recover upon the removal of any deep-seated irritation of pain that had disturbed and quarrelled with the impulses of the heart originally just and good. (*Confessions* 298)
De Quincey betrays an inordinate tendency toward a life removed from the exigencies of daily living, and makes of this residual resistance both a mysterious epistemology and a justification for the use of opium:

Among the powers in men which suffer by this too intense life of the social instincts, none suffers more than the power of dreaming. Let no man think this is a trifle. The machinery for dreaming planted in the human brain was not planted for nothing. That faculty, in alliance with the power of darkness, is the one great tube through which man communicates with the shadowy. And the dreaming organ, in connection with the heart, the eye and the ear, composes the magnificent apparatus which forces the infinite into the chambers of a human brain, and throws dark reflections from eternities below all life upon the mirrors of the sleeping mind.

And it is opium "which indeed seems to possess a specific power in that direction; not merely exalting the colours of the dream-scenery, but for deepening its shadows; and above all, for strengthening the sense of its awful realities." According to this particularly Gothic introspection, not taking opium seems tantamount to turning one's face to the wall: "It is the faculty of mental vision, it is in the increased power of dealing with the shadowy and dark, that the characteristic virtue of opium lies." De Quincey proposes a kind of sickly, if determined, adventuring into horrific, if profound, subconscious territory, creating it
seems the frailty and the earnestness of the typical Poe or H.P. Lovecraft narrator distraught with his own sens-itivity.

Driven to neurotic revery, yes, but notwithstanding a particular social sympathy. For reasons that he could never adequately explain, De Quincey left school at seventeen and eventually experienced absolute deprivation in London. De Quincey's fear of persecution, his attraction to the lost pariah girl, his sympathy with the lower classes, all derive from this period in London. Probably the most memorable feature of De Quincey's dream life—"the tyranny of the human face"—results from De Quincey's fruitless search for Ann on and around Oxford Street. The young artist associated with the disaffiliated, the lost, the hungry, seems almost a stock character, and though in De Quincey's case the identification is hardly complete (there is a pronounced gentility in De Quincey as well), he does assist in a fundamental way with the transmission of a tradition of art occasioned by disaffiliation, habitual pain, shame, the search for absolution. Perhaps because De Quincey in some ways coordinates with the world of his day—his classical, if bizarre, scholarship; his sometimes maddening tact—his isolation can seem a mere variant of the Romantic norm. However, it is interesting that sober Wordsworth, whom De Quincey admired unfailingly, eventually
turned away from him, either because of De Quincey's
dependence upon opium (which recalled Coleridge) or because
a rather common woman bore De Quincey a son, an indiscretion
apparently not ameliorated by marriage. In the Confessions,
finally, there emerges a portrait of a young man with
magnificent potential who is at the same time fatally
distinguished beyond recall.

While contributing to the formation of an enduring
stereotype of the urban artist, De Quincey also describes
the various ways in which the addiction to opium renders
the execution of art impossible. The pleasures of opium
De Quincey hymns in the 1821 version of the Confessions;
the pains of opium he spends the rest of his life writing:
De Quincey at seventy is still writing what he had written
in his thirty-sixth year--the story of his addiction. And
figuring importantly in De Quincey's assessment of addiction
insofar as the writer is concerned is the wasting of the
will, the same symptom of addiction that would drive Baudelaire
to distraction in the next generation of addicts. Sixteen
years after writing the original Confessions, De Quincey,
while writing a retrospective on Charles Lamb, speculates
on just this subject. And he finds that the main liability
of writing under the influence of long-term addiction (and
remember De Quincey was still an addict) is a sense of
disgust both physical and intellectual for the writing at
In any state of health, I do not write with rapidity. Under the influence of opium, however, when it reaches its maximum in decreasing the liver and deranging the digestive functions, all exertion whatever is revolting in excess; intellectual exertion, above all, is connected habitually, when performed under opium influence, with a sense of disgust the most profound for the subject which detains the thoughts; all that morning freshness of animal spirits . . . all that dewy freshness is exhaled and burnt off by the parching effects of opium on the animal economy. (Writings 73)

"L'opium permet de donner forme à l'informe; il empêche, hélas! de communiquer ce privilège à autrui," writes Cocteau, expressing the difficulty of bearing witness to a transcendent disease, an unbearably sensitized exhaustion.  

To properly confuse matters, in this same article De Quincey admits that he wrote the *Confessions* when "armed . . . by a sudden increase in opium" and thereby retained for a period "a remarkable glow of spirits"; this respite, however, was "purchased at a heavy price of subsequent suffering . . ." (Writings 75). Aside from dignifying the *Confessions* with an abnormal existential value for De Quincey himself, these remarks promote extreme opium intoxication to something like extra-lucid perceptiveness, clearly distinguishable from the normal dullness of the addict:

It is mere childish helplessness, or senile
paralysis, of the judgement, which distresses
the man in attempting to grasp the upshot
and the total effect . . . of what he has
himself so recently produced. There is
the same imbecility in attempting to hold
things steadily together, and to bring
them under a comprehensive or unifying
act of the judging faculty, as there is
in the efforts of a drunken man to follow
a chain of reasoning. (Writings 77)

De Quincey evidently desires us to see him as surfacing in
the Confessions, heroically testifying to the life, the
acute life, behind his daily hydraulic gaze at the empty
page before him.

De Quincey charts a distinctly subconscious life,
exhibits the artifacts, or "involutes," of the subconscious
made luminescent under the influence of opium. He can
virtually paint scenes at will against the screen in his
brain. He feels that he is going down into his visions and
these are "accompanied by deep-seated anxiety and gloomy
melancholy"--"Nor did I, by waking, feel that I had reascen­
ded." Space and time swell to infinite proportions. And
most importantly, "the minutest incidents of childhood, or
forgotten scenes of later years, were often revived: I
could not be said to recollect them; for if I had been told
of them when waking, I should not have been able to acknow­
ledge them as parts of my experience" (Confessions 327-28).
De Quincey seems to be heading toward a regressive solipsism
enforced by opium.
But it simply does not work out that way. De Quincey's final declaration on opium seems unbelievably sanguine. First of all, he claims that opium has allowed him the long life he has enjoyed. Without opium "thirty-five years ago, beyond all doubt, I should have been in my grave." He goes on to refute the tolerance factor in addiction and to assert that, taken all around, opium has been the slight sedative his nervous system requires:

At present and for some years, I have been habitually content with five or six grains daily, instead of three hundred and twenty to four hundred grains. Let me wind up this retrospect with saying, that the powers of opium, as an anodyne, but still more as a tranquilizer of nervous and anomalous sensations, have not in the smallest degree decayed; and that, if it has casually unveiled its early power of exacting slight penalties from any trivial inattention to accurate proportions, it has more than commensurately renewed its ancient privilege of lulling irritation and or supporting preternatural calls for exertion. (Writings 420)

Such a purring satisfaction in the elderly addict, apparently exorcised of the furies that had haunted his earlier years, leaving him more prolix and seemingly invulnerable. De Quincey plays a variety of roles in his casebook of the opium-eater: visionary, adventurous youth; sparkling debutante of opium; ferocious user submerged in gloom; and finally the urbane, moderate, thoroughly adjusted addict soothing his exacerbated nerves.
But there is another of De Quincey's poses which in a sense arches over all the others, organizes them into a coherent structure. When De Quincey steps away from himself in order to hear himself, sentence himself, he dignifies the confession mode beyond measure, but only if he can be believed, only if his self-observations maintain a certain credibility. In the 1856 revision of the Confessions, De Quincey writes, "For in these incidents of my early life is found the entire substratum, together with the secret and underlying motive of those pompous dreams . . . which were in reality the true objects--first and last--contemplated in these Confessions" (Writings 233). The dreams make up the object of the Confessions, though the dreams only become explicable in relation to the whole life. Why the dreams? Because they might prove instructive as examples of the way continued doses of opium influence the human brain. The assumption is that the world needs to know the truth about opium, and "in consideration of the service I may thereby render to the whole class of opium-eaters," De Quincey takes the job on himself, especially since

Coleridge, the only person known to the public as having dallied systematically and for many years with opium, could not be looked to for any candid report of its history and progress; besides that, Coleridge was under a permanent craze of having nearly accomplished his own liberation from opium; and
thus he had come to have an extra reason for self-delusion. (Writings 419)

The Confessions impose certain demands on De Quincey: if he is to instruct, he has to create the illusion that he himself has no "reason for self-delusion," and to do this he has to strictly define his relation with the work as he writes it. This need to establish credibility marks each and every effort De Quincey makes to define opium's "history and progress."

De Quincey's credibility depends a good deal on his innate good taste, or discretion, when it comes down to revealing sensitive details of his life. He knows that he must tell a good deal--and that the most intimate psychologically--but he does not want to repeat the unwholesomeness of Rousseau's autobiography or any other scoundrel's:

Nothing, indeed, is more revolting to English feelings, than the spectacle of a human being obtruding on our notice his moral ulcers or scars, and tearing away that 'decent drapery', which time, or indulgence to human frailty, may have drawn over them; accordingly, the greater part of our confessions (that is spontaneous and extra-judicial confessions) proceed from demireps, adventurers, or swindlers . . . . (Confessions 253)

A group, De Quincey assures us, to which he does not belong. His striptease will be an unwilling one. Looking nervously around himself, asking us, "Do I have to?" De Quincey
arouses a distinguished brand of genteel prurience:

All this [the possibility of impropriety]
I feel so forcibly, and so nervously am I alive to reproach of this tendency, that I have for many months hesitated about the propriety of allowing this, or any part of my narrative, to come before public eye, until after my death (when, for many reasons, the whole will be published): and it is not without an anxious review of the reasons for and against this step, that I have, at last, concluded on taking it. (Confessions 253)

Yet De Quincey wrote the Confessions with a deadline imposed by the publishers on this secret history that (one wonders) he had kept hidden with such anxiety. Winningly, De Quincey constructs a persona of unimpeachable moral gravity, the confessor himself, as opposed to the addict himself. And though somewhat invented for the occasion, this rectitude—or distance from addiction—figures strongly in the emerging structure of the confession as De Quincey conceives it.

As does the confessor's sobriety. This De Quincey feels to be particularly important. Recognizing that opium is an indulgence, and that he has indulged in it to excess, De Quincey proudly announces that he has practically weaned himself of this "fascinating enthrallment"; he has "at length accomplished what I never yet heard attributed to any other man--have untwisted almost to its final links, the accursed chain which fettered me" (Confessions 254).
Sadly, De Quincey later admits that he took more opium than usual while writing the Confessions, but despite this, he feels compelled to support the coolly authoritarian voice of the confessor with sufficient props.

De Quincey later concedes that he has misrepresented the real status of the confessor, and he cites two reasons: first, such suffering as De Quincey was to describe "presumes in the recorder a power of surveying his own case as a cool spectator, and a degree of spirits for adequately describing it, which is would be inconsistent to suppose in any person speaking from the station of an actual sufferer . . . ."; and second, he really thought he had just about kicked: "In suffering my readers therefore to think of me as a reformed opium-eater, I left no impression but what I shared myself . . . ."11 Ironically, the confessor is confessing himself regarding his confessions, making the admission, probably painful, that he feels obliged to make in Suspira de Profundus:

Or, in the imagery of my dreams, which translated everything into their own language, I saw through vast avenues of gloom those towering gates of ingress which hitherto had always seemed to stand open, now at last barred against my retreat, and hung with funeral crape.12

De Quincey was to be an addict all his life. But the original Confessions depend upon the rectitude and sobriety
of the man as he is at this moment.

De Quincey could excuse his amendments of reality for the purpose of credibility in two ways. First, De Quincey could hardly write his own mental and physical anatomy without considering it to be of the profoundest importance. Remember his lifework was to have been named De emendatione human intellectus, the title being taken from Spinoza. De Quincey simply does not want to allow the reader any means of taking the Confessions lightly. Strangely, De Quincey lends credence to the notion that the addict can live productively only when he is withdrawn from drugs, since he pretends to believe it himself. As he becomes the English Opium-Eater in fact and in repute, the pose of absolute sobriety becomes impossible, though he can diminish or even dismiss opium's importance, as has been seen in the revision.

Second, it seems certain that De Quincey had a keen interest in his life becoming a permanent contribution to research dealing with opium. In the Confessions De Quincey reminds us that

I speak from the ground of a large and profound personal experience: Whereas most of the unscientific authors who have at all treated of opium, and even those who have written expressly of the materia medica, make it evident, from the horror they express of it, that their experimental
knowledge of its action is none at all. (Confessions 299)

And jauntily, he says, "And, therefore, worthy doctors, as there seems to be room for further discoveries, stand aside, and allow me to come forward and lecture on this matter" (Confessions 297). De Quincey assumes a scientific importance in the subject, and he assumes that his experiences achieve a validity in proportion to the objectivity of the confessor himself. But at the same time De Quincey establishes another basis for credibility when he stresses the importance of actual, firsthand experience. The only expert in addiction is the addict himself. Burroughs, for instance, ends discussion when he says that "I can say definitely that weed is an aphrodisiac and that sex is more enjoyable under the influence of weed than without it. Anyone who has used good weed will verify this statement."  

Similarly, De Quincey speaks because he knows. Though never a "former" addict, De Quincey yearns after the title, to the point that in an appendix to the Confessions he factually describes the withdrawal process, and though "I cannot stand still or sit for two minutes together," and

it seems as though all the thoughts which had been frozen up for a decade of years of opium, had now according to the old fable been thawed out at once--such a multitude stream in on me from all quarters,
he still maintains that

it is evident that thus much of benefit may arise to the persons most interested in such a history of opium—viz. to opium-eaters in general—that it establishes, for their consolation and encouragement, the fact that opium may be renounced; and without greater sufferings than an ordinary resolution may support; and by a pretty rapid course of descent.

Which only makes sense as an example of wish-withdrawal, an ingenuous attempt to distance himself from opium in order to erect a veneer of respectability over his daily shame.

The considerable popularity of De Quincey's *Confessions* raises the question of the actual effect of the *Confessions* on subsequent generations of miserable drug fiends. Orthodox opinion from the 19th and early 20th centuries generally held that De Quincey exercised a deleterious social influence in describing his opium experiences. Terry and Pellins sum up the prevailing suspicion:

It is possible that even today of most of those who have come into contact with a considerable number of individuals suffering from chronic opium intoxication, there are few who have not known one or more who owed their first intoxication to the drug to a perusal of De Quincey's sorry masterpiece. Not only has it influenced individuals of suitable psychologic make-up to fall under the sway of the drug but also it was the forerunner of a host of
other morbid and ill-conceived creations on the part of misleading writers who have chosen to apply what mediocre or other gifts they have had to the stimulating of exploitable desires and weaknesses. This, what may be termed the educational influence, has continued to the present time as is evident to anyone familiar with the periodicals or daily press.  

Aware that the Pleasures of Opium control the tone of the Confessions, De Quincey cites a disinclination to talk about unpleasant things, and the haste of composition, as reasons. And he then promises a third part which would emphasize the pains of opium—which he never wrote.  

After his squabble with Coleridge—Coleridge charged De Quincey with taking opium for voluptuous reasons where he, Coleridge, took opium only to allay pain—De Quincey becomes more sensitive to the charge that he promotes opium-eating: "Teach opium-eating! Did I teach wine-drinking? Did I reveal the mystery of sleeping? Did I inaugurate the infirmity of laughter?" And he concludes by absolutely denying any "educational influence" insofar as opium is concerned: "My faith is, that no man is likely to adopt opium or lay it aside in consequence of anything he may read in a book."  

The real object is "pure science," as Burroughs (as Benway) would say. De Quincey:
I say that opium, or any agent of equal power, is entitled to assume that it was revealed to man for some higher object than that it should furnish a target for moral denunciations, ignorant where they are not hypocritical, childish where not dishonest; that it should be set up as a theatrical scarecrow for superstitious terrors, of which the result is often-times to defraud human suffering of its readiest alleviation, and of which purpose is, 'Ut pueris placeant et declamatio flant.' (Writings 214)

Knowledge, De Quincey maintains, abrogates petty concerns of how someone was introduced to opium when, chances are, a toothache could perform the introduction as easily as the most lurid descriptions. In the world of drugs this is not an unimportant notion. A noticeably responsible study of marijuana, the La Guardia Report, received criticism in the early forties because it did not effectively state the Pains of Marijuana (to use De Quincey's formula):

Already the book has done harm. One investigator has described some tearful parents who brought their 16 year old son to a physician after he had been detected in the act of smoking marijuana. A noticeable mental deterioration had been evident for some time even to their lay minds. The boy said he had read an account of the La Guardia Committee report and that this was his justification for using marijuana. He read in Down Beat, a musical journal, an analysis of this report under the caption "Light Up Gates, Report Finds 'Tea' a Good Kick."
And this is from the editorial page of the Journal of the American Medical Association, which indicates the collusion between the Bureau of Narcotics and the AMA in sanctioning ignorance as the superior means of controlling drug use, preferring socially useful propaganda to any kind of liberating truth. De Quincey brings himself forward as the truth about opium and its influence, and he has been bitterly censured for his pains, which is one certain, if perverse, proof of his importance. "You can almost judge the importance of a discovery by the efforts made to suppress it," Burroughs has warned. 19

The conviction that the particulars of his interior life are in themselves important as literature and as science begins and ends De Quincey's life in letters. De Quincey delineates the frequently recurring form of addiction; he creates the distinctive way in which something that had never been written about all of a sudden becomes the subject of desperate meditation. Even when the physical realities of another person's experience were widely different, or depending on another drug, it was likely he would carry De Quincey's Confessions in his mind as the fulfillment of the genre. Fitz Hugh Ludlow, for example, an American hasheesh-eater writing in the 1850's admits the probability that
every man hereafter, who opens the mysteries of that great soul within him, speak, so far as he can, down the channels through which Thomas De Quincey has spoken, nor out of vain perversity refuse to use a passage which the one grand pioneer has made to all.20

De Quincey's unexampled success with transforming a medical problem, drug addiction, into a spiritual affliction with unlimited metaphoric possibilities is one of the more significant legacies from the Romantic period. Dostoevski could have used a junkie, but chances are that he would have had to have read De Quincey before he would have realized the potential inherent in the image of the addict.

Sending out deeply considered, not always truthful messages, De Quincey's addict staggers within his own stricken subjectivity (as though he can only dream). Ludlow's hasheesh-eater, on the other hand, seems overwritten, camp, unwittingly misleading, humorously earnest, absolutely commercial--a 19th century "Reefer Madness." De Quincey maintains that his opium dreams are important in terms of the psychological connections to be drawn with his childhood experience. Ludlow, on the other hand, treats his dreams as potentially cosmic truths that can only be discussed in transcendental language. De Quincey listens, witnesses himself in analytic language, whereas Ludlow gallops through galaxies, leaping to awed conclusion.
One reader has even taken Ludlow's activity to be desirable, claiming that his book "certainly provides . . . more lively and colorful reading than do the grossly overrated confessions of the 'English opium-eater,' Thomas De Quincey." But only if your taste runs toward Byzantine drug spectacular of a particularly continent kind. *The Hasheesh Eater* stands in the same relationship to the interior life of an opium addict as the most escapist MGM musical stands to the daily life on the streets during the Depression.

In *The Hasheesh Eater* Ludlow recognizes no formal psychological relationship between past experience and consciousness under the influence of hashish. When describing the feeling when hashish first takes effect, Ludlow writes that "the nearest resemblance to the feeling is that contained in our idea of the instantaneous separation of soul and body" (50). It is difficult to imagine anything less descriptive, except perhaps his dithyramb to the beauty of the American collegiate song "trolled from manly throats, which keep good chord and time, and first learned within these homely walls, which, to the true American collegian, are dearer than all the towers of Oxford" (155). Where De Quincey's anxiety ultimately refers to the individual body and psyche, Ludlow gazes far away:

I yielded to no sensual gratification. The motives for the hashish-indulgence
were of the most exalted ideal nature, for of this nature are all its ecstasies and its revelations—yes, and a thousand-fold more terrible, for this very reason, its unutterable pangs. (4–7)

Though metaphysical melodrama certainly, Ludlow has also found another tack with which to establish credibility—his purity. And it is true that Ludlow's hallucinations seem definitely Spenserian. The Galahad of addiction, Ludlow swallows his bolus and rides off to fight the Giant of Oriental drugs: "Censure me not harshly, ye who have never known what fascination there is in the ecstasy of beauty; there are baser attractions than those which invited me" (46).

Ludlow was a child of his time (with the emphasis on child). Perhaps influenced by Emerson, interested in the Orient and the fabulousness of The Arabian Nights, exhibiting a suitably visionary constitution—"A feeble childhood soon exhausted its superfluous activities, and into books, ill health, and musing I settled down when I should have been playing cricket, hunting, or riding" (62)—Ludlow appears the lip-smackingly priggish counterpart to Owen Warland in Hawthorne's "The Artist of the Beautiful." But not quite so absolutely idealized, in that Ludlow was a sort of scientific glue-sniffer, the William James of adolescent druggers:
Now with the chloroform bottle beneath my nose have I set myself careering upon the wings of thrilling and accelerating life, until I had just enough power remaining to restore the liquid to its place upon the shelf, and sink back into the enjoyment of the delicious apathy which lasted through the few succeeding moments. Now ether was substituted for chloroform, and the difference of their phenomenon noted, and now some other exhilarant in the form of an opiate or stimulant, was the instrument of my experiments, until I had run through the whole gamut of queer agents within my reach.

And then enter Cannabis Indica, "a powerful agent in cases of lockjaw" (17). Ludlow steals an amount of hashish from his friend, the friendly druggist, who works at his "favourite lounging-place," the American drugstore. Ludlow goes on to experience dislocations that can only find a parallel in the sensational reports of the effects of LSD in the 1960's: "Hashish I called 'the drug of travel,' and I had only to divert my thoughts strongly toward a particular part of the world previously to swallowing my bolus to make my whole fantasia in the strongest possible degree topographical" (52). And like LSD popularly considered, Hashish is Manichean, leading inevitably to confrontations with almost morality play personifications of evil. During one hellish vision a "she-fiend" presses her hissing heart on his breast. And on another occasion a bevy of devils serenade him, and he describes the scene with customary
I still remember the meaning of the song they sang, although there is no language yet coined which will convey it, and far be it from me even to suggest its nature, lest I should seem to perpetuate in any degree such profanity as beyond the abodes of the lost no lips are capable of uttering. (70)

Despite these nightmarish visions, however, Ludlow stoutly maintains that angelic truth has been revealed to him:

Hasheesh is indeed an accursed drug, and the soul at last pays a most bitter price for all its ecstasies; moreover, the use of it is not the proper means of gaining any insight, yet who shall say that at that season of exhaltation I did not know things as they are more truly than ever in the ordinary world. (91)

The hashish state even becomes equated in Ludlow's mind with the actual heaven: "Yet through all the long agonies which attended its abjurement, I consoled myself with the knowledge that the infinite glories of the past should beam in on me again" (92). Angels speak to Ludlow, yet even with this profound aid, Ludlow admits to a few past-times which make life without hashish worth living: blowing soap bubbles, building houses out of books, and writing the notes which make up the book we are reading.

There is, however, one interesting intrusion of concrete reality into the book. Convinced that he will never be able
to withdraw from hashish, Ludlow runs across an article entitled "The Hasheesh Eater." Up to this time Ludlow has assumed that he is the only hashish eater in North America, and he first imagines that the article must be about himself. He reads the article and discovers that the author has successfully abandoned the use of hashish, and with new resolve (and with the author's aid) Ludlow succeeds in withdrawing from hashish. This may seem overdone to anyone who knows the first thing about hashish, but within the context of the book the withdrawal from hashish is fearsome indeed: "I speak confidently, yet without exaggeration, when I say that I have spent many an hour in torture such as was never known by Crammer at the stake or Gaudentio di Lucca in the Inquisition . . . " (45). Having emerged with his soul intact, Ludlow ends his book with the name (Dr. J.W. Palmer) and address of the doctor who had written the article on hashish and goes on to urge other hasheesh eaters to seek the doctor out and be helped as he was helped.

Though Ludlow seems the equivalent of the miles gloriosus in the literature involving drug addiction, he too worries over his strained credibility. With his reluctance to be too graphic in the drawing of suffering, with his Latin and Greek droppings, with a myriad of mincing delicacies,
Ludlow makes the same attempt as De Quincey to assure us that he has escaped from "the very witchplant of hell, the weed of madness," or in other words, "the hasheesh state" which "in its intensest forms, is generally one of the wildest insanity" (100). But there is a great difference between Ludlow and De Quincey. Where De Quincey's attempts at credibility seem wistful machinations incident on pathological self-doubt, Ludlow's attempts seem merely sanctimonious, actually imagining himself to be the spokesman for an ideal creed that demands an unusual eloquence before anything in the least can be felt to be meant by the language. This eloquence Emerson had, for instance, and Emerson would probably have reissued his prescription of intoxicating water for the poet if he had ever read Ludlow's unintentionally hilarious account that advances the myth of hashish addiction into the popular mind for perhaps the first time in the United States.

An incredibly florid vision of the Orient contributed to Ludlow's curiosity about the influence of hashish, and he remains convinced that hashish retains in itself peculiarly Eastern properties:

In later days, I believe, and now with all due modesty assert, I unlocked the secret, not by a hypothesis, not by processes of reasoning, but by journeying through those self-same fields of weird experience which
are dinted by the sandals of the glorious old dreamers of the East. (17)

In France, however, interest in hashish and opium as means of escape from daily routine was not even particularly arcane among artists, scientists, and the curious. And the ambience of the Orient, with which hashish and opium were associated, had been evoked in racy households since at latest 1664, the year of the successful formation of the Compagnie des Indes Orientales. The many travel books dealing with the East naturally discussed the exotic stimulants to be found there—coffee, tea, perfumes, hashish, and opium. The Arabian Nights certainly provoked an interest in the East, as well as in secret and erotic potions.22 Significantly, Napoleon was forced to give an order outlawing hashish for his soldiers during his Egyptian campaign. In sum, esoteric fashion readily interested itself in the strange, fabled intoxicants of the east.

In 1818 Silvestre de Sacy published "Mémoire sur la dynastie des Assassins," or the story of the Old Man of the Mountain, the picturesque background to hashish that would crop up everywhere in scholarly drug circles. (Burroughs to Ginsberg: "And always remember. "Nothing is True. Everything is permitted." Last words of Hassan Sabbah. The Old Man of the Mountain."23) De Quincey's Confessions
appealed to the French as well, opening up the metaphorical possibilities of opium and, in the process, hashish (different as they may be). Alfred de Musset adapted—and sentimentalized—the *Confessions* into French in 1828. It was an era of Neo-Platonism, magnetism, Swedenborg, occultism, and opposition to the materialism shaping the future. The widespread interest in transcendent experience through drugs is one aspect of the period's modernity; the famous "Club des Hachichins" at the Hotel Pimodan evokes perfectly the character of consciousness-expanding drugs in the Western world—secret, experimental, spiritualist. Moreau de Tours, who officiated at the meetings of the club, published in 1845 *Du Haschisch et de l'alienation mentale* where he argues that the physician could benefit from taking hashish in order to comprehend the psychologically disturbed mind, a rationale which will later prompt experiments with peyote, mescaline, and LSD.

In 1851 Baudelaire published "Du vin et du hachish," in which he declares himself rather in favor of wine, even while condemning hashish:

> Le vin exalte la volonté, le hachish l'annihile. Le vin est un support physique, le hachish est une arme pour le suicide. Le vin rend bon et sociable. Le hachish est isolant. L'un est laborieux pour ainsi dire, l'autre essentiellement parassuex."²⁴
Baudelaire's judgement contrasts markedly with De Quincey's comparison between wine and opium: "Wine robs man of his self-possession; opium greatly invigorates it" (Confessions 313). But these remarks suggest divergent interests to a degree characteristic of the two men. De Quincey posits self-knowledge born of introspection to be opium's greatest favor; Baudelaire, on the other hand, yearns for the return to gregarious, elastic, productive health, this being in his view the most seductive correlative to salvation. In his trial run before "Le poème du haschisch" Baudelaire initiates the expansion of hashish from a mere intoxicant to a moral challenge, going far beyond the three essays by Gautier published during the 1830's and 40's which had been content to describe the hashish experience and the hallucinations one might expect. What De Quincey eventually accommodated himself to, and found benefit in (his addiction), Baudelaire considers the greatest of all possible sins, the equal to selling one's soul.

Baudelaire divides Les paradis artificiels into two parts: "Le poème du haschisch" and an abridged rendering of De Quincey's Confessions and Suspira de Profundus. Despite "des renseignements nombreux et minutieux, extraits des notes ou des confidences d'hommes intelligents," which seems no more than a stock attempt at credibility, "Le poème du haschisch" is a deeply personal meditation
written in the at turns objective and transcendental language characteristic of drug literature. In "Du vin et du hachish" Baudelaire speculates that

Quand il y aura un vrai médecin philosophe, chose qui ne se voit guère, il pourra faire une puissante étude sur le vin, une sorte de psychologie double dont le vin et l'homme composent les deux termes.

Baudelaire actually becomes that philosophical doctor in "Le poème du haschisch," only now it is man and hashish that make up the two terms. This encroachment into the physician's domain is not unique to Baudelaire. De Quincey proclaims opium to be the "Universal Panacea," the cure for consumption. Ludlow never ceases to extol the nobility of doctors. And during his cure, Cocteau writes, "Jamais je n'ai regretté plus profondément de n'avoir pas été poète et médecin, comme Appollon." Baudelaire, however, steps completely into the role of moral doctor, evading his true role as confessor. The difference between "Le poème du Haschisch" and The Doors of Perception (disregarding conclusions) is that Huxley is telling us everything he knows, whereas Baudelaire knows much more—his struggle with addiction—but in self-defense (and, ultimately, as personal punishment) he adopts an authoritarian voice, strictly moral, absolutely persuaded, with which he condemns himself to hell.
Hashish, Baudelaire argues, incites unbounded narcissism, self-love that excuses everything, even remorse for past sins. Everything in the least unpleasant becomes an occasion for "d'analyse voluptueuse"; contemplation becomes confused with action; the hashish user ends by pompously declaring his own virtue, as Rousseau had done without hashish. And finally, the habituate dreams of himself as God: he sells his soul to the devil: "En effet, tout homme qui n'accepte pas les conditions de la vie, vend son âme." Hashish thus becomes a variant of the Faustian pact. The hashish user begins by hungering for the infinite, and though this hunger defines his greatness, it leads him to "ce paradis d'occasion" peculiar to hashish and opium. The only salvation, according to Baudelaire, lies in prayer, fasting, and work, especially work.

Baudelaire ultimately expounds an ethic of work in "Le poème du haschisch," an ethic exemplified by Balzac. Baudelaire condemns hashish and opium in a personal scourging ritual, the intensity of the excoriation bespeaking the temptation Baudelaire himself experienced. The fact is, Baudelaire took opium from 1842 on a recurrent basis. In 1857, the year Les paradis artificiels was published, Baudelaire writes,

Est-ce le physique malade qui diminue l'esprit et la volonté, ou est-ce la
lâchété spirituelle qui fatigue le corps, je n'en sais rien. Mais ce que je sens, c'est un immense découragement, une sensation d'isolement insupportable, une peur perpétuelle d'un malheur vague, une défiance complète de mes forces, une absence totale de désirs, une impossibilité de trouver un amusement quelconque... Si le moral peut guérir le physique, un violent travail continu me guérira, mais if faut vouloir avec une volonté affaiblie; --cercle vicieux.29

Baudelaire's confession lies unwritten between "Le poème du haschisch" and Les Fleur du Mal, each of which takes up the implications of addiction, the one as moral tract and the other as highly symbolized poetry.

Though Baudelaire does not feel it necessary to repeat De Quincey, and translates the Confessions instead, though he never points the finger at himself but instead maintains a voice of "inflexible authority" (Burroughs' phrase), Baudelaire comes back to us in furtive confession, reconciles in an equivocal way his isolation, his fatigue, and his need to speak in "impassioned prose" "médicale et poetique a la fois" the truth of his rewards, and punishments. Baudelaire's need to speak is both moral and artistic: aching and lunatic as moral instruction, cool and refined as art. Baudelaire calmly states that "la même flétrissure moral s'applique à toutes les inventions qui tendent à diminuer la liberté humaine et l'indispensable douleur," including ether and chloroform in surgery.30 Arguing, in
effect, his own damnation, Baudelaire never once excuses himself, or brings up his syphilis—the opium user remains silent—the physician and the preacher speak, and their verdict is irreversible: Baudelaire's salvation can only be won by a determined stoicism unaffected by "the claims of the ageing, cautious, nagging, frightened flesh."\(^3\)

Like Burroughs, Baudelaire comes to a "program of total austerity and total resistance."\(^2\) Though he was reluctant to openly admit his addiction, the symptoms of addiction—the loss of the will, the sense of disgust—instruct Baudelaire, and in a way similar to De Quincey, Baudelaire's vision begins and ends with the fundamental polarities of addiction in the 19th century: indulgence—abstinence; ecstasy—melancholy; revery—work. Baudelaire's excruciating Catholicism condemns the indulgence in opium in the same way that Hopkins' Catholicism condemns the over-luscious indulgence in the writing of poetry: they are being kept from God's work. God cannot be served as His equal.

Subsequent generations ignored the informed urbanity behind De Quincey's acceptance of opium as an indispensable element in his life. But the austerity behind Baudelaire's conclusions on hashish and opium would suit exactly a young country ready to apotheosize work and abstinence, and at the same time anathematize the use of opiates with such
zeal that the addict would in fact become within the popular imagination the devil Baudelaire saw within the mirrors of hashish and opium.
Though hovering above the ordinary American perception of the drug addict, the pale and learned wraith married to opium does not completely exhaust himself in the Gothic tale as practiced by Poe. The popular drug confessions of the 19th century frequently summon the spectre of De Quincey to justify maiden explorations into opium; despite his protests, future generations of addicts would see De Quincey as a promoter of opium—the scholastic pusher contaminating highly sensitive readers with the fatal first glimpse of the pleasures of opium. The repentant addict could look back on having read De Quincey as the first step in his unwitting walk into slavery. One addict writes:

While in my sophomore year in college, I read De Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium Eater and also his later utterance, Suspira de Profundus. The first essay kindled within me a desire to experience for myself the grand dreams to which the drug gave birth in him. The latter did not warn me—I had not the remotest intention of becoming an opium-eater, nor could a special divine revelation have
then made me believe that my sighs would ever ascend from the midnight depths.  

The genteel confessions of the 19th century uniformly deplore the human disaster occasioned by De Quincey and his fascinating dreams; contrastingly, they swing interest toward the addict's degradation, his guilt and isolation, his pathetic desire to return to the healthy, social world, and above all, the moral trial of withdrawal. In doing so, they only conventionally notice the provocative interior territory which De Quincey went to such pains to inhabit. The popular confessions begin the movement from addiction seen as an especially sensitized affliction to addiction seen as a disgusting and socially dangerous disease.

Beyond their somewhat daffy literary interest, there is at least one important benefit from reviewing the drug confessions of this period: the persecution of the addict in the 20th century becomes a comprehensible historical development. No longer the superior individual at the mercy of his own subjectivity, the popular confessors created loathing in proportion to the pity they aroused. H. Wayne Morgan comments:

The writings revealed people with intense feelings of isolation from humanity and unworthiness. Their accounts created some sympathy for the addict. But they also helped shape the popular stereotypes
of addiction and were a factor in the drive for national regulation.²

By portraying himself as so miserable, the addict begs for institutional interference in his life, or at least sanitariums equipped to answer his unique needs. Whitman's statement in "A Sun-Bath--Nakedness" serves as a model of conviction in a country which would in the next generation impose any punishment necessary to separate the drug fiend from his "damnable dirt": "Shall I tell you, reader, to what I attribute my already much-restored health? That I have been almost two years, off and on, without drugs and medicines, and daily in the open air."³

Out on the farm, writes one addict, the cure comes naturally, "but as soon as I began to have leisure, I found that I was not cured."⁴ Physical labor in a rural setting was believed to be a prophylactic against addiction, the antidote to the destructive effects of the American city upon the nervous systems of highly-strung individuals predisposed to drugs: "Essentially a nervous people, prone to go to excess in every thing, gladly welcoming narcotics and stimulants, we go to a very decided excess in all matters of this kind."⁵ The opium addict emerged as the avant-garde victim of urban pressures, and though commentators could only speculate as to how many addicts
there actually were at any given time, the nervous exhaustion which supposedly nurtured the opium virus would continually be understood to be on the rise. Fitz Hugh Ludlow strikes the common note:

The habit is gaining fearful ground among our professional men, the operatives in our mills, our weary sewing women, our fagged clerks, our disappointed wives, our former liquor-drunkards, our very day-laborers, who a generation ago took gin; all of our classes, from the highest to the lowest, are yearly increasing their consumption of the drug.

By the late 1860's analysts of the drug situation began to use empirical methods to establish the extent of addiction and the kinds of people vulnerable to the disease:

The number of confirmed opium-eaters in the United States is large, not less, judging from the testimony of druggists in all parts of the country as well as from other sources, than eighty to a hundred thousand. . . . Neither the business nor the laboring classes contribute very largely to the number. Professional and literary men, persons suffering from protracted nervous disorders, women obliged by their necessities to work beyond their strength, prostitutes, and in brief, all classes whose business or whose vices make special demands upon the nervous system, are those who for the most part compose the fraternity of opium-eaters.

And in addition to the nervous victims, the Civil War spawned a significant number of addicts, many having had
morphine administered by the newly discovered method of subcutaneous injection. Addiction was commonly referred to as the "Soldier's Disease" at this time. From the late 1860's onward, commentaries on addiction customarily warned against the number of addicts already in the country and expressed the earnest conviction that the habit threatened to escalate beyond control.

Besides their manifest social conscience, the genteel confessions convey a profound awareness of personal guilt. One addict, writing under the pseudonym of the Habituate, testifies to the presence of a stern super-ego when the immediate effects of opium wear off:

A sickening, death-like sensation about the heart; a self-accusing sense of having committed some wrong,--of being guilty before God; a load of fear and trembling, continually abide with and oppress the victim in the first stages;--but more especially when the influence of the drug is dying away.

Though the act of confession mitigates the guilt which haunts the addict, it is successful withdrawal which brings forth the ecstatic reaffirmation of values which had been obfuscated by the degrading realities of addiction. All addicts lie--the reformed addict tells the whole truth. The addict lives only for himself, is a slave to his craving--family means everything to the reformed addict.
The addict drains the vitality of a young country on the move—unchained, he spits in his hands, ready to get back to work and make up for lost time.

Mysteriously, however, the extreme spectacle which separates the unregenerate addict from the grace of metabolic normalcy—or withdrawal—cannot be adequately described: "Were I to continue writing both day and night for a week I could not then fully relate the unutterable torments I have gone through," writes a physician addict. This admission, conceded by the majority of testifying addicts—that language is being used to express what cannot be expressed—locates a potential poetry in the crisis of withdrawal, signals a resource to such future writers as Cocteau and Burroughs, regardless of the use to which the confessions were commonly put—whether as sociological case studies, propaganda for repressive laws, or unconsulted volumes in medical libraries.

"An Opium-Eater in America," by William Blair (an Englishman), appearing in Knickerbocker Magazine in 1842, reveals the tendency to imitate De Quincey's pioneering anatomy of addiction while writing in a brief, journalistic form. Like so many other addicts, Blair makes explicit the connection between his own addiction and De Quincey's writings:
The strange confession of De Quincy [sic] had long been a favorite with me. The first part had in fact been given as a model in English composition, and also as an exercise to be rendered into Patavinian Latin. The latter part, the 'Miseries of Opium,' I had most unaccountably always neglected to read.10

Blair singles out the Confessions as a symbol of precocious learning as well as an alluring directive toward a means of relieving the distress incident to scholarship. If the debilitating drive for scholastic excellence had never been undertaken, Blair implies, then he might have avoided "the infernal drug which has imbittered my existence for seven most weary years" (47). Ludicrously, Blair claims to have studied Latin, Greek, Persian, Hebrew, Italian, and French, besides his more than passing interest in metaphysics, poetry, science, and fiction. This singular over-achievement takes its physical toll:

I suffered from constant head-ache; my total inactivity caused the digestive organs to become torpid; and the innutritious nature of the food which I allowed myself would not supply me with the strength which my assiduous labours required. My nerves were dreadfully shaken; and at the age of fourteen I exhibited the external symptoms of old age. (48)

Unlike De Quincey, however, Blair does not take opium for the first time to alleviate unbearable pain (he is always
in pain) but rather to insure his survival: "But now that I knew that unless I could by artificial stimuli obtain a sudden increase of strength I must STARVE, I no longer hesitated. I was desperate" (49). After taking opium and experiencing a "creeping thrill" at tea, Blair goes to the theater (De Quincey occasionally went to the opera after taking opium). Incredibly, Blair turns demoniac under the influence of opium: "As I ran up the stairs I rushed after and flung back everyone who was above me" (50). Promoting opium as more an energizer than a sedative, Blair works steadily for six months "without lassitude or depression of spirits."

Inside the theater, however, "on that memorable night which is an 'oasis in the desert' of my subsequent existence," Blair falls into a "dreary abstraction." Though he feels obliged to service the expectations aroused by De Quincey's ornate visions, Blair admits that the enterprise is beyond him: "I will not attempt further to describe the magnificent vision which a little pill of 'brown gum' had conjured up from the realm of the ideal being. No words that I can command would do justice to its Titanian splendour and immensity" (50). And eventually the De Quinceyan nightmares attack the benighted opium eater, but again Blair barely intimates the psychological possibilities opened up by
De Quincey; he claims, for example that

darkness always brought the most horrible fancies and opticular and auricular or accoustical delusions of a frightful nature, so vivid and real, that instead of a blessing, sleep became a curse; and the hours of darkness became hours which seemed days of misery. (52)

Perhaps an even more blatant example of conventionality is Blair's assertion that a literary piece, "The Fratricide's Death," appeared to him in much the same way that Coleridge recalled having perceived "Kubla Khan": directly after taking a large dose of opium, "I composed the 'Fratricide's Death,' or rather it composed itself and forced itself upon my memory without any activity or violation on my part" (52). Blair in effect constructs a makeshift pastiche of the scholastic opium eater, one based upon the two readily available models--De Quincey and Coleridge.

The naturalistic description of the physical disruptions incident to addiction distinguishes Blair from De Quincey and Coleridge, who were content to entertain addiction in the language of Gothic romance. By breaking the barriers of common decency, Blair initiates an extraordinary prurience which, while masquerading as precise medical observation, proposes the addict as a disgusting, leprous horror:

Burning heat, attended with constant
thirst, then began to torment me from morning till night: my skin became scurvy; the skin of my feet and hands peeled off; my tongue was always furred; a feeling of contraction in the bowels was continual; my eyes were strained and discolored, and I had unceasing head-ache. But internal and external heat was the pervading feeling and appearance. My digestion became still weaker, and my incessant costiveness was painful in the extreme. (51)

And in describing the ordeal of withdrawal, Blair likewise finds occasion to reduce himself to a kicking mass of raw flesh:

I could not rest, either lying, sitting or standing. . . . My sight became weak and dim; the gnawing at my stomach was perpetual, resembling the sensation caused by ravenous hunger; but food, though I ate voraciously, would not relieve me. I also felt a sinking in my stomach, and such pain in the back that I could not straighten myself up. A dull constant aching pain took possession of the calves of my legs; and there was a continual motion of the nerves from head to foot. My head ached; my intellect was terribly weakened and confused. (55)

De Quincey's striptease was a psychological one. Blair, on the other hand, removes his dirty bandages and with sullen unconcern points out his suppurating cankers and ulcers. A professional horror, he performs for pay. Blair demonstrates the physical ramifications of the opium
plague, and, fortunately or not, he does not break the news delicately. The first report on opium addiction to establish itself on a popular footing in America presents the addict as at turns disgusting, violent, immoral—and eminently deportable.

Having withdrawn from opium once, Blair hoped to establish a new life in America. After an unsuccessful attempt to find literary work in New York, however, he relapses, blaming the New World for his undeserved indigence:

I was so melancholy and hopeless that I really found it necessary to have recourse either to brandy or opium. I preferred the latter, although to ascertain the difference, merely as a philosophical experiment, I took rather copious draughts of the former also. But observe; I did not intend ever again to become the slave of opium. (56)

Needless to say, he becomes re-addicted, "frequently unable to procure a dinner; as the few dollars I received from time to time scarcely sufficed to supply me with opium." Blair ill-humoredly concludes his piece: "I have no hope whatever of gaining a respectable livelihood in this country; and I shall therefore return to England the moment I can obtain passage" (57). Blair's contempt for America and himself even includes the prospect of writing his opium history, a project originally intended to be a book, "but
before I had written more than two or three sheets, I became disgusted with the subject" (57). It seems fair to assume that we are reading the waste product of that larger ambition. De Quincey, it will be remembered, took inordinate amounts of laudanum to write his Confessions; Blair, on the other hand, writes from the perspective of exile, bitterness, and lack of opium. "An Opium-Eater in America" prophetically descends to the hardpan of 20th century urban drug addiction—poverty, poor health, involuntary withdrawal, hustling.

Though not precisely in the role of confessor, Fitz Hugh Ludlow again takes command of the American drug scene, this time as the reigning authority on opium addiction during the late 1860's. The feverish ideality of the hashish eater returns to earth in the disguise of a grievously concerned physician attending the miseries of the afflicted. His well-known article, "What Shall They Do To Be Saved?" appearing in Harper's in 1867, advances the improbable image of Ludlow watching over a practice composed of opium eaters earnestly seeking cure—the addict's dedicated Father Damien. Ludlow characteristically conceives of withdrawal as an incredibly complex, almost medieval medical challenge as well as a morally instructive spiritual distress. Ludlow proposes the most subtle alchemical means to extract the
poison from the sufferer's wracked system, evoking the scientific Gothicism of test tubes, hermetic experiments, arcane terminology, and the constant threat of death. But at the same time, Ludlow recognizes the withdrawal process as a kind of deathbed confession, a terribly significant human event for the patient and for the sympathetic witness. In attempting to play midwife to the withdrawing addict, Ludlow aspires to finally become that "vrai médecin philosophe" that Baudelaire had envisioned.

While Ludlow pretends to be the altruistic "practitioner" without a drug history of his own, there is an overt confession in the Harper's article, though one contained by Ludlow's decorative scientism and sentimental drama. Ludlow witnesses the mute confession of a representative addict who struggles within withdrawal:

In publishing his case I am not violating that Hippocratic vow which protects the relations of patient and advisor; for, as I dropped my friend's wasted hand and stepped to the threshold, he repeated a request he had often made to me, saying: "It is almost like Dives asking for a messenger to his brethren; but tell them, tell all young men, what it is, 'that they come not into this torment.'" (385)

Where De Quincey entered a visionary psychiatric profile, where Blair sneeringly pulled back his filthy sheet, Ludlow's
Mr. A signs over his cadaver to science—and Ludlow, the boy whose favorite lounging place was the American drugstore, eagerly reports upon the autopsy.

Rather than some skidrow bum, however, Ludlow conjures up an extravagantly accomplished addict who expressly sends for Ludlow after enduring years of suffering:

He was one of the bravest, fairest, most generous natures I ever came in contact with; was versatile as a Yankee Crichton; had ridden his own horse in a trotting match and beaten Bill Woodruff; had carried his own little 30-ton schooner from the Chesapeake to the Golden Gate through the Straits of Magellan; had swum with the Navigators' Islanders, shot buffalo, hunted chamois, and lunched on mangosteens at Penang. (378)

The extraordinary Mr. A nevertheless became addicted to opium "as happens with the majority of opium-eaters, through a medical prescription" (377). A normal man might have repudiated opium with the disappearance of the original malady, but like De Quincey, Mr. A discovered in opium something absolutely compelling:

There are certain men to whom opium is as fire to tow, and my friend was one of these. . . . He had tasted as many sources of earthly pleasure as any man I ever knew; but the ecstasies of form and color, wine, Eros, music, perfume, all the luxuries which wealth could purchase or high-breeding appreciate, were as nothing to him in com-
parison with the memory of that time on
which his family threw away their sympathy
when they called it his "month of suffering."  (377)

Ludlow preaches a radical sympathy for the addict which
tacitly refers back to De Quincey's respectable, if voluptuous,
opium history.

Though opium attracts certain highly developed
individuals, the addiction to opium is still a disease
amenable to medical procedures:

Now, such a man is a proper subject, not
for reproof, but for medical treatment.
The problem of his case need embarrass
nobody. It is as purely physical as one
of small-pox. When this truth is as
widely understood among the laity as it
is known by physicians, some progress may
be made in staying the frightful ravages
of opium among the present generation. (379)

The paradox inherent in Ludlow's public view of addiction--
addiction presupposes transcendental experience while at
the same time it can be reduced to a medical problem--
creates wild fluctuations in perspective: the physician
compiling data and the Romantic poet agonizing over the
spiritual implications of addiction. Ludlow sees withdrawal,
for example, as a purification rite which for the addict
means passing from death to life and which prompts in the
onlooker a hemorrhage of sympathy. But in keeping with his
bogus physician's smock, Ludlow relishes the image of withdrawal as a vile eruption impersonally controlled by the "practitioner":

Usually as early as the third day after its abandonment . . . opium begins to show its dissolutions from the tissue by a profuse and increasingly acrid bilious diarrheah, which must not be checked if diagnosis has revealed sufficient constitutional vigor to justify any attempt at abandonment of the drug. Hemmorhoids may result; they must be topically treated. . . . Short of threatened collapse, the bowels must not be retarded. (382-83)

Regarding the mental anguish of withdrawal, however, Ludlow's sentences swell with oracular sympathy:

The totality of the experience is only conceivable by adding this physical torture to a mental anguish which even the Oriental pen of De Quincey has but feebly painted; an anguish which slays the will, yet leaves the soul conscious of its murder; which utterly blots out hope, and either paralyzes the reasoning faculty which might suggest encouragements, or deadens the emotional nature to them as thoroughly as if they were not perceived; an anguish which sometimes includes just, but always a vast amount of unjust self-reproach, which brings every failure and inconsistency, every misfortune or sin of a man's life as clearly before his face as on the day he was first mortified or degraded by it--before his face, not in one terrible dream, which is once for all over with sunrise, but as haunting ghosts, made out by the feverish eyes of the soul down to the minutest detail of
ghastliness, and never leaving the side of the rack on which he lies for a moment of dark or daylight, till sleep, at the end of a month, first drops out of heaven on his agony. (383)

Ludlow predicts the spasms of lacerating memory associated with withdrawal which Cocteau and Burroughs would adopt as a poetic mode in the 20th century—the insistent voice of the withdrawing addict "talking to any body who may happen to be present in a low-voiced, suicidal manner, which inexperience finds absolutely bloodfreezing" (382).

Where Baudelaire summoned the blandishments of the Devil to define the psychological effects of hashish and opium, Ludlow evokes the passion of Christ to suggest the physical ordeal of withdrawal: "From the hour he first refused his craving, and went to the battlefield of the bed, he had endured such agony as I believe no man but the opium-eater has ever known" (380). It is an agony which more often than not results in martyrdom. Ludlow has known successful cures, "but in no case is there any relief to a desperate case of opium-eating save death" (381). And like a ministering angel, Ludlow eases the martyr's struggle with either rest or, more frequently, death: "I may give chloroform. I always do in the dénouement of bad cases—ether—nitrous oxide. In employing the first two agents I secure rest,
but I induce death nine times out of ten" (381). Ludlow concludes his somber history with the admission that Mr. A could not be withdrawn from opium: "He will have to take opium all his life. Further struggle is suicide. . . . He will have to continue the habit which kills him only because abandoning it kills him sooner . . ." (384).

The very next year Ludlow's name appeared again, this time in a learned discussion of addiction and possible cures. Incredibly or not, Ludlow had become so eminent in the field that the editor of The Opium Habit, Horace Day, concluded his book with a lengthy letter from Ludlow outlining the kind of institution which would be helpful to addicts and which, it is hoped, some philanthropic individual might care to fund--with Ludlow, of course, at the helm. Ludlow goes on to describe a utopian disintoxication center, a Lexington turned into a genteel health spa. While saying good-bye to Mr. A, Ludlow had bemoaned "the helplessness of a practitioner who has no institution of his own to take such cases to when I shook his poor, dry sallow hand and bade him good-bye at the station" (380). Ludlow foreshadows the numerous sanitariums and institutions designed to withdraw the addict. Unlike Synanon and other incarnations, however, Ludlow's Lord's Island program would involve no psychological reconstruction whatsoever; he envisions an elaborate compound
wherein every conceivable mechanical and chemical aid would relieve the addict from withdrawal symptoms. Itemizing his arsenal of weapons, Ludlow cites for special recommendation such alleviates as cannabis indica (his old foe), bromide of potassium, scutelaria, capiscum, belladona, atropin, nux vomica, and, finally, strychnia. On the strictly mechanical side, he mentions hot bricks, galvanic battery treatments, Russian baths, Turkish baths, almost continual massage, occasional pummeling by punching machines, and beef-tea enemas. No fight against the devil could have more aroused the most gadgety of sorcerers. Ludlow confidently imagines scores of addicts shuffling off crowded ferries to be transformed into shiny new pennies, thanks to his island retreat bounded by the forgiving sea instead of "fences, bolts, and bars."

To anyone unfamiliar with Ludlow's record, it must have seemed a momentous occasion when in a letter to Harper's in June, 1870, he announces that at long last the cure to opium addiction has been discovered. Ludlow solemnly predicts that "the discovery is one which ranks in importance to human weal and woe with vaccination, chloroform, or any grandest achievement of beneficent science which marks an age." It is not, however, an altogether triumphant achievement. No longer displaying the "hopeful, frolicsome
bearing of the young man who was always a blithe boy," Ludlow is now an invalid with not much time to live, inexplicably going away, back to Europe, and addressing his last public words to the victims he has attempted to heal:

To-day sailing for Europe, an invalid, with all the uncertainties of return which attend such a one, may I ask to say . . . a word or two, in parting, to the class of our suffering fellow men and women for whom . . . I have spent a large part of my life--all that part, indeed, which is usually the leisure of a laborious profession?

He goes on to assure the opium eaters that he has indeed discovered a painless cure. Since he is disembarking for Europe, they should get in touch with

my noble-hearted and philanthropic friend, Mr. Henry Read of Lowell, Massachusetts, who possesses all my information on the subject, and has kindly consented to let me roll off upon his shoulders the loving but heavy burden of answering such questions as might, if I staid here, be addressed to me.13

Sounding tired but content, Ludlow retired from the strife, left for Europe, and barely lived out the summer.

In December, 1870, Harper's "Easy Chair" writes an appreciative retrospective of Fitz Hugh Ludlow, the young man who had prepared for law, and who wrote short sketches
and articles for magazines as well as a travel book on the American West. The "Easy Chair" feels inclined to forgive Ludlow for his decidedly science fictional announcement before his departure:

The public note, as presently appeared, was not as frank as it should have been; but it is not necessary to impute any ill intention to the writer. He was already wasted to a shadow and grievously ill, and his private note clearly shows his premonition that he should not return from his voyage to Europe which he was about to undertake.

The "Easy Chair" makes Ludlow's final confession for him:

A cloud of sorrowful rumors had enveloped the young man's life. Many of them, as is always the case, were doubtless untrue, but many also were probably only too much justified in the minds of those who had known him, and who could not help feeling, with the Easy Chair, that the sad old legend was verified in him, and that at the very outset of his life he had thoughtlessly yielded to an intolerable but hopeless tyranny, which, seeming to stimulate his powers, really exhausted them, while it relaxed his moral purpose and destroyed his will.

Ludlow died at the age of thirty-four, the Grand Young Man of American drug addiction—Puritan, cursed, even brilliant. Like Baudelaire, Ludlow atoned for his guilt, but instead of writing moral tracts, Ludlow searched for
the holy cure, "what I confess has been one of my life's ruling passions—a very agony of seeking to find—any means of bringing the habituated opium-eater out of his horrible bondage . . . ."16

Opium Eating: An Autobiographical Sketch, published in 1876, does not pretend to Ludlow's scientific precision regarding addiction. "I am no physician and not learned in physiology," the Habituate concedes. "Therefore I cannot enter into a learned analysis of the opium appetite" (90). Furthermore, the Habituate warns the reader not to expect anything like De Quincey's gorgeous dreams but kindly accept "a dull and trudging narrative of solid facts, disarrayed of all flowers of speech, and delivered by a mind, the faculties of which are bound up and baked hard by the searing properties of opium—a mind without elasticity or fertility—a mind prostrate" (vii). Neither scientist nor literary man, the Habituate is a veteran of the Civil War and a simple clerk attempting to put down in everyday language the story of his addiction as a matter of public conscience: "I have good reason to believe that even now the use of opium is carried on to such an extent, that a census of the victims would strike the country with terror and alarm" (113). During such an emergency, he must speak "lest my
mouth be sealed forever" in order to salvage those who can be warned:

Oh! if I can deter but one from being drawn into the "maelstrom," as Coleridge has so aptly termed it; if I can save but one from the woe and misery I suffer daily, I shall feel well rewarded for the effort I have made to record my unhappy personal history. (115)

Deep within addiction, the Habituate, "writing, as I do, by snatches and in haste," emerges to sound a word of warning.

A full third of Opium Eating deals with the Habituate's experiences as a prisoner of war in Confederate prisons, especially Andersonville: "Andersonville! Dread word! Dread name for cruelty, and patriots' graves, I stand paralyzed before thy horrid gates! Thou grim Leviathan of Death!" (19) The privations suffered as a prisoner result in terrible physical afflictions after his release: "From the ravages made on my entire physical system by constant headaches, and the terrible agonies and torments of my stomach, my mind became debilitated. In my extremity, I cried to God, and asked him why He so afflicted me!" (54) The Habituate touches heavily upon a source of national guilt while discussing the etiology of his addiction. Rather like the crusaders who brought leprosy back from the Holy Land, the
Habituate justifies his addiction and subsequent isolation by virtue of his patriotism.17

There is, however, another major factor in the etiology of the Habituate's addiction. The physician, while a traditional symbol for integrity, occupies a particularly sinister position in the early literature of addiction, since he is the normal conduit between opium and the suffering patient. The physician is the predecessor of the cynical addict who seduces youngsters by the dozens just outside schoolyard gates. Almost ludicrously, the evil physician dogs the steps of the suffering Habituate for six months in order to gain his trust. Despite misgivings, the Habituate finally allows the physician to treat him, though "I emphatically charged him not to administer me any opium or morphia, as I had a horror of such things" (55). After a time, the Habituate predictably realizes that he depends upon his regular hypodermic injections and in due course discovers that he is addicted to morphine: "Thus was I, as the notorious fly, invited into the parlor of the spider, and met with something like the same sad fate" (58-59). Though indignant, the Habituate can do nothing against his seducer: "Justice calls him to account, and sinks his abhorred countenance out of sight of man" (59). On two counts, then, the Habituate excuses himself from the
suspicion of having contracted the opium disease through some inherent infirmity of will.

Nevertheless, *Opium Eating* reveals a respectable man beside himself with guilt, deserved or not. A resident paranoia alerts him to his status as a pariah to his fellow men and to God:

It seems the peculiar province of those so happy as to escape this earthly damnation, to deride and blame for want of energy and force the poor victim—perhaps to the crime of some one else,—and nothing but black looks and condemnation from his fellow-man does he receive; he, from whom even the face of his Maker seems almost turned away, as he winds his weary pilgrimage through a chaos of unutterable woe down to his soon-forgotten grave. (80-81)

Not at all removed from the estimation of the world, "the opium eater's sensibilities are not armor. A wound from a cruel word pierces deep and rankles" (122). Like a 19th century Wanderer, the opium eater staggers through his blighted interior landscape:

No tongue or pen will ever describe—mine shrinks from the attempt, and the imagination of another, without suffering it all, could scarcely conceive it possible—the depth of horror in which my life was plunged at this time; the days of humiliation and anguish, nights of terror and agony, through which I dragged my wretched being. (68-69)
As Ludlow strongly suggested, the virtuous opium eater suffers an exemplary pain: "His general conduct is mild, simple, and child-like. All the animal is dormant, quite dead. The beautiful, the good, the free from sham, the genuine and unaffected, meet his approval" (97). A kind of ravaged Prince Myshkin, the opium eater absorbs unbelievable pain while still retaining his natural innocence and goodness.

As part of his responsibility in detailing his addiction, the Habituate must descend to concrete description, but he is reluctant to do so. Disgusting physical symptoms rapidly become metaphors of overstated intensity:

My food would frequently be arrested in the lower bowels, where it would seem determined to abide with me forever, cutting me like a sharp-cornered stone, rendering me almost wild with nervous distress, and almost entirely dethroning my mind for the time being. It was a perfect hell-rack, and sometimes lasted for days. (86)

Withdrawal, easily the most frightful aspect of addiction, is a narrative prerequisite which the Habituate promises to fulfill, "although sick and weary of the subject, and sick and weary in body and mind" (115). Sadly, the Habituate can only recall old attempts at withdrawal since at this stage of his addiction "seventy-two hours of abstinence would, I think, prove fatal in my case; and I believe that
I would die by the expiration of that time" (116). The Habituate goes on to catalogue the by now familiar withdrawal symptoms: the "acrid and fiery diarrhoea," the painful sensitivity of the body, "the mouth continually dreuls, and in some instances is ulcerated and sore," the "apparent stationary position of time," and "thoughts which march like funeral processions through the mind" (117-18).

Though the Habituate is forced to draw back the cloth of decency, he forcefully argues for a kind of yeoman status in the aristocracy of opium eaters. As should be obvious from the quoted passages from Opium Eating, he hardly speaks in a voice "disarrayed of all flowers of speech." In fact, pieces of Shakespeare frequently appear to freshen up the story: "Whether to annoy the reader with the history of my repeated attempts and failures, that is the question: for that I did attempt to throw off my shackles, honestly and earnestly, I would have the reader fairly believe" (61). The Habituate evidently aspires to a culture far beyond what one would expect from a simple clerk addicted to opium since the age of twenty. It seems certain, however, that the expectations of the form demanded that the opium eater at least attempt to rival the culture of a De Quincey, even if the result veered toward unintentional burlesque.

It was probably impossible for a literate 19th century
addict not to become something of a critic of Romantic personalities, especially De Quincey and Coleridge. These two famous opium eaters governed the public imagination regarding addiction, but more importantly, they explained the addict to himself. Moreover, the two presented a convenient duality, since De Quincey was so easily excoriated and Coleridge so easily defended. Expressing the genteel norm, the Habituate deplores De Quincey: the Confessions "show the man to have been morally depraved, and utterly regardless of the influence of his writings. The result of the opium habit, first, last, and always, is to bring unhappiness" (71). The dreams which De Quincey recovered mean nothing to the Habituate, being mere symptoms of opium rather than any indication of superior introspection:

I have always thought it the acme of the ridiculous to attribute to the peculiar formation of De Quincey's brain a special aptitude for dreaming magnificent dreams. Let any one, bold enough to undertake so costly an experiment, try the virtues of opium in the capacity of producing dreams, and, my word for it, he will either claim a special aptitude for dreaming himself, or, with me, give all the credit to the subtle and mighty powers of opium. (95)

De Quincey can never be forgiven for having thrown "a glamour of enchantment over the subject of opium, irresistably tempting to some minds" (126). The Habituate, on the other
hand, trusts that "I have said nothing that can allure any one into the habit: my whole object has been professedly and in reality, to do the contrary" (129).

Contrastingly, the Habituate conceives of Coleridge as the noble victim of opium who warned De Quincey against the drug, deplored the pernicious influence of the Confessions, and privately bemoaned the enervating consequences of his habit. The Habituate writes an incredible eulogy to Coleridge's departed spirit:

Numbered with the saints in heaven is the sweet-minded, long-suffering Coleridge. Oh, venerated shade! thy spirit living yet upon the earth has kept mine company in this sad ebb and flow of time. Thy nature, so gentle, so tender, and so true; thy heart so pure; thy whole being so perfect and so high, hath been a lighted torch to me in this my dark estate, travelling up the rugged hill of time, and rolling my stone along; hath been balm to my wounds, wine to my spirit, and hope to my o'er-freighted heart! (104-05)

The Habituate performs the ultimate reductio ad absurdum of the posthumous debate between De Quincey and Coleridge.

In Doctor Judas: A Portrayal of the Opium Habit, published in 1895, William Cobbe essentially agrees with the Habituate's conviction--and De Quincey's and Coleridge's examples--that the opium eater could be a superior individual: "The fact of opium slavery is fairly good evidence of
intelligence; for it would seem that those who are stolid, those who are commonplace, and those who are stupid have no affinity for the drug."¹⁸ And predictably, Cobbe bitterly denounces De Quincey's influence on young people: "The evils of the fascinating 'Confessions of an English Opium-Eater' have been beyond estimate and are daily driving innocents to eternal ruin" (12). Cobbe reminds his readers that De Quincey was addicted when writing his Confessions, answering De Quincey's fear that the public would not take his findings seriously if it knew that he was taking opium at the moment of composition. Cobbe urges us to take the word of his withdrawn friends over that of De Quincey: "Their evidence is to be credited above his, because they have been cured of addiction, with its associated evils of lying, deception, and moral cowardice" (27). Though an admitted attempt to redeem the addict from the world's poor opinion, Doctor Judas takes as an important formal objective the annihilation of the Confessions as a significant documentation of drug addiction: "Opium is a fiend that deserves no apologist; it is altogether infamous and yields no good to any creature who may get within its merciless clutches. De Quincey's defense of it is absolutely indefensible, and, also, illogical and dishonest" (123). Having miraculously withdrawn from opium for some eighteen months, Cobbe declares
himself as the representative addict of his time.

A former soldier in the Civil War, minister, English teacher, IRS agent, and finally a literary man, Cobbe's acute guilt over his life as an opium eater makes of Doctor Judas a labor of contrition which precludes artistic or commercial considerations: "Because I would make restitution as far as in me lies, I have told the plain story of slavery" (318). As with the Habituate, however, "the plain story of slavery" involves the awed exaggeration peculiar to addiction melodrama:

Of all the pains that are and may be, in this world or the next, it seems impossible that any can equal those endured when every bodily cell is in a rage because it is emerging from the stupefying drunkenness of opium. It is a bodily crucifixion that tongue cannot portray or pencil depict. (165)

Not the clairvoyant Ludlovian physician, Cobbe returns to the authority claimed by De Quincey, Blair, and the Habituate—first-hand experience: "Other books will be written upon this all-important subject; yet the facts herein related must be and abide because they are truth" (10-11).

Like the genteel addict that he is, Cobbe maintains that his addiction to opium was through no fault of his own. He recalls that his father was fifty when Cobbe was born, his grandfather was sixty and a drunkard when Cobbe's
father was born, and his mother's father was seventy when she was born. Such decrepit seed, Cobbe implies, could only produce degenerate offspring: "I was born of parents whose natures were highly sensitive, both being subject to melancholy and to periodic attacks of excessive nervousness" (17). And to take any chance of a normal, healthy life away from him, Cobbe's mother favored opiates as a remedy for childhood complaints: "Thus from infancy up I was fed paregoric, Bateman's drops, Godfrey's cordial, or laudanum, whenever lamentations from any cause evoked the spectre of impossible disease" (19). Needless to say, Cobbe proves an easy victim to "the hell drug, morphine" administered subcutaneously by an ignorant—or sinister—physician, to whom goes the immediate blame: "Either there is no sin in the opium habitué's life, or his misdeeds belong to him who made them possible" (33). Cobbe promotes the image of a constitutionally weakened individual helpless in a drug-dependent society, the victim of genetic and environmental factors: "The readiness with which the mature man of thirty-eight succumbed to opium was undoubtedly due to ... early habitude and hereditary environment" (19). In citing heredity as a major factor in the etiology of his addiction, Cobbe essentially agrees with the medical opinion of his day. One physician, for example, believed that morphine
addiction "follows very largely from alcoholic, syphilitic, tuberculous, hysterical, and neurotic ancestors." Significantly, falling prey to such an inevitable fatality relieves Cobbe of the major guilt for his subjugation to opium: "It is as reprehensible to attach censure to the opium 'fiend' as it would be to reproach the victim of small-pox" (303). The often maudlin pathos of the confessing addict derives from this conviction that addiction is a disease entirely independent of the will.

Cobbe constructs a portrait of the opium eater which involves an absolute division between a bullying opium tyrant and an irreproachable original self. It is inevitable that metaphors of possession by the devil frequently appear to describe the addict's internal reality: "The first work of the Judas drug is to double-lock the prison door of the will, so that successful struggle against the demoniac possession is impossible" (27). The superimposed opium personality contradicts the persuasions of the genteel addict, rendering him suspicious, anti-social: "Scarcely had there come a realizing sense of the subjection, when there was present a purpose to take no one into confidence" (45). Cobbe warns against assuming that the moral changes effected by the opium self represent any fundamental change in the opium eater's character: "Deception and lying are
just as positive effects of the opium habit as contraction of the muscles or disorder of the vision" (50). The burden of Doctor Judas is to persuade the reader that behind the despicable, leprous mask of the opium eater resides a pitiful creature painfully aware of his status as a pariah: "Will-less, helpless, nerveless, and desolate, he is of all creatures most unhappy" (7-8). Despite this moral and physical enervation, however, the addict does not completely lose touch with his innate gentility:

He does not frequent the saloons, gambling houses, or have low associations; never becomes a criminal, nor consorts with low companions. In all the stages of addiction he is respectable in appearance and does evil to no one except himself, beyond the suffering that comes to those who love him, because of his nerveless, purposeless life. (300)

By arguing for a native self untouched by opium, Cobbe supports the possibility of absolute cure: "The effect ceases with the cause; perfect health crowning the healed man with rejoicing" (38). By simplifying the connection between opium and the addict to that of a parasite living off a helpless host, Cobbe conceives of cure as simple separation from the drug. Unfortunately, 20th century junkies relapsing minutes after release from involuntary withdrawal cures would disprove the simplicity of Cobbe's theory of addiction.
The search for tolerable cure is one of the major sources of continuity in the literature dealing with addiction. One physician warned against the various miracle cures of the era:

Persons who have used alcohol associated with the morphin often become vociferous reformers, and their positiveness is suspicious. Such men are found about sanitariums, on the streets, and in public places, at reform meetings, proclaiming loudly and emphatically their escape, and boasting of the means that they used. This class have become prominent as managers and supporters of the "gold cure" asylums and the secret drugs to break up morphinism. After a time they disappear, relapsing to the old addiction.  

The drug confession seems suspiciously close to a kind of huckstering, or How I Lost My Habit in Three Short Days. In the beginning of Doctor Judas, Cobbe suggests that the chances of successful cure are gloomy indeed: "Those who have not yet experienced the agony should know that where one has been delivered a million have died in chains, and herewith be warned" (15). By the conclusion of the confession, however, Cobbe informs his readers that a cure for addiction does exist, though (like Ludlow) Cobbe goes lightly on the details of the cure in this book "designed for the general reader and not for scientific students and scholars only" (12). Devoting some three hundred pages to the moral,
psychological, and social implications of opium addiction, Cobbe manages only a few remarks on his mysterious cure, seemingly remembering it as a dream: "I do know that the treatment was purely scientific, that the cure was radical" (309). Though lacking so much as a name or a representative, Cobbe's cure occasions the wildly optimistic language which by Cobbe's time had become a convention of the literature of addiction:

Touched with a compassion that comes of the memory of the agony of the tristful enslavement, I declare, with all the intensity of my being, that at last, in the closing decade of the nineteenth century, for the first time in the world's history, a cure has been found for the disease of opium, and that it yields as easily to intelligent scientific treatment as does ague and fever, or any other disease; with this added encouragement, that whereas in nearly all other diseases there is appreciable percentage of fatalities, in the treatment for the opium habit everyone is restored, with not a vestige of the curse remaining. (320)

Though Cobbe triumphantly proclaims his miracle cure, he also declares himself a stern advocate of legislation to curb the flow of narcotics to unsuspecting victims: "Among all classes the habit is increasing to an extent that should occasion alarm and incite the people to drastic measures for relief and release" (193). And Cobbe's distrust of physicians predicts the criminilization of the physician's
maintenance of the addict: "Medical men would denounce as a glaring outrage upon their rights and an assassination of science any legislative statutes making it a penal offense to use opium in the practice; yet society must protect itself" (171-72). Sounding like a late Victorian Anslinger, Cobbe attacks the integrity of the physician and by so doing paves the way for governmental interference in the patient-physician relationship:

> There should be general education of the young in public schools, that they be warned in advance of the direful peril; the adult should be told that its "lure is woe, its sting is death." Legislative bodies should be urged to provide for the cure of those in the habit, and enact laws for the restricting the use of the toxic drug to the intelligent physician. (308)

Cobbe announces the migration of the frenzied rhetoric of the literature of addiction into the legislative process.

As studies began to discover who were the addicts in America, it became clear that there were more female addicts than male. Cobbe takes up this aspect of addiction and hits right at the touchstone of the American concept of civilization—the purity and goodness of the American wife and mother. By representing opium to be a direct threat to maternity, Cobbe scores a persuasive point:

> A good woman is rarely overcome of alcohol,
but hundreds of thousands of pure, virtuous, and intelligent wives and mothers in the land are under the pitiless thrall of opium. Alas! they were mothers before opium had fastened its gyves about them, because it never permits the joys of maternity to hallow the home of women in its toils. (307-08)

Writing in the same year, Henry Cole, in *Confessions of an American Eater*, turns Cobbe's warning on its head, granting to women the special power to cure the sinful addict:

If the world was lost by a woman's transgression, its salvation and redemption has, and will, come through her; and the honor and the glory will be accorded to her by the redeemed, will be incomparable by any figure of speech, no matter how much exaggerated. 22

Cole never doubts that it is a world in need of redemption: "There is no department of life, no order of society, from the highest to the lowest, that cannot muster a large roll of opium takers" (5). In confessing his guilt and advertising the means of his deliverance, Cole exchanges the pseudo-scientism of Ludlow and Cobbe for a fervent brand of evangelical faith healing based upon the guidance of feminine temperance.

Unlike the majority of genteel opium eaters, Cole includes opium in a complex of associated vices which together breed the opium eater: "In my own case, I ascribe
the continual use of opium, in great measure, to gambling and associated vices" (8). Cole claims to have been an alcoholic and also to have engaged in ambiguous criminal activities. And unlike his more fastidious predecessors, Cole recognizes a stimulating property in opium: "A small quantity of this delusive fluid made of me, for the time being, a new creature, and weariness and fatigue fled, and the animal and carnal nature found expression where it otherwise would have lain dormant" (32). Opium thus becomes a means of increasing physical potency, though Cole insists that opium stimulation does not ultimately compensate for its associated pains: "Unlike De Quincey, I have no language to deify the Opium god, although from the bottomless pit of despair he has often lifted me to an exalted physical paradise, but only to hurl me back again--and again--and again!" (8) The use of opium leads Cole to a physical paradise and an existential hell: "I looked upon the opium habit as a gross sin, and one which must, so long as indulged in, separate me from God" (110). In Cole's system successful cure from opium addiction suggests less the separation of the addict from opium than the reunion of the addict with God.

After years of opium, alcohol, gambling, and starvation, the American Opium Eater meets a young woman. In the shadow
of the church they confess to each other, she in deep mourning and he looking "more like an invalid,—without being one,—pale, thin, and emaciated" (53). This Gertrude, who later became his wife and mother to his children proves to be the key to withdrawal:

The noblest, and grandest, and purest, and saintliest thing on this beautiful planet of ours,—sin-cursed and full of misery and wretchedness as it is at present,—is a pure and spotless woman, and to this, the highest type of womanhood, this saint belonged. (138)

After meeting such a paragon, Cole takes it upon himself to undergo public declaration and withdrawal, though with some hesitation:

I lacked not only the courage of a public declaration, but such an act on my part was freighted with far greater consequences than any one could conceive,—an abandonment of opium and an excruciating death or a worse fate in a drawn-out existence of imbecility. (111)

But then the miracle. Having finally decided to withdraw—"The physical agony I felt prepared to undergo until released and set free by death" (113)—Cole does not experience any withdrawal symptoms whatsoever. No diarrhea, no restlessness, no discomfort of any kind: "My mind and body were under a peace far more transcendent than that ever derived from the
distillation of the poppy's famous nectar!" (122) Of the insufferable elongation of time incident to withdrawal, Cole writes: "In more than forty years of life I have never known such a fleeting day" (118). It becomes clear that it is a rigged game, however, when he weakens and decides to take a shot: "No sensation--no absorption, even; only a lump of raised flesh marked the unabsorbed drug" (122). The exalted condition of his soul, aided by the saintly Gertrude, arms Cole against the drug. He has been granted immunity: "Nature's laws transgressed were being assisted and supplanted by a supernatural or spiritual power" (124). Having achieved his unparalleled release, Cole cannot help but write a kind of hagiography when writing the story of his addiction. He returns to the power of confession and supernatural intervention as the means to the cure which science can never patent.

While offering far and away the most dramatic of cures, Cole presents some concrete observations of the everyday realities of the addict in the late 19th century. For example, Cole documents the ease with which opium could be obtained despite the welter of local and state regulations:

In all the years I had been associated with opium takers, in cities of several States, with statutory enactment, severe and penalties large for violation of the
law, and in innumerable drug stores, the Opium Eater never experienced any more difficulty in obtaining the drug than in buying the most harmless thing. (49)

He also records the prevalence of sanitariums designed for drug addicts: "The fact that almost everywhere throughout our land, institutions for those addicted to some one of the many drug habits . . . would be in itself ample apology for this work" (2-3). Cole actually sets out to destroy the myth of "scientific" cures for the simple reason that he has tried them and they did not work; he eventually comes to the conclusion that the practitioners in such institutions are in all probability addicts themselves. In an appendix Cole pays tribute to Fitz Hugh Ludlow, noting that he too was an unfortunate opium user, as well as a physician, and, what is quite often the case, practiced on others for that which he could find no balm for himself. The Opium Eater, in his experience in looking for assistance in his dire extremity, has twice been under treatment by men, since deceased, one suicidally, who were addicted to the same habit as himself. (165)

Besides assuming that Ludlow was in fact a physician, Cole supposes that "this gentleman was at the head of an institution for opium eaters located on Lord's Island" (183). A distinctly fanciful historian, Cole nevertheless perpetuates the skep-
ticism regarding the physician which was to result in the lamentable identification of the predatory script writing doctor with notably humane men. 24

The disparate voices discussed in this chapter--Blair, Ludlow, the Habituate, Cobbe, Cole--eventually come to agree on one essential point: addiction is a grave personal and social problem which should at any cost be eradicated to preserve distinctly American values. The popular confessions coordinated ideologically with the temperance mood of the country around the turn of the century. And yet investigators such as William James and Havelock Ellis called attention to a mystical potential in drugs which, while evoking the memory of the Hotel Pimodan, predicted the urgent excitement surrounding LSD in the 1960's. The popular confessions indeed helped create the stereotypes of the addict which resulted in the addict becoming the victim of a punitive mentality masquerading as hygiene. Thankfully perhaps, the popular confessions of the 19th century tell only a part of the story of the drug taker and his relation to our always backward knowledge of drugs and the questing mind.
By the turn of the 20th century no one could publicly prescribe addictive drugs to alleviate ordinary depression without cutting orthodox morality on a major nerve. In "Uber Coca" and other papers Freud concluded that the modest use of cocaine improves the quality of life in several ways—for example, as an aphrodisiac, or as a recourse against depression and fatigue. But a mere three years later, in 1887, Freud published "Craving For and Fear of Cocaine" in order to dissociate himself for professional reasons from the spectre of cocaine addiction, though he still maintains that cocaine is not necessarily addictive. ¹ Freud's brief career in psychopharmacology predicts the powerful forces which would eventually render any reasonable debate on the subject of drugs professionally compromising. Dr. Watson's warning to Sherlock Holmes carries public opinion toward rigid homogeneity: "'Count the cost! Your brain may, as you say, be roused and excited, but it is a pathological and morbid process which involves tissue-
change and may at least leave a permanent weakness.\textsuperscript{2}

Or at most transform the drug fiend into a despicable, leprous criminal, reflexively dangerous, sexually insatiable, cruising the streets for unknown purposes, the incarnation of Mr. Hyde, that lascivious late Victorian nightmare, the pure spirit of cocaine.\textsuperscript{3}

The period following World War I, however, allowed at least three voices to emerge from the world of letters which, if they do not undermine the prevailing opinions on what had come to be classified as Dangerous Drugs, do challenge the hyper-hygienics being espoused as the essential condition of mental and physical sanity. Drugs restore themselves as means of bohemian magic, incantatory, a moral prison only to those who misunderstand their elaborate and ancient rituals. Jean Cocteau:

On parle toujours de l'esclavage de l'opium. Non seulement la régularité d'heures qu'il impose est une discipline, mais encore une libération. . . . Il rassure. Il rassure par son luxe, par ses rites, par l'élegance antimédicale des lâpes, fourneaux, pipes, par la mise au point séculaire de cet empoisonnement exquis.\textsuperscript{4}

Cocteau's tranced eroticism concerning opium threatens in a fundamental way tractarian discussions of drugs and the evils of addiction. None of the genteel assumptions—cleanliness, vigour, social standing, progress—apply.
Aleister Crowley, James Lee, and Cocteau himself, each in an individual way walks right off the stage organized by moral authority; together they complicate the image of the addict, take him out of the police report and the evangelical medical report, out of hell, perdition, and the penitentiary, and place him in a progressive framework which easily evades political and social orthodoxy, creating in the meantime a kind of biologic pornography outlandishly related to mysticism.

Nevertheless, it is difficult imagining the same reader for The Diary of a Drug Fiend, The Underworld of the East, and Opium: journal d' une désintoxication, such various interests they display. Crowley employs his Diary as a political instrument, as promotion for his retreat at Cefalu and his philosophy of Will. Lee writes a travel-adventure which celebrates physical science. And Cocteau meditates upon art while at the same time writing a journal describing the withdrawal process. It would be difficult to arrange a ménage à trois with more discouraging prospects.

To say this, however, is to disregard the peculiar luminescence of drugs as a subject for literature. The books in question assist in propagating the popular association between sex, violence, and drugs; they proffer a license as threatening to moral authority as any other form of human deviance. "It is a book that ought to be
burned," writes one reviewer of the Diary. The world of drugs promises unique satisfactions for prurient readers. Even withdrawal bumps and grinds in a strange kind of metabolic pornography: the head whipped by the spine in devastating spasms, the epileptic possession of the body by alien spirits, cellular torture. Drugs automatically invoke erotic violence in the 20th century. "A number of morphinists have erotic paroxysms of a few days' duration," one physician warns. "Their conduct during this time is that of sexual maniacs. Rapes, seductions, and other criminal acts occur, sometimes boldly, or with secretiveness and cunning." It is unlikely that Clarissa, drugged and raped (the same thing?), ever really fades from the popular mind. By 1922, the year of the Diary, drug literature necessarily involved erotic and punishable crime. It is no wonder, then, that Crowley, writing for hard cash for the first time in his life, chose the contemporary drug milieu for his subject.

The Diary departs significantly from the formula of the drug confessions being considered in this study. Crowley does not declare himself as an addict (though he happened to be one) but instead records the diaries of Sir Peter Pendragon, and his wife Lou, both addicts to cocaine and heroin. "This is a true story," Crowley affirms in the preface, quickly establishing the credibility that
the illusion of real life brings to unbelievable events. The illusion, however, does not hold. The Diary offers the choice of accepting the diaries as actual accounts reproduced by Crowley, "rewritten only so far as was necessary to conceal personalities," or as true in spirit, likely to have happened or going to happen, a Robinson Crusoe of the drug world, a work of fiction, and not the genuine case study which the conventions of drug literature demand. In all probability the Diary was the twenty-seven day employment that it is assumed to be, and though he undoubtedly drew from his own various and experimental experiences with drugs as well as the realities of bohemian London, Crowley invented the Diary for sixty pounds ready money and dictated every word to his Scarlet Woman of the moment. Despite his adopting a false (or literary) voice, Crowley confesses in the Diary; no matter with what unctuous self-esteem he "saigne de l'encre," as Cocteau says the hero must. Crowley appears in the Diary as a mystical drug counselor, the harbinger of a new aeon, and only tacitly as a functioning heroin addict.

Crowley, going under the alias of Basil King Lamus (aka Big Lion), completely reprograms the lives of the two drug fiends whose diaries he presumably authors. King Lamus plies the model of con: truth serves authority. Lamus's assumption of unlimited prescience extends the
meaning of credibility to another plane: he not only
wants to be believed, he wants to be followed. To begin
with, Lamus commands his two homeless orphans to write
the diaries we are reading. As with Ludlow and Cocteau,
writing the history of one’s addiction serves as therapy
for withdrawal. Lou writes: "The only respite I have is
this diary. It relieves me to write of my sufferings;
and besides it is important for the spiritual life. Basil
must have the record to read" (226). Cocaine and heroin
come to dominate their lives, but even this overwhelming
sickness begins and ends with King Lamus, as though he
planned their addiction as a spiritual exercise: "'You
encouraged us to go on,'" Sir Peter accuses. "'Certainly,'
admitted Lamus, 'and now, I'm encouraging you to stop'" (155).
King Lamus courses through their minds, even when they
foolishly revolt against his Will. Lou realizes that "King
Lamus is always at the root of my brain" and "I am the
first-born child of King Lamus without a mother. I am the
emanation of his essence" (169). Periodically, Lamus
appears to impress upon the pair that he understands thor-
oughly what is happening to them (he refers to their ordeal
as an "experiment"11) and that he is uniquely suited to
assist them when the crash finally comes. On one occasion,
without saying a word, he hands them a card reading: "Don't
forget me when you need me" (96). The hope of withdrawal, following madness and suicide attempts, inevitably composes itself in terms of King Lamus and his doctrine of Will.

Sir Peter and Lou's lives so completely depend upon King Lamus and his Will (which is, altruistically enough, to have them find their Wills: "Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be the Whole of the Law") that in reporting their salvation they actually testify to Lamus's power. "You have been tried in the crucible and come out pure gold," Lamus tells Peter (363). There is little doubt who is the alchemist or what the gold standard. King Lamus half-seriously informs Sir Peter that

"your brain soaks up the highly charged particles of my atmosphere. And before you know where you are, instead of expressing yourself—what little self you have to express—you will be repeating, in a debased currency, the words of wisdom that from time to time have dropped from my refined lips." (251)

After passing through Lamus's holy alembic, Sir Peter and Lou aspire to join "a number of selected people to act as a sort of brain for the world in its present state of cerebral collapse" (252). When Sir Peter discovers his true Will (to build helicopters), he begins "to perceive dimly that the Big Lion had worked out the whole situation in a masterly fashion. He had done with his
material--us, what I was doing with my material, the law of mechanics" (355). In the Diary Crowley fulfills the dream in which he exercises total control over his suffering patients, those crippled from "spiritual distress"--the archetypal healer, intimately associated with the mysteries of drugs, eroticism, spirits, and death.

And usually some organization as well. The Abbey of Thelema at Cefalu had been in existence for over two years when the Diary was published late in 1922. In a note to the Diary Crowley-as-editor writes:

The Abbey of Thelema at "Telepylus" is a real place. It and its customs and members, with the surrounding scenery, are accurately described. The training there given is suited to all conditions of spiritual distress, and for the discovery and development of the "True Will" of any person. Those interested are invited to communicate with the author of this book. (246)

The Abbey proves just the rural tonic whereby the young city couple experience regeneration under Big Lion's guidance. Though something like Hawthorne's The Blithedale Romance in the breath-inhaling lyricism surrounding what is, after all, a kind of Utopian experiment, the Diary grabs for the clinical authority of a medical report, reminding one of Ludlow's fetching recommendation of the noble doctor who weaned him from the pernicious hashish
habit, but at the same time disturbingly similar to a brochure for sanitariums claiming to be peculiarly suited to care for the drug addicts who, due to the new repressive laws designed to suppress their state of being, were left helpless. One reviewer of the Diary notices the real point:

It is not a pleasing book, but Mr. Crowley invites anyone interested in the system of training he describes to communicate with him. Doubtless there must be many victims, and relatives of victims, of this and other crazes who will accept his invitation.

And yet this Mr. Crowley, who, disguised as King Lamus, "could use cocaine as a fencing-master uses a rapier, as an expert, without danger of wounding himself," was addicted to heroin before and after he wrote the Diary, having failed to withdraw from the drug himself. Shortly before the Diary, Crowley wrote an article for The English Review, "The Great Drug Delusion," describing himself as "a New York Specialist" who had tried to addict himself to heroin for the sake of science—but had failed. Predictably, there is an advertisement for the "Specialist's" clinic located at Cefalu. Though Crowley never enlisted more than a few recruits for his Abbey of Thelema, his failure was not through lack of nerve. His intentions
in the Diary sink to those of a cancer clinic in Tijuana and yet outrageously rise to those of a hedonistic savant coolly dispensing salvation to the orphans of a disintegrating social order.

The Diary strenuously affirms another of Crowley's creeds: "Love is the Law; Love under Will." Love that is separated from the true Will allows addiction to occur. Cocaine lifts the body to carnal love and without the intervention of Will leads to irresponsible excess. Lou's first words to Sir Peter: "Your kiss is quite bitter with cocaine" (28). After his first snort, Sir Peter realizes the emotional potential of cocaine: "I recognized, for one swift second, the meaning of my previous depression. It was my sense of inferiority to her! Now I was her man, her mate, her master!" (25-26) Cocaine functions in the Paradise section as an erotic means of release, stimulating beyond moral control, swelling love until the two rush to Sir Peter's airplane and fly to Paris: "For the first time in my life I was being absolutely myself, freed from all inhibitions of body, intellect, and training which keep us, normally, in what we call the sane courses of action" (36). The shivering carnality of cocaine eventually becomes identified with love itself: "The exaltation of love was combined with that of cocaine;
and the romance and adventure of our lives formed an exhilarating setting for those superb jewels" (42). And in a solemn moment Sir Peter reveals that without cocaine sexual love might even be impossible:

I come of a very refined race, keenly observant and easily nauseated. The little incidents inseparable from love affairs, which in normal circumstances tend to jar the delicacy of one's sensibilities, do so no longer when one's furnace is full of coke. Everything soever is transmuted as by "heavenly alchemy" into a spiritual beatitude. One is intensely conscious of the body. But as the Buddhists tell us, the body is in reality an instrument of pain or discomfort. We have all of us a subconscious intuition that this is the case; and this is annihilated by cocaine. (46)

Snorting extravagant amounts of cocaine from each other's hand serves as furious foreplay, even the sexual act itself. Deep in addiction, Lou writes: "I took a whole lot of cocaine. It dulled what I felt. I was able to fancy I loved him" (143). Withdrawing in an Italian jail, Sir Peter realizes that Lou's "hair was tousled and dirty; her complexion was sallow, mottled with unwholesome red. Her eyes were bleared and bloodshot. Dark purple rings were round them" (124). Thus the basic melodrama of drug literature (drugs degrade the body and deprave the mind) vindicates itself not only in terms of cocaine but, by
implication, carnal love as well.

But there is another factor in the drug equation resolved finally at the Abbey. Cocaine sponsors carnal love, but heroin puts the body to sleep; heroin sponsors a kind of quiescent spirituality, untouchable, unmoved, timeless. Cocaine is the agent with which Gretel Webster, the evil witch of love, hopes to create destructive love, and it is heroin with which another bizarre woman, Haideé Lamoureux, attempts to seduce the two orphans into death.

Haideé lugubriously pleads for a negative deliverance into the hands of heroin; she represents the bleak confidence of death itself: "A wan smile flickered on her hollow cheeks. There was something appalling in its wintry splendour. It silenced us" (70). In the middle of withdrawal Lou evokes this familiar presence (". . . Did Quattrocento finger fashion it / Hollow of cheek as though is drank the wind / And took a mess of shadows for its meat?"15) in her diary:

I saw the spirit of heroin today when I went up to the magic room. It is tremendously tall and thin, with tattered rags fluttering around it, and these turn into little birds that fly off it, that come and burrow into one's skin! (214)

More than a Gothic tactic, Haideé has renounced everything for "divine purity," the ambience of heroin. "I feel
that contact of any sort, even with myself, contaminates me" (69). She takes the two young people temporarily into her power, dismissing love as a disgusting distraction from her mysterious purpose:

"You have to be born into it, married with it, and dead from it before you understand it. Different people are different. But it always takes some months at least before you get rid of that stupid nonsense--life. As long as you have animal passions, you are an animal. How disgusting it is to think of eating and loving and all those appetites, like cattle!" (68-69)

"Listen: Their Garden of Delights is a terminal sewer," Burroughs warns.

"Now I've forgotten what love means, except for a faint sense of nausea when it comes under my notice. I hardly eat at all--it's only brutes that want to wallow in action that need three meals a day. I hardly ever talk--words seem such a waste, and they are none of them true. No one has yet invented a language from my point of view. Human life or heroin life? I've tried them both; and I don't regret having chosen as I did." (69-70)

Sir Peter realises "that Haïdée, low-class, commonplace, ignorant girl that she was, had somehow been sucked into a stupendous maelstrom of truth" (103). And Lou recalls "what Haïdée said about the spiritual life. We were being prepared to take our places in the new order of Humanity" (145).
The frantic, genital love initiated by cocaine gives way to heroin death-in-life: dirty fingernails, silence, filthy rooms, falling out hair, and, strangely, the experience of love on a higher plane:

It is a formless calm. But love! We had never loved like this before. We had defiled love with the grossness of the body. . . . We were conscious of every nerve to the tiniest filament; and for this one must be ineffably aloof from movement. (169)

But when this fine calibration is disturbed, when the "hourglass of junk" (Burroughs' phrase) runs out, then "I feel as if I had died and got forgotten in some beastly place where there was nothing but hunger and thirst. Nothing means anything any more except dope, and dope itself doesn't mean anything vital" (147). The seeming impossibility of withdrawal sends them to King Lamus rather than traditional medical help—"We venomously contrasted the calm confidence of King Lamus with the croaking clamour of the authorities" (182)—just as any junkie, cut off from his supply, flushed out by the Dangerous Drug Act, automatically fell prey to any charlatan advertising a certain method of cure.

Historically, Sir Peter and Lou are in the vanguard of all those who found drugs easy to obtain until they were
completely addicted and were then forced by their persistent habits and repressive laws to go down into the underworld as a life-and-death necessity rather than as an exciting indulgence. Gretel (the only woman who does not love King Lamus) plays the part of bogey-pusher, giving the couple honeymoon gifts of cocaine and heroin, and then disappearing when the stuff becomes necessary to maintain a human form. In the book's immediate background the champions of public morality are beating the drum to outlaw the states of being induced by drugs:

The papers are disgusting. It's the silly season right enough. Every time one picks one up, there's something about cocaine. That old fool Piatt is on the warpath. He wants to "arouse public opinion to a sense of the appalling danger which threatens the manhood and womanhood of England." (142)

After they have been swindled in the black market, Lou remarks:

Last night's swindle was made possible by the great philanthropist Jabez Platt. His Diabolical Dope Act has created the traffic which he was trying to suppress. It didn't exist before except in his rotten imagination . . . . (165)

And underground traffic obviously asks higher prices: "The price of cocaine has gone up from a pound an ounce to anything you like to pay" (146).
But the clever (and probably astute) irony in the Diary is that Jabez Platt, the great reformer of the day, who had realized his ambition of "putting through a law for suppressing the evil of drugs," owns a cocaine factory in Switzerland. He ends up offering Sir Peter shares in the company, informing him that

"thanks to the very Act which I had so arduously laboured to put upon the Statute Book, that little bottle of yours which costs me less than five shillings to manufacture, and was sold retail for a matter of fifteen shillings, can now be sold—discreetly, you understand—in the West End for almost anything one cares to ask—ten, twenty, even fifty pounds to the right customer. Eh? What do you say to that?" He laughed gleefully. "Why, ill-natured people might say I had put through the Act for the very purpose of making a bull market for my produce!" (289-90)

Crowley clearly perceives the evil intentions of those who would criminalize the use of drugs and thereby create tremendous sources of capital based upon the lowest unit in the "pyramid of junk" (again Burroughs' phrase): the addict in the street. As the addict turns into a pariah (morally and legally) it becomes natural to exploit him. Untypically, Sir Peter and Lou have little need for money; rather they desperately need connections for drugs; Lou finally whores herself to a doctor for heroin (the government prescription hardly serves to fix them). They
live in fear of discovery, finally moving to sordid rooms in Soho to be closer to heroin connections: "We had both of us a certain shame in admitting to each other that we were renegades" (184). Only heroin holds them together:

I hated Peter from the depths of my soul. I would have given anything in the world—except the heroin—to be able never to see him again. But he had the money, why shouldn't we enjoy our abject ruin as we had enjoyed our romance? Why not wallow in the moist, warm mire? (203)

Finally the degradations that accompany addiction lead them to a suicide pact:

Sir Peter and Lou seem standard victims of addiction except for the stupendous personality standing adamantly between them and the grave—King Lamus. (Naturally he arrives to talk them out of committing suicide.) But instead of the temperancemonger stereotype, Lamus holds himself up as a connoisseur of drugs ("'I've just been thinking that we should all be the better for a little heroin,"") [261] Lamus remarks), possessing a Mephistophelian ability to control his appetites on every level, including addictive drugs. Sir Peter:

I could understand perfectly how it was that Basil could take a dose of heroin or cocaine, could indulge in hashish, ether, or opium as simply and usefully as the ordinary man can order a cup of strong
black coffee when he happens to want to work late at night. He had become completely master of himself, because he had ceased to oppose himself to the spiritual will-power of which he was the vehicle. He had no fear or fascination with regard to any of these drugs. He knew that these two qualities were aspects of a single reaction; that of emotion to ignorance. He could use cocaine as a fencing-master uses a rapier, as an expert . . . . (362)

The use of drugs represents no moral issue in the Diary, but addiction does, since addiction estranges the victim from his true Will. It was Crowley's public opinion that everything, even matter could be translated into something beneficial on a mystical as well as on an ordinary plane:

Now Samahdi, whatever it is, is at least a state of mind exactly as are deep thought, anger, sleep, intoxication, and melancholia. . . . Morphine makes men holy and happy in a negative way; why should there not be some drug which will produce the positive equivalent.17

While preparing the stage for Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert, Crowley also enunciates the plea for honest research which goes back at least to De Quincey. About hashish Crowley writes: "But today I claim the hashish-phenomenon of the first importance; and I demand investigation."18 By Crowley's time, however, an honest and rational discussion of drugs amounted to subversion. And especially,
one must remember, if Crowley was the man to initiate discussion. Crowley proposes a freedom that galls, freedom over sexual taboos and freedom over time and matter, the freedom to open up the doctor's sacred black bag at will. The Diary figures as one of the basic elements in the public vilification of Crowley, suggesting as it does modes of behavior unbearable to the epoch in which he lived.

Crowley obviously enjoyed doing evil things, but he also enjoyed spreading evil rumours about himself, in some cases contributing phrases to the yellow journalism that followed his career with such outraged perseverance. In the Diary, for example, Gretel, the evil witch, whispers to Peter:

"He's over a hundred years old, in spite of his looks. He's been everywhere, and done everything, and every step he treads is smeared with blood. He's the most evil and dangerous man in London. He's a vampire, he lives on ruined lives." (22)

Crowley revels in the self-directed slander, even adding some Tom Sawyer touches to his gory reputation. But even Crowley might have been surprised at the horror incited by the publication of the Diary. James Douglas, for example, screamed that the book "is an ecstatic eulogy of the drug [cocaine] and of its effects upon the body
and the mind. A cocaine trafficker would welcome it as a recruiting agent which would bring him thousands of new victims..."\(^{19}\)

As with De Quincey before him, Crowley was seen as a propagandist with a deleterious social effect rather than as a serious investigator into largely unresearched areas. And to make the atmosphere even more poisonous, Crowley's protege, Raoul Loveday, died at Cefalu, and the newspaper stories gleaned from interviews with Betty May (Loveday's wife) and Mary Butts did not redound to his credit:

The facts are too unutterably filthy to be detailed in a newspaper, for they have to do with sexual orgies that touch the lowest depth of depravity. The whole is mixed up in a hocus-pocus of doubtful mysticism, of which Crowley is the "Purple Priest." Children under ten, whom the Beast keeps at the "abbey," are made to witness horrible sexual debauches unbelievably revolting. Filthy incense is burned and cakes made of goats' blood and honey are consumed in the windowless room where the Beast conducts his rites. The rest of the time he lies in a room hung with obscene pictures collected all over the world, saturating himself with drugs.\(^{28}\)

The voice of moral outrage always amuses and electrifies, until one recalls that the English publisher, Collins, allowed the \textit{Diary} to go out of print as a result of public pressure, declaring that he would never publish Crowley again. Crowley was accused publicly of being a
pimp, a thief, and a cannibal ("A Man We'd Like to Hang" one headline reads). Significantly, a novel about drugs proved the forum in which Crowley first opened himself to public outrage.

As has been noticed, drugs exercise a strange influence over the popular mind, stimulating fantasies of unbridled lust, deflowered virgins, unnatural potency (Lamus "fascinates" women "with a thousand different tricks," Gretel informs Sir Peter). Crowley achieves in a blatant form the connection between eroticism, drugs, and weird ritual which would influence the occult societies which would in turn spawn Charles Manson. The idea of programming a group of spiritual adepts through a drug and sex-induced psychic vulnerability must eventually be credited to Crowley. The horror that he aroused in the 1920's prefigures the vilification of Charles Manson in the late 1960's.

It might seem that Crowley's arcane attainments--his synthesis of magic and yoga, his studies in the Cabbalah, his sex-magick, his plan to convert the world--would serve to dissociate him from the everyday addict. In a sense they do. But in a fundamental way Crowley belongs with the junkies of the 20th century: he went through the psychosis of withdrawal and attempted to objectify his experience the way Cocteau and Burroughs would; he
offers his knowledge for whatever good it can do the world (and himself, let it be noted). Despite the messianic tone that characterizes so many other writers dealing with drugs, despite the whiffs of incense, the ornate jewelry, the shaved head and the hypnotic stare of the Beast, Crowley belongs with those who have paid the epileptic dues of withdrawal.

Along with withdrawal as spiritual and biological spectacle, the association of the East (aboriginal city man) with erotic vices and subtle violence accounts for the major sense of continuity in Western drug literature. De Quincey's demonic Malay threatens and seduces—represents ambivalent psychological compulsions. Direct knowledge of the East (usually despite the luxurious colonial overworld) commands a unique credibility, dependent upon self-control and, above all, a highly developed responsiveness to evil. Crowley must have "been everywhere"; his collection of pornography must have been "collected all over the world." Crowley (following Sir Richard Burton) defines a kind of cosmopolitanism on a distinctly vertical plane. Similarly, James Lee, instead of lying on a pillow made in Singapore, actually penetrates the secrets (typical phrase) of the warm, dark opium den, the lavish bordello, the Thuggee Society; he wanders "the underworld, the jungles,
and the drug haunts of the Far East in search of transcendent sensation—and he goes alone. The underworld: symbol suggesting marginal outer precincts where bodies give themselves up to pleasure while maintaining cruel animal vigilance. Significantly, Lee never takes drugs with another white man: an occasional Chinese to smoke opium, an Indian doctor to instruct him in the use of drugs, but never a white man. Lee identifies drugs and the Orient. China: "It was a country of which I had read so many strange things, I wanted to see them for myself; to delve below the surface, and to find out all I could about the drug habit there, the greatest drug using country in the world" (181). If by the 20th century the ideal of search has been traded in for the business of sightseeing, Lee searches with uncharacteristic fervour for the addict's holy grail—and what is more, he actually finds it, the pharmaceutical philosopher's stone, the "Elixir of Life."

Though somewhat of a pastoral retrospective of an epoch when drugs were cheap and legal ("Where are all the young fellows that I once knew? Then so full of life and spirits. Or the pretty young girls; Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Malay, or white, of those days. Most will be dead, and the rest old" [101]). The Underworld of the East,
published in 1935, turns a nervous eye to orthodox opinion regarding narcotic drugs: "My hope is also that this book will act as a warning to any who may be tempted to indulge in narcotic drugs of any kind, by showing the terrible consequences they can produce" (v). It so happens, however, that these "terrible consequences" are noticeable only in their absence. Moreover, Lee prescribes a workable and even salutary system of constant drug use, one depending, he easily admits, upon careful knowledge of drugs as well as upon unlimited supply, nodding politely to the authorities as he says it: "The life of a drug taker can be a happy one; far surpassing that of any other, or it can be one of suffering and misery; it depends on the user's knowledge" (2). Lee's system depends upon alternating drugs:

If I had been taking heavy doses of cocaine for some time, living in a state of mental exhilaration and stimulation of every bodily faculty, then I knew that I must reverse, and give the nervous system a perfect rest, under the soothing influence of morphia; and obtain long sound sleeps, with the aid of opium. Moreover, these alternative drugs were equally fascinating. It would be difficult to say that one was more so than another, and the contrast in their action made each one seem more attractive than the last. (38)

Though Lee passively submits to the Dangerous Drug Act in England and advises his reader to do the same, the
Underworld is in no sense an anti-drug book:

All these narcotic drugs, which are commonly known as Dangerous Drugs, are really the gift of God to mankind. Instead of them doing him harm, they really should be the means of preserving his health, and making his life a state of continual happiness. (38)

While continually emphasizing the necessity of knowledge when dealing with drugs, Lee offers an exquisite image of drugs without offering anything by way of the joys of normal existence. Having kicked once, he writes: "I was in perfect health, but I longed to start using drugs again, because I found that it was the only way to be really happy; to get away from the deadly sameness of life in this world" (106). Echoing Sherlock Holmes' reply to Watson's admonition--"But I abhor the dull routine of existence"--Lee underlines the eternal motivation for the use of drugs: the desire to transcend a dingy and uninteresting reality.

Lee has been an addict for some thirty years, and for eighteen of those years he has performed as an engineer in primitive circumstances while taking alternating doses of morphine, cocaine, opium and hashish. Though a native wife follows his wanderings at a distance, she seems more an embarrassing monkey than a companion. She does not share his drug life, and it is something of a sinister
mystery when he writes that "she died suddenly . . . in 1918, from an overdose of some drug, I think morphia."

Never establishing himself anywhere, never questioning his need to travel, Lee continually signs on with different companies and goes for tours of service in Assam, the Malay Archipelago, Africa, and finally China, "the land of my dreams." After having contracted to work in a particularly pestilential area in West Africa, he simply says, "There was something about jungle life which was attractive to me" (212). Lee's outward stoicism, however, conceals his zeal to discover mysterious drugs. In Malaya, "I had let it be known that I would pay for curious specimens of plants, and natives passing down river often brought me specimens, and they knew that I would pay in opium" (127). It is from this particular research that Lee derives the drug he refers to as the "Elixir of Life." With the dedication of a professional botanist--"The Pharmacopoeia will never be complete until every plant and flower and root has been tested" (61)--he searches for unknown sensations: "There are also secret drugs known only to a few in China, drugs which are terrible in their after-effects, but which are more alluring than any of those mentioned here. I do not give the names of them here" (37). Lee blends elements of the mad, impressionable scientist
into the essential character of the lone, perfectly sane explorer. We are never really certain how to interpret him. Burroughs will create the same problem in a later chapter.

Speaking "in my own simple language," Lee offers a course on how to intelligently alternate drugs while maintaining health, but at the same time he instructs the reader in the proper conduct if one is to descend beneath the surface of foreign countries. Because he does not evince the normal European condescension toward Orientals, and because he renounces the habitual company of Occidentals, Lee finds doors open to him that are normally closed to Europeans. In China, for instance, "I soon became friendly with one or two well-to-do Chinese who used drugs, and who knew the underworld of the city thoroughly, so that soon I had the entry of places of which very few Europeans had any idea of the existence" (239). Lee enforces the idea that China is a country of surfaces and that one must behave properly if he is ever to find the secret life hidden beneath the innocent exterior:

What strange sights may a man not see during seven years in a country like China, if he goes to look for them beneath the surface? It is a country of camouflage and hidden ways. Innocent looking junks, quietly floating down
the rivers and canals, may be really
sumptuously furnished gambling dens
and drug haunts, where orgies of many
kinds are carried on. No European,
unless he is introduced by a trusted
Chinese, will ever have the entry to
these places. (2)

Both participant and spectator, Lee advances the myth of
the perfectly adjusted addict, at home in any situation
("For myself, I had plenty of books, and my drugs and
experiments" [127]) somehow removed from the normal
European inhibitions which make Oriental customs suspicious
by reputation and intolerable in practise.

Another aspect of this cosmopolitan personality is
the insistence upon anonymity, reminiscent of Burroughs'
warning against direct classification by authority. While
Lee's wife talks to strangers, "I was gradually edging
to the outskirts as I hate being in the public gaze . . . "
(179). In keeping with this reluctance to stand out, Lee
never exposes himself by talking too freely--an indispensable
trait within the world of drifters, addicts, and thieves:

Although I was a quiet man, I always got
on well in a rough crowd, especially
among foreigners. A Dutchman told me
that I was the only Englishman whom he
could ever get on with. I was very
popular with all in the mess in spite
of the fact that I spoke very little;
I never made conversation for the sake
of making it. (220)
A function of Lee's desire for anonymity is the directness of his language. The normal drug confession draws addiction in sensational, apocalyptic language. Lee's speech departs radically from the fervent scholasticism of De Quincey and Ludlow (even the *Diary*) as well as from the melodrama of journalistic accounts of addiction. Instead, Lee transmits the hard data received by the silent traveller who through discipline and basic sense seizes the situation direct, eyes open, "a neat Smith & Wesson" which "I always carried . . . in my hip pocket" (133), and a body alive with veins, treated dispassionately as means of constantly changing pleasure.

In contrast to De Quincey, whom opium drowns in his own subjectivity, Lee objectifies drugs into an arsenal of weapons, much as Crowley proposes in the *Diary*. Drugs, used intelligently, insure his survival. The jungle and the underworld demand occasional bursts of concentration, or unusual endurance, which can be achieved with the right drug at the right time:

But for Ali's opium we might never have got back, because such a position calls for the best of mind and body; calmness, keen perception, staying power, and this opium will supply when wanted. Now, under such a situation, cocaine would not have been so good, it might even have been a disadvantage if used alone.
It would not produce calmness and deliberation. It would produce a feeling of great vitality, but there would be the liability to hurry, and not to be cautious enough. (162)

Though the military establishment, for obvious reasons, has always been interested in stimulants, Lee outlines a democracy of drug use; every drug—sedatives, stimulants, hallucinogens—influences the mind in an instructive way. Lee reconciles militancy with the voluntary overloading of his own senses. After taking an especially large dose, "I was in no sense intoxicated, as drugs do not affect one that way. I could walk and move about with the same ease and certainty as when in a normal state, only the senses were affected in quite a different way" (213). What for some may be frightening hallucinations to Lee are instructive angles of vision, modes of inquiry: "I have sat up through the night taking drugs until the room has been peopled with spirits" (3). The paradox in Lee is his clear perception of surfaces alongside his desire to go beneath, beneath the surfaces of strange societies and beneath normal forms of consciousness:

Drugs to me meant, not so much bodily pleasures which they brought, as mental pleasures; the powerful stimulation of the imagination; the effacement of the present, so that I could live, almost
in reality, in other scenes and periods of the world's history. (66)

Hallucination and distortion serve the instinct for survival as means of speculation, as indispensable knowledge.

The conscious manipulation of drugs prompts speculations which begin in hallucination:

By now introducing hashish and minute additions of one or two other drugs, the visions which I saw, and the thoughts which accompanied them, began to change in character, and became grotesque and fantastic.

I started off by turning my thoughts to the mystery of the universe. (189)

Instead of the psychological introspection of De Quincey, or the feverish metaphysics of Ludlow, Lee's visions result in a rash of mental calculations having to do with astronomy, geology, physics—practically a textbook on elementary physical science, a comprehensible Eureka—which return to the real world in the sense that science fiction returns—as factual dream, as a warning. Lee does not attempt to transcend phenomenal reality, as Ludlow thinks he does; rather he wants to understand the physical universe from a scientific point of view, as a machine whose action he can predict. Futuristic speculation thus becomes in Lee's hands an aspect of drug use. One characteristic example:
Nothing is more certain than that, sometime in the dim future, all life on this planet will come to an end. If we escape all the disasters already mentioned then the human race may live for hundreds of millions of years, until cold eventually brings about the final death.

Long before this occurs, the whole of mankind will be living at the equator, a land of ice and snow, and semi-darkness. They will be dressed in skins and the sun will appear as a purple-coloured ball in the sky.

By then all vegetation will have disappeared from the face of the earth, but man will have made great strides forward in science and invention; he will have invented new kinds of synthetic foods. He will burrow deep down into the earth for chemical means of producing heat, to replace the sun's. Great cities will be built underground, artificially heated and ventilated, and every aid of science will be made use of in an endeavor to prolong life a little longer, but the end will come. (57-58)

One wants to say that it makes little difference if Lee is correct or not in his predictions. For instance, Lee claims that "scientists are wasting their time when they talk about releasing the energy of the atom. The only energy in nature is gravitation, in one form or another" (91). As with Burroughs ("Perhaps if a junkie could keep himself in a constant state of kicking, he would live to a phenomenal age"24), Lee's drive toward the universal law and the ultimate consequences seems less rewarding than the data collected from his everyday life. The (one hesitates to
say mythical) value of the Underworld depends less on the accuracy of Lee's speculations than on the stoical image of Lee himself, solving the problems of the universe with his eyes steadily on the door, waiting to be murdered.

The "Elixir of Life" raises a similar problem of credibility as it relates to accuracy and good faith. Either the "Elixir" serves a metaphoric purpose (as tactic of comic drug literature, ie. the Abbey in the Diary) or it in fact exists. It is in Sumatra that Lee discovers this drug that normalizes instantly any unusual state of being:

Not only would this drug remove all forms of intoxication, exhilaration, and narcotic effects, but it would remove pain of most kinds. It would reduce the temperature if too hot, producing a feeling of warmth when too cold, and remove fatigue. (156)

When the Dangerous Drug Act comes into effect, Lee declares that he kicks the habit "easily with the aid of the drug . . ." (278). Predictably, the drug has no scientic name, but somewhere, Lee assures us, "in the island of Sumatra there exists the plant from which I made the drug I called the 'Elixir of Life'" (278). Taking something from good old-fashioned snake oil on the one hand and Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth on the other, Lee reveals the one drug that can relieve every human problem
and... nothing is revealed; it was a memory, a mirage, you have to go out and find it yourself. Lee teaches us the facts of life (as Burroughs does) and then hands us a dream for a diploma: "This story will be as a message of hope to all drug addicts" (3). In the Underworld Lee launches the chimerical hope of a masterful agent (predicting Burroughs' faith in apomorphine) which breaks the authority of addiction while at the same time not being addictive.

Before he discovers the "Elixir" Lee experiences symptoms of withdrawal which he related in conventional terms:

I was suffering terribly; I could not sleep nor sit still, and I was on the fidget all the time. I had a horrible toothache, and I was jumpy and nervous. I could not get a wink of sleep at night, for I would be up half a dozen times walking about the room, as I had cramps in my feet and legs, which I could not keep in one position while lying on bed for more than a minute, before they began to ache again.

I felt wretched in the extreme, and I think that the worst symptom of all was the horrible feeling of depression and gloom—so terrible that it defies description... I could not stand it any longer and I injected a whole grain dose. (29)

Both the Diary and the Underworld instruct the reader in how to navigate or avoid the trauma of withdrawal; no
matter how fantastically, they hold out the hope of normality and health. Cocteau's Opium: journal d'une désintoxication, on the other hand, defines itself strictly in terms of withdrawal. No deus ex machina descends to deliver the sufferer, no King Lamus, no Elixir. Cocteau discovers in the extraordinary dislocations of withdrawal a particular perspective, disabused and hopeless, from which science can be served and his work (that prodding echo throughout drug literature) can be done.

The Diary describes a typical curve in addiction morality drama: orgiastic excess, withdrawal-madness, and the determined resolution to lead a productive life. Withdrawal serves as cellular and moral retribution, while the effected cure supposes the resolution of the conflict which precipitated addiction in the first place. Cocteau, however, exploits his own withdrawal from opium as a unique divide between "un état considéré comme anormal à un état considéré comme normal" (13). He isolates withdrawal as the eloquent moment of addiction, as Burroughs would do with Naked Lunch. Cocteau writes—and draws—from within withdrawal, employing in an existential sense the literary convention which allows voices to live and write at the same time, thereby gaining the immediacy of the diary (an inherently fragmented medium) and the
credibility inherent in a deliberate attempt to organize from within metabolic chaos a series of illuminations:

L'opium permet de donner forme à l'informe; il empêche, hélas! de communiquer ce privilège à autrui. Quitte à perdre le sommeil, je guetterai le moment unique d'une désintoxication où cette faculté fonctionnera encore un peu et coïncidera, par mégarde, avec le retour du pouvoir communicatif. (151-52)

Cocteau bears witness of an ineffable world untamed by literary convention and hardly affected by medical knowledge. In *Opium* Cocteau attempts the genuine form of withdrawal as distinct from the reflective histories of addiction that we have seen thus far.

As with the confession in general, *Opium* addresses the social world; it attains its explicit purpose insofar as it is explicable as a field report originating in extreme circumstances. Objective perception is an end in itself, the result of a desire to serve the medical profession:

Il faut laisser une trace de ce voyage que la mémoire oublie, il faut, lorsque c'est possible, écrire, dessiner sans répondre aux invites romanesques de la douleur, ne pas profiter de la souffrance comme d'une musique, se faire attacher le porte-plume au pied si c'est nécessaire, aider les médecins que la paresse ne renseigne pas. (26)
Cocteau, in hoping "arriver au style des chiffres," repeats his conviction on a stylistic level that his function in *Opium* is to express in the most pellucid manner possible physical and psychic phenomena as he experiences them:

> J'ai voulu prendre des notes au fur et à mesure de mon séjour à la clinique, et surtout me contredire, afin de suivre les étapes du traitement. Il importait de parler de l'opium sans gêne, sans littérature et sans aucune connaissance médicale. (131)

As with *Naked Lunch*, however, *Opium*'s intentions belie its effects. Despite Cocteau's claim that *Opium* belongs "entre les brochures de médecins," he cannot escape the metaphoric possibilities in withdrawal, which is to say that he cannot speak of withdrawal "sans littérature."

The assurance of objectivity—the hope of assisting science and successful cure—serves as a convention of drug literature, as a means of establishing credibility. With Cocteau, however, objectivity actually (rather than hypothetically, as with Ludlow) acts as an element of form, suggesting a metabolic stoicism akin to Baudelaire ("La vie se passe avec trop de perfectionnement, de confort" [75]) and also to Hemingway in the sense that stylistic control operates as a method of self-defense, as a mirror reflection of berserk anxiety. It is in Cocteau's pretence that he is,
or can be, perfectly objective that we know we are reading literature.

"J'écris ces lignes après douze jours et douze nuits sans sommeil" (19), Cocteau admits early on in Opium. Initially a piece of data (ie. withdrawing addicts experience insomnia) this admission from the patient, if taken seriously, eventually brings his analytic faculty into question (has he really not slept for twelve days? is that possible? has he counted right? is he lucid?) and reminds us that instead of a machine imparting data the patient achieves moments of lucidity to mark the flight of "une blessure au ralenti." Reminiscent of the Dreamer in Chaucer's "The Book of the Duchess" (or, for that matter, Jake Barnes, who also has trouble sleeping), the patient in Opium has suffered so violently that something must happen to resolve an unendurable physical and mental grief, one compact with madness. De Quincey attempts to dissociate himself from the radical dislocations of withdrawal while he is writing, promotes in doing so an authorial calm. Cocteau, on the other hand, finds in the perspective of the wakeful sufferer a special licence to fancy which contradicts his earnest proclamation that "Je verse des pièces à charge et a décharge au dossier du procès de l'opium" (13). Rather Cocteau murders the
solipsistic hedonism, the wonderful solitude created by opium; he spills over the page; like Chopin and Rousseau, he "saigne de l'encre."

This is not to cry bad faith between Cocteau and his readers--"aux fumeurs, aux malades, aux amis inconnus que les lives recrutent et qui sont la seule excuse d'écrire" (13). On the contrary, the truth of withdrawal demands grotesque fancy, paradox, fugitive attempts to say in words what cannot be said in words. Any anatomy of withdrawal must take fragmentation as the truth of the experience; that the patient organizes his impressions into a coherent structure both suggests his desire to return to the social world and, more importantly, his instinct to instigate a form whereby his experience can be understood. "I apparently took detailed notes on sickness and delirium," Burroughs observes (italics mine). Cocteau too emphasizes the idea that the notes which make up Opium exist on the verge of extinction: "La sueur, la bile précédent quelque substance fantôme qui se serait dissoute sans laisser d'autre traces qu'une grosse dépression, si un porte-plume ne l'avait canalisée, lui prétant volume et contour" (246). Withdrawal forms such a distinguished reality that it cannot even be remembered when the cure is effected. The notes thereby exist as anterior to the automatic repression
which is cure; the notes--forgotten, random, fragmented evidence of ordeal--contribute to Cocteau's understanding of withdrawal as a literary possibility.

Cocteau does not necessarily always innovate, however. He employs the traditional main feature of drug literature: withdrawal as spiritual warfare, devil and angel each with an arm. Cocteau cannot help but recall the archetypal image of withdrawal, the image which provokes fascination and disgust--exorcism.

On épuise le malade, on le vidange, on pousse la bile et, bon gré mal gré, on retourne aux légendes qui voulaient qu'on chassât les démons par des plantes, des charmes, des purges, des vomitifs. (25)

Cocteau's special irony is that instead of the devil clawing at his entrails, the memory of heaven beguiles his mind. "N'attendez pas de moi que je trahisse," he warns. "Naturellement l'opium reste unique et son euphorie supérieure à celle de la santé. Je lui dois mes heures parfaites" (25). Cocteau mourns for the slowness of opium:

Je ne suis pas un désintoxiqué fier de son effort. J'ai honte d'être chassé de ce monde auprès duquel la santé ressemble aux films ignobles où des ministres inaugurent une statue. (100)

The price of the cure is the unremitting contemplation of
opium, "l'inquiétude amoureuse traduite dans le sensible" (89). When Cocteau no longer needs to write about opium, he is cured. "Il faudrait que j'invente" (246). Withdrawal is a cellular compulsion, "une absence qui règne, un despotisme négatif" (89), which is at the beginning irresistible and at the end forgotten beyond remembering, leaving the sufferer "vide, pauvre, écoeuré, malade" (261).

And yet possibly more self-aware than he had been. Perhaps the most important aspect of Opium in terms of its extension of drug conventions is the use of withdrawal as a mode of personal flashback, revealing in momentary epiphanies unknown sources of nostalgia. "A mild degree of junk sickness always brought me the magic of childhood," Burroughs writes. Cocteau also experiences in withdrawal the "retour de la mémoire et du sentiment du temps (même chez moi où ils existent très peu à l'état normal)" (159). His memories of Proust, though structurally situated to literally perform the return of memory, do not seem remarkable in the course of the journal—Picasso, Satie, childhood scenes, dogs, the theater, anything and everything inform Cocteau's unloosed memory. Paralleling De Quincey's concentration on memory in his analysis of opium, Cocteau evokes the image of the sufferer who in withdrawal recontacts animal life as well as the revealing past, thus adding a
dimension to withdrawal as a state of being, suggesting a hypnotic state where the psychological truth may be told. As with yage, which, according to Burroughs, "specifically reproduces the state of withdrawal," withdrawal imparts a sense of travel through memory, independent of will or invention, and therefore mysteriously true. About *De Profundus*: "On quitte cette lettre avec l'impression d'avoir lu un chef-d'oeuvre de style, parce que tout y est vrai . . ." (14-17). Without the use of memory as an element of form *Opium* would be poetic, sadly philosophical. Sickness afflicted with involuntary memory adds the dramatic, the psychological.

It is impossible to deduce for certain why Cocteau must leave opium, except to observe that the inexorable demands of work move Cocteau (as they did Baudelaire) back and forth between opium and the cure: "Le travail qui m'exploite avait besoin de l'opium; il avait besoin que je quittasse l'opium; une fois de plus je suis sa dupe" (262). Opium, then, disengages from contaminative, but at times productive, life: "Il arrive au fumeur d'être un chef-d'oeuvre. Un chef-d'oeuvre qui ne se discute pas. Chef-d'oeuvre parfait, parce que fugitif, sans forme et sans juges" (115). The attempt to impose form on himself with his notes from withdrawal indicates that Cocteau in curing
himself from addiction must kill the perfection he once lived in: opium, like heroin in the *Diary*, signifies a transcendent death, warm and motionless, while the cure represents exaggerated hurry, speed, "tout un printemps affole les veines, charriant glaces et laves de feu" (23). The style of opium would involve "des vitesses qui arrivent à l'immobilité" (81), whereas the style of cure would break consequential logic and ultimately (one presumes) syntax. It is possible that Cocteau withdrew from opium so that he could write this journal. Opium can be considered as an avant-garde experiment in language, a linguistic study of the effects of speed. Or as a predatory execution of a state of being.

Proust's accomplishment testifies to the power of the image of the invalid violated by memory and time. Cocteau guts this image in terms of withdrawal. Perhaps more sensitive to the nuances of delirium, Burroughs would carry on the angle of vision first seized by Cocteau. And yet Burroughs connects at some vital point with all these junkies who preceded him. Burroughs shares with Crowley that messianic mission, at once profound and lunatic, and also that aura of unspeakable evil. And with Lee (perhaps the most central, after all) Burroughs displays gravitational kinship: the lone traveller and the mad scientist, searching for the final kick, eternally on the look out.
Chapter 4

ADDICTION, CRIME, AND PRISON

Boosters, pimps, bunko men—American justice coaches them as carefully for their roles as it does its detectives, lawyers, and judges. In the pillory or on the third page of the morning edition, the criminal unlucky enough to be caught performs a crucial part in the daily ritual which sustains the effectiveness of authority, as well as the pertinency of the pieties which support it. Concisely, "Crime brings together upright consciences and concentrates them." Though the dramatic exploitation of the addict as a community sacrifice does not begin in earnest until the early 1920's, the association of addiction with a criminal predilection was already firmly implanted in the public mind by the turn of the century. The image of the addict moves from the gorgeous sensitivity of De Quincey to the dirgeful invalidism of the late 19th century to the rapacious degeneracy connected with the "criminal mentality" of the 20th century. Alfred Lindesmith analyzes one result:
It is interesting to note that crime is sometimes explained in terms of psychopathic personality just as drug addiction is. We may note also that those who seek to prove psychopathy among drug addicts cite criminality as evidence of it, while those who are interested in demonstrating the psychopathy of criminals cite addiction as supporting evidence.  

In this way psychological guesswork accompanies the historical transformation of the addict into a criminal by necessity and by decree. In reality, economic considerations have forced the addict out into the streets and make of successful thieving the concomitant to addiction. But in this advance from the invalid's couch to the street corner and the prison cell, the nature of narcotic addiction changes. These are different people living under different social conditions. The modern addict resists public pressures which the genteel generations of addicts would have considered heartless beyond comprehension.

Crowley, Lee, and Cocteau never descend to the typically grayish American experience of drug addiction. The conditions of their lives never made it necessary to live within skid row ghettos patrolled by predatory narcotics agents. This is not to say that Crowley and Lee do not deplore the implications of the Dangerous Drug Act, or that Cocteau is not cognizant of the fugitive status of the opium smoker. Nevertheless, they never display that crouched awareness
of authority which is to become the standard feature of
the modern literature dealing with addiction. Leroy Street,
for example, describes a recurring dream while within the
deep coma induced by the hyoscine cure for addiction:
"Finally, just as I located a hypodermic and actually had
it in my hands, gigantic members of the narcotics squad
bulging with muscles battered down the door and pinned me
to the floor." This nightmare of the intruding agents
occurs frequently in Burroughs, notably in the Hauser and
O'Brien section of Naked Lunch, where Burroughs takes sweet
fantasy revenge. Regular incarceration imposes new disci­
plines on the urban addict, aptitudes which distinguish
him from his composed and aloof foreign fellow addicts: "I
have learned the cellular stoicism that junk teaches the
user," Burroughs observes. "I have seen a cell full of
sick junkies silent and immobile in separate misery."

With the exception of Cocteau, the regular use of opiates
has been discussed thus far in terms of the accepted medical
usage of the 19th and even 20th centuries. As has been
noticed, most addicts were created as a result of poor
judgement on the part of physicians. Addicts took their
chosen drug--opium, morphine, laudanum, or whatever it might
be--either orally or by hypodermic injection. It is a
matter of history, however, that from the 1870's on there
were a significant number of people who exclusively smoked opium and who guarded a tradition directly opposed to the lamentable victims of medical malpractice: "The opium smoker of the nineteenth century belonged to an elite underworld group which despised and generally avoided all contact with the hypodermic user or 'opium eater' of respectable society." A contemporary authority reports that opium smokers tended to be wayward "sporting characters" who responded to the secrecy and silent affability of the opium joint traditionally run by a discreet Chinaman:

Men and woman, young girls, virtuous or just commencing a downward career, hardened prostitutes, representatives of the "hoodlum" element, young clerks and errand boys who could ill afford the waste of time and money, and young men who had no work to do were to be found smoking together in the back rooms of laundries in the low, pestilential dens of Chinatown, reeking with filth and overrun with vermin, in the cellars of drinking saloons, and in houses of prostitution.

The sensational physical and moral degradations evoked by opium smoking became a fixed point in the public mind. The drug's influence and the conditions existing in the opium den understandably became a source of prurient interest. Older addicts supposedly took advantage of the aphrodisiac properties of opium to have their way with virtuous young girls: "Female smokers, if not already
lost in point of virtue, soon become so." Cobbe comments on the sink of iniquity itself: "The surroundings are always repulsive and the inmates are criminals or petty offenders against police regulations. They are ignorant, illiterate, vulgar, brutal, and wicked." Furthermore, because smoking opium did not have any place in medical usage, the image of the malevolent friend or the vicious prostitute initiating the unsuspecting victim begins to form as a function of this particular kind of opiate addiction. Factors such as these contributed to the idea that smoking opium spreads through a community like typhoid and for obvious hygienic reasons must be scoured away. One sensible physician of Virginia City, Nevada, writes about smoking opium in the early 1880's: "The habit grew very rapidly, until it reached young women of more mature age, when the necessity for stringent measures became apparent, and was met by the passing of a city ordinance." 

The story goes that the first Caucasian to smoke opium in America did so in 1868 in San Francisco and that the second smoked in 1871 at the prompting of the first. No matter how that was, in one decade one would be able to serve time in Nevada for maintaining or patronizing an opium den, or for mere possession of smoking opium. In California the punishment for a first offense of the
smoking opium laws was a fine of $50, but for the second offense the punishment was $500 and six months in jail. Even the price of smoking opium reflected public disapproval: the duty on a pound of regular opium was $1 whereas the duty for smoking opium was $6. Significantly, the first piece of legislation levelled at the drug problem was the ban on the importation of smoking opium in 1909. Though legislation could never wipe out such a popular practice, city ordinances and state laws harassed the opium smoker and prepared the way for national regulation. The punitive mentality of American justice toward heroin addiction finds its precedence in the 19th century's class-conscious attitude toward the practice of smoking opium.

By 1910 local and federal pressures had forced the opium joints deeply underground. It is hardly coincidental that about this time heroin (discovered in 1898 and thought not habit-forming) began to achieve popularity with the men and women about town. Referring to the year 1912, Street writes, "There was no law against the sale of heroin, for it was still regarded chiefly as a cough medicine. Anyone with the price could go into nearly any drug store and buy a packet of the pure drug." As with smoking opium, there was a pattern of seduction involving naive youth and the cynical machinations of an elderly addict:
"Oftentimes one old addict will corrupt at one sitting ten or twenty boys." Where the West had initiated the smoking of opium, the gangs of dissolute young men in New York appear to have introduced the practice of snorting heroin. Of course the use of the hypodermic would follow when the supply of heroin tightened on the black market, but the disreputable people snorting heroin served as a bridge in the public mind between the opium smokers of the past century and the junkies of the 20's. The young and predominantly male addicts of the early 20th century sought a narcotic which would supply the same comforts that smoking opium had for the last forty years. In choosing heroin, they make the unfortunate exchange of a warm room for a windy street.

With the passage of state laws (New York's Boylan Law, for example) and finally the Harrison Act in 1914, the black market began to feature narcotic drugs other than smoking opium. Naturally, the prices went up and the quality of the drugs went down. It was still relatively easy to obtain heroin, but there was clearly a public consciousness of addiction which presaged sterner attempts to wipe out the virulent disease. After a variety of dismal attempts to cure addicts through public means (Street describes one such hyoscine cure in New York), maintenance clinics had
a few years to prove themselves capable of answering the problem; despite some loyal support, they were closed down by the Narcotic Division, the clinic in Shreveport hanging on until early 1923. By this time the right of the doctor to prescribe narcotics to his patient-addict had disappeared; prescribing drugs to an addict was not "a legitimate purpose." It was illegal for addicts to have drugs in their possession unless the drugs had been prescribed, which was impossible unless the doctor involved put his common humanity (or his avarice) above the risk of a jail sentence. Only elderly addicts incapable of withdrawing were exempt from these unethical implications of the Harrison Act, which in reality was designed as a means of regulating the drug traffic rather than creating a new criminal class.12

Though a rather slight short story, "A Modern Opium Eater" illustrates the traditional conception of the smoking of opium as a police problem. The implication of the title is that the De Quincey of today is an editor from San Francisco who smokes opium, steals in order to maintain his habit, and ends up a member of a criminal gang. Suitably, this tale was published in 1914, the year of the Harrison Act. Stories such as this groomed addicts to be the staple of the penitentiary system.
If he were not in prison, the Editor's account would begin conventionally enough. He warns of the rapidly spreading habit: not only San Francisco but "every other great city in the country . . . numbers its 'fiends' by thousands and tens of thousands." He fires up the old machinery when describing the devil who has once possessed him: "For five years there has not been a day, scarcely an hour, during which my mind and body have not been under the influence of the most subtle and insidious of drugs" (121). The extraordinary difference in the Editor's story from his predecessors', however, is that his credibility maintains itself because he has withdrawn from opium—but his social standing can never return. Opium has taken him to the other side and left him there: "To-day I am a convict serving my second penitentiary sentence—a 'two-time loser' in the language of the underworld, my world now" (121). Addiction seems to be unpardonable, leaving only the underworld to house the addict. All the penance in the world cannot rectify this social mutiny equivalent with the decision to commit systematic crime.

Opium, according to the Editor, not only necessitates itself, it works on the individual in such a way as to predispose him to the commission of crime:

I had been a user of opium about eight
months when I first began to realize a mental change in myself--a new moral viewpoint, so to speak. I handled a story of the arrest of a criminal with real regret, while the news of a clever crime with the perpetrators safely at liberty was a personal gratification. (125-26)

Though in one sense a restatement of De Quincey's more than passing interest in the art of murder, the Editor's interest in crime does not remain that of a scholarly bystander. The intermediate stage of addiction throws up a kind of Sherlock Holmes sans moral tone. For instance, the Editor solves a crime which has the police baffled, but he helps the criminal to escape to the Orient (of all places) after he discovers the thief to be a brother opium smoker. The Editor explains his signal success in this instance with the following conclusion:

Take two men of similar intellects and propound a problem, preferably in criminality. If both men are users of opium their minds will arrive at exactly the same result by exactly the same mental processes. I have tested it scores of times and the results were the same nineteen times out of twenty. (128)

Opium, then, constructs cruel back alleyways in the human brain: "Opium-made plans, plots, inspirations--call them what you will--are devious, tricky, shrewd because of their abnormality" (128). For this reason "a normal brain and
an opium brain have nothing in common" (128). The Editor proposes an opium species endowed with one weapon which protects it from deserved annihilation—unpredictable cunning.

The Chinaman rules over one sector of the underworld as both traditional purveyor of smoking opium and resident sage. Predictably, the Editor smokes opium for the first time in Chinatown. He eventually buys his own layout when the expense of smoking out becomes prohibitive. Thinking he can quit at any time, the Editor hears "the wisdom of ages" from the ancient addict who cooks his pills (and who the Editor calls Lee): "Bimeby maybe you go to jail, no got friend bling you hop, not got money given policeman catchem hop, you quit" (125). The old Chinaman predicts the future exactly, but the Editor blithely descends down the opium ladder: "I laughed at his warning. Had I but known it, the wisdom of ages, the experiences of untold thousands of wrecked lives were summed up in the halting words I allowed to pass me unheeded" (125). The Chinaman functions as the spokesman and symbol for addiction to smoking opium, as well as representative of the quality of the human mind saturated with the accursed drug. Racial intolerance sharpened itself on the image of the Chinaman as the curator of the moral abyss of opium. Jack
Black recalls a particularly illustrative moment from San Francisco at the turn on the century:

About ten o'clock there was a stir in the hall and several police came in with Chinese from a gambling-house raid. This was before they had cut off their queues, and instead of handcuffing their prisoners the cops came in driving the silent, stolid Chinese before them like charioteers. Each cop had the tails of three Chinemen's queues in each hand.

The Editor maintains that the opium addict (and, by implication, the shifty Chinese) would be invulnerable if he were not a slave to his habit. The slavering need imposed by addiction flushes the opium smoker out into the open where he can be found stinking in his own hydrophobic bestiality. Though dangerous, "an opium smoker suffering for the drug and lacking the money to buy what alone can still the frightful agony in nerve and limb is as simple as a coot" (128-29). As soon as the hungry smoker smokes, however, the opium mentality gains sway, "like a guardian, a mentor, pointing out reprovingly the folly of that same mind, committed while in want of opium" (131). And this susurrant Socrates listens for the heavy shoes outside the door:

But now, opium once again having made me as near normal as was possible, I sensed danger, imminent, immediately impending.
It was not alone the knowledge of guilt, it was something more definite, something intuitive. In the underworld there is a species of foresight termed "hophead hunches." They are regarded with superstitious awe the country over. (132)

Despite this highly developed alert system, however, the Editor proposes incarceration as the terminal function of withdrawal. After leaving journalism, "I occupied myself with prizefight promotion, gambling clubs and stock tricks, all verging on swindles, but permeated with the subtleness of the drug that created them" (130). But opium drags its victim even lower: "And now I was ripe for the final stage of the opium habit--criminality" (130). Out of need for opium, the Editor forges some checks and ends up serving a year sentence in prison. He has proved himself "right" to the other inmates and joins a gang of opium smokers on his release: "I was discharged, uncured of the drug habit, and returned to society a hundredfold more dangerous a menace than before" (131). They run out of drugs and earn another sentence in prison, where the Editor writes his confession.

The Editor draws an ideal polarity between the two prisons where he has served time. In the first, he received all the opium he needed: "I lived in an environment and under conditions, both moral and physical, that create
criminals instead of correcting them" (131). But in this second one, things are run on the square; he was given assistance during withdrawal, and now, a cured man, he thanks the providence that led him to this cell: "I am the fourth man I have ever known who has escaped--if I have escaped. Each of the four was saved exactly as I have been, in an institution like this . . . " (135).

The Editor's story promotes the treatment of addiction with prison sentences which was to be a practical fact of life for thousands of addicts in the future. It had not been so until this time. As federal and state prison rosters swelled with junkies in the 20's and 30's, the conclusion that addiction demanded some kind of institutional quarantining became a fixed article of faith, and that lacking unique facilities for such a purpose, it fell upon the prisons of the United States to separate from society such a contaminative and subversive deviancy.16

Though perhaps psychologically linked with such Civil War horrors as Andersonville, the modern penitentiary system symbolizes the change from the erratic mob justice of the frontier to the implacable authority of urban civil justice. Monotony and detention replace violence and expulsion. And naturally, the composition of the criminal class changes as the execution of civil control changes.
More reliable means of detecting and prosecuting crime (a development for which Pinkerton is the obvious symbol) force the frontier soldier-criminal tutored by Quantrill to develop radical cautions. Jack Black describes this new criminal type responsive to a technological police force already employing the Bertillon system and not far away from fingerprinting:

He is silent, secretive, wary; forever traveling, always a night "worker." He shuns the bright lights, seldom straying far from his kind, never coming to the surface. Circulating through space with his always-ready automatic, the yegg rules the underworld of criminals. (5)

In You Can't Win Black recalls the period in the West from roughly 1890 to 1914. Raised in the post-Civil War frontier, (the cowardly murder of Jesse James was the disaster of his boyhood), the young Black feeds off the callousness and the sense of honor which accompanied the Civil War's memory. Motherless ("There is no substitute for the home and the mother" [3] he avows) and left by his father to shift for himself in hotels and rooming houses, Black's yearning for adventure, excited by dime novels and the examples of men around him, leads him to the road at the age of sixteen. But in direct contrast to Huck, who is also motherless and adventurous, Black,
before his life on the road even begins, has worked for
a corrupt barkeeper-politician, for a cigar store fronting
for a gambling joint in the back, and as a messenger
collecting bills from the "parlor houses" in the Tenderloin.
Hannibal exists in another realm altogether from Black's
Kansas City. Sporting people and shady enterprise prepare
Black for a partnership in the "yeggs"--an amorphous migrant
society haphazardly congregating at railroad junctions,
dance halls, wine dumps, gambling joints, and Chinese
laundries. The brave journey to San Francisco ends in a
ten year period of addiction. The Chinaman closes the
door behind him when (and it is every night) the electric
tension of crime--entering a hotel room, rifling trousers,
pulling off rings, planting the stolen articles--can only
be released by six or eight pills of opium.

Years before addiction, however, Black joins a way of
life on the road which organizes such diverse elements
as yeggs, bindle stiffs, migrant workers, brass peddlers,
and plain thieves. The first day Black begins to learn
a new language transmitted willingly by talkative and
kindly bums:

"I was just after gettin' a six months
floater out of Denver an' went down to
Pueblo to do a little D.D.ing with
lavender for myself. I got myself a
bunch of lavender and ducat."

The other bum laughed, his mouth full of chicken. "You're talking Chinook to that kid. What does he know about the D.D. and ducats."

"You're right," I said. "I don't know what he is talking about." I was anxious to learn, but didn't like asking questions. (69)

Prison, however, is the Academy of criminal science, the source of both indispensable knowledge and loyal contacts. Prison produces the teachers who drill Black in the basic implications of being "right."

I thought in terms of theft. Houses were built to be burglarized, citizens were to be robbed, police to be avoided and hated, stool pigeons to be chastised, and thieves to be cultivated and protected. That was my code; the code of my companions. (69)

In the disciplined conduct of the professional thief, Black discovers the radical security which follows from a code of ethics based on vital contact between men. Under conditions of uniform anonymity, the fundamental question (right or wrong?) gets answered quickly and unerringly.

Black's teachers guard their manifest identities in a number of ways. None of them retains his family name. Each employs a "monoger" (from monogram and possibly the derivation of moniker): Black takes courses from the Smiler, the Sanctimonious Kid, Soldier Johnny, Foot-and-a-half George,
and, by example, Salt Chunk Mary (a madam and fence "righter than April rain"). Like Lee, this patrician class of the underworld resists formal classification. Foot-and-a-half George: "His eyes were small and cunning. They looked as if they had been taken out, fried in oil, and put back. Dead, pale blue and expressionless, they gave no hint of the cunning, always-busy brain behind them" (109). The Sanctimonious Kid warns Black that "ninety-nine men out of a hundred are picked up through some peculiarity of dress and identified by the same" (139). And like Bill Gains ("He was positively invisible; a vague respectable presence"), Soldier Johnny "was born lucky. His face and figure were neutral. A hard man to pick up on his description. Medium size and weight. After one look at him you couldn't say whether his hair was brown or black, whether his eyes were gray or blue" (111). Even in dying the thief takes his identity with him. When George gets shot after robbing a safe, "Nobody claimed the dead man's body and he was buried unnamed and unknown" (215). As Black proves to himself many times, the criminal's only defense is his silence.

You Can't Win preserves the atmosphere of the underworld before the War, repressive anti-drug laws, and Prohibition. Black looks back on the old Barbary Coast as the Rome of Western vice:
Those were the days when there were saloons by the thousand; when the saloon keeper ordered the police to pinch the Salvation Army for disturbing the peace by singing hymns in the street; when there were race tracks, gambling unrestricted, crooked prize fights; when there were cribs by the mile and hop joints by the score. (338)

Young Black prowls the dives of San Francisco and first smokes opium ("the Judas of drugs," as he comes to call it) in Chinatown: "Curiosity was my only excuse for my first 'smoke.' It made me very sick, and although I became a smoker after, it was years before I touched the pipe again" (141). Nevertheless, Black notices the integral part that opium plays in the composition of the underworld. In San Francisco, for example:

The Tenderloin was saturated with opium. The fumes of it, streaming out of the Baltimore House at the corner of Bush and Grant, struck the nostrils blocks away. Every room in it was tenanted by hop smokers. The police did not molest them. (140)

In a Chinese laundry in Chicago, "Thieves, pickpockets, and pimps and their girls smoked unmolested day or night" (217). When Black does begin to smoke regularly, he adopts a well-established means of pleasure and relaxation in the underworld.

While not exactly allies, the criminal and the Chinaman
find themselves in common cause against prying authorities. On the subject of buying a gun (a .38, of course, because it is the most common) the Sanctimonious Kid says, "'The Chinks are safe to do any kind of business with, buying or selling. They don't talk'" (138). The yegg prizes adamant descretion over any other virtue, and the Chinaman has it in abundance. The criminal smoker could find in a Chinese laundry the promise of security which a life without a home and a name makes practically impossible. The only domestic detail in You Can't Win involves Chinese living quarters in Vancouver:

The place was a big loft. The foggy air was hot, stifling, and laden with every Chinese smell—opium, tobacco, fish, and damp clothes drying. Chinamen were cooking, eating, smoking hop, gambling, or sleeping in curtained bunks that lined the walls. (237-38)

Black admits that after a robbery "I always had to hunt up a hop joint and roll myself a few pills, 'just for the good of my nerves'" (287). It is as good as coming home. Cocteau writes: "Un des prodiges de l'opium est de changer instantanément une chambre inconnue en une chambre si familière, si pleine de souvenirs, qu'on pense l'avoir occupée toujours." Opium and the Chinaman's home produce the significant continuity in Black's life as a criminal—
his sole connection with the frontier Catholic school where he had been a child especially eager to say his prayers. Opium conjures innocence: "For ten years I had never gone to sleep without taking it. I owed to it all the sleep, all the rest and forgetfulness and contentment I had had in that time" (372). The acute, cumulative anxieties of the professional thief find temporary surcease in the domestic safety of the Chinese family.

Besides the sedative value of the opium den, Black considers opium as a means of arriving at criminal plans, though he is less enthusiastic on the subject than the Editor. Black runs across hop smokers who present plans which in retrospect seem fanciful; reality is never "altogether the rosy dream of a hop fiend" (242). Such a plan leads him to try chloroform as an aid to burglary and proves to himself that this technique belongs in novels and in opium dreams, the two deriving from similar departures from cold fact: "As an agent for stupefying a sleeping person without waking him, I maintain, in spite of the opinions of fiction writers and romancing thieves, 'it can't be done'" (249). Earlier the Sanctimonious Kid instructs Black, "'You've read a lot of books about criminals, but forget it all'" (141). Nevertheless, Black cooks up at least one plan which barely keeps alive the superstition
that the opium smoker harbors an especially tricky and
intuitive slant upon criminal problems:

A moderate quantity of opium will not
inflame or distort the imagination. I
do not say it is an aid to clear thinking,
but it is a fact that I left the laundry
with what I thought, and still think, was
nothing less than an inspiration. (304)

Generally, however, Black does not show any interest in
proving opium to be instinct with crime--he began to
steal well before he ever smoked.

Similarly, Black punctures the pigeon-breasted rhetoric
of the more sheltered opium-eater. Gone are the ineffable
pangs. In fact, Black insists that the distress associated
with withdrawal exists primarily on a mental plane. Knowing
that opium is destroying his health, he withdraws from
opium by himself in a rooming house, assisted by a more
compelling obsession: "It would have been a good deal
harder to quit if I hadn't had that fear of jail always
before me. That took my mind off the opium" (373). And
in Folsom Prison, Black kicks a habit of years standing
while being punished with a straitjacket: "I had an opium
habit, but suffered so much from the jacket that I forgot
all about the hop--another proof to me that the habit is
mostly mental" (364). He displays a "cellular stoicism"
which cannot refer to the whining, heroical metaphors
with which addiction had composed withdrawal in the 19th century. The dismal ashram where it all began controls Black's mind in a way that the claims of withdrawal on the flesh cannot.

By the time he makes his promise to go straight, Black has served sentences in New Westminster, Folsom, Alcatraz, and a variety of local jails. Most of his criminal years have been spent in prison. Far from making opium unavailable, however, prison affirms the use, and principle, of opium: in prison narcotics become a political and economic factor—the way to kill time. In Folsom, for example, "Opium was the medium of exchange in the prison. About three hundred men used it habitually and a hundred more, occasionally. Incoming prisoners smuggled money in and we bribed the poorly paid guards to buy hop at Sacramento" (357). Naturally, "I joined the schemers and soon had my share of power and influence" (358). The desire to escape from prison finds its vendible substitute in opium-sleep: "For years in the jail I had slept away all the time I could; I had slept ten or twelve or fourteen hours a day" (373). As in Lee's Orient, opium proves a means of adjustment to one's environment—a means to cold vigilance and warm reveries of security.

Though the story of a reformation, You Can't Win will
be remembered as a picaresque travel book of crime. Whatever he suffers on the road to his final confession of guilt to a jury, the loyalties of other thieves make up the human content of his life. Burroughs explains his early attraction to anti-social gestures and secret partners:

At this time I was greatly impressed by an autobiography of a burglar, called You Can't Win. The author claimed to have spent a good part of his life in jail. It sounded good to me compared with the dullness of a Midwest Suburb where all contact with life was shut out.\textsuperscript{19}

Burroughs puts the finger on Black as the De Quincey of crime, while also without apparent irony conceiving of the prison-crime-opium matrix as a means of freedom. Black's retirement to his law-abiding library would have seemed to the young Burroughs to be lacking the vital contact evident in his life as a thief and convict; Black's thirteen year stint of legitimacy between the writing of the book and the events which the book describes figure as the only real prison sentence he has ever served.

Thankfully, however, Black does not turn completely white when he retires from crime and the hop joint. His old underworld cronies visit him from time to time in the library where he works. Occasionally he finds himself gazing fondly at a rack of rings in the display window
of a jewelry store. He also recognizes and accepts the bar sinister that disfigures his face: "I can't remember a time that any woman, young or old, ever stopped me on the street and asked me to be directed" (1). Black's conversion to the ordinary program is a retirement from an exhausting advocacy, but one that does not signal some attainment of the domestic integration he never had. Probably still celibate, he occupies a cell in the Puerta Vallarta of prisons, the Baden of opium dens. "I have no money, no wife, no auto. I have no dog. I have neither a radio set nor a rubber plant--I have no troubles" (394). The strange unworldliness of the criminal-convict still finds expression in the librarian's life: "Habit is the strongest thing in life . . ." (385).

Leroy Street, writing in 1953 about a period long past, also cannot escape the evidence of his life as a heroin addict in New York:

Dope is out of my life and has been for a long time. Yet whenever I go to a bathing beach, I try to hide the tiny blue marks of the hypo needle which form a dotted tattoo on my legs. That brand of the drug addict has made it impossible for me to sprawl at ease in the sun after a swim. Other people have scars and are not self-conscious, but I can't get over the feeling that everyone would recognize mine for what they are. (4)
And the fear of persecution resulting from his thirteen year addiction erupts nightly in his dreams:

I am caught with the drug and the needle hidden on me, dragged to the station house, flung into a cell. I suffer all the anguish and the torments of the arrested addict—and then I wake up, sometimes screaming with fear, always drenched in perspiration. (4-5)

But no matter how mortified Street professes to be over his addiction, it still remains that it all happened twenty-seven years ago: "Our eldest will be graduated from high school next year, and if there are any prouder parents in the world, I don't know them" (244). Street's and Black's reformations form a natural duality: Black aspires to a state of grace, and Street wants desperately to be a good father and citizen—"I've done some of the most satisfying work of my life in an organization which provides recreation facilities for the sort of kid I used to be before I got on the dope" (245).

With I Was A Drug Addict, the firsthand story of addiction moves from the back rooms of Chinese laundries to the front stoops of New York, from the opium smoking thief of the West to the heroin snorting city tough of the East. Street is a teenager in Greenwich Village when Black in his middle thirties retires to his library. It is a crucial difference
in time and place. Significantly, a friend warns Black against going to New York:

"Almost all the thieves belong to gangs—the Irish, the Jews, and the dagoes. They fight each other, but they make common cause against an outsider, especially if he's from the West, and they'll know you in a minute with your soft hat and your Western talk." (219)

Street, on the other hand, is New York, born and raised. He leaves the city only to make for the most part futile attempts at cure—searching for the healing properties of the country and the moral influence of work. Street reverses Black's pattern of constant travel with occasional stays in large cities. And more importantly, the lessons of modern addiction—how best to plant your works in a safe bathroom, how to avoid the newly founded narcotics agents, how to diagnose an addict stool pigeon—supersede the offensive, disciplined code of the professional thief who may or may not have smoked opium. The sense of coherent society persists among heroin addicts, though it is barbarized somewhat by the need for the drug. A funeral for a friend, for example, is an opportunity to search his bathroom for his plant, as well as a chance to gossip about new drug connections with friends. By recovering what amounts to the gaslight period of heroin addiction, Street locates
the major shift in the drug world from the sordid but relatively unmolested dive to the bathrooms and street corners of the major cities.

As moral history, *I Was A Drug Addict* confirms stock notions on the etiology and the effects of addiction. For instance, Street lingers lovingly on his portrait of the elderly addict-seducer as an inexplicable vampire who arouses the fear and loathing usually reserved for infant kidnappers or occult murderers. Street puts forth the by-now-antiquated law: "Behind every new 'dope fiend' is an older one who for one reason or another brings the neophyte into a group of what might be called established addicts" (7). Though it is commonly understood that pushers infect new addicts in order to create customers, Street takes his first snort of heroin at the prodding of a charming older man, John Devon, who would have considered it degrading to sell drugs. Lee (as, ironically enough, his friends call him) steps up to take his first blow, not because Devon hopes to make any money out of him, but because the older man craves an audience, has to have one. He is an Ancient Mariner in expensive checkered pants, casting a spell of heroin over the unwary urchins who allow his eloquence, like carnival sounds, to pull them in. Street returns frequently to the image of the "high stoop" at
the Devons' and a dozen pale, sick boys hooked to heroin under gaslight, above them a turned-out rheumatic dandy wielding a snuff box of heroin with special style, talking famous addicts. Devon's malignity predicts Burroughs' Bill Gains, also from a well-to-do family:

Gains was one of the few junkies who really took a special pleasure in seeing non-users get a habit. . . . Gains liked to invite young kids up to his room and give them a shot, usually compounded of old "cottons," and then watch the effects, smiling his little smile.

And Gains usually begins his interminable routines after a shot, perhaps his disgusting daily bulletin on the condition of his bowels. Devon, on the other hand, "talked mostly of drugs and their history" (37). Even after forty years, Street cannot quite control his indignation: "What a world of suffering and disgrace might have been avoided if this evil panderer had been put behind bars for his crimes of debauching the young" (9).

Street remembers the period when public opinion, suckled on forty years of bizarre cautionary literature, first supported legislative attempts to regulate drug consumption. As would be usual, however, the threat of plague accompanied public scruples: "A wave of addiction among the stage people of the day, including several well-known
Broadway figures, had aroused the public and the authorities" (30). This kind of scare results in the Boylan Law in New York which in turn results in higher prices and another reason to fear the police, though "most of us had gained considerable experience in dodging cops through the petty thefts which kept us supplied" (92). Significantly, Street's childhood hero is "Legs" Diamond while they are both in reform school. With the enforcement of the drug legislation, however, it rapidly becomes clear that the addict is an especially vulnerable criminal when addiction itself is made a crime, since an addict must possess heroin in order to use it. The stoop changes from a history class to a survival field camp: "The talk at the Devon's was now all of tricks on both sides in the battle to avoid arrest, of the underground organization of the drug traffic, of possible stool pigeons" (103). Despite the best-laid plans, however, prison takes whomever death leaves behind.

Using relatively pure heroin—"The poison hit us hard and fast" (109)—the addict of Street's generation develops unmistakeable physical characteristics. The junkie stands out like a red tie or a funny hat; he has a shrunken body, a protruding skull, hollow cheeks. Reminiscent of Mr. Hyde, Street's clothes hang on his wasted body, and he pays no attention to physical hygiene. Narcotics agents easily
classify an addict on sight. During the War, the draft rejects Street on account of his obvious addiction, one of 80,000 to be refused for the same reason: "Small and skinny and obviously unhealthy, I couldn't get taken on even at the war plants" (191). Street promotes heroin addiction as a neighborhood blight which destroys young boys with staggering comprehensiveness: "Of more than 100 addicts in my neighborhood whom I knew, boys who acquired the habit a little sooner or a little later than I, all are dead except myself" (4).

Beyond the fatal physical deterioration incident to addiction, Street deplores the accompanying moral decay which Baudelaire noticed in opium and hashish use. The young junkie drops out of school; he steals from his long-suffering parents; he lies as a way of life. Street could have fulfilled his dream to be a commercial artist, "but the drugs seemed to draw a curtain between me and the future. I could not be bothered with thoughts of what might happen tomorrow or next week. I lived--and stole--for today" (38). The wasting of the will and the difficulty in working effectively that echo down through the literature involving addiction find enthusiastic expression in I Was A Drug Addict. Street relishes the slide from a normal boy interested in baseball to a degenerated specimen of urban offal in order
to illustrate the effects of heroin, tacitly agreeing with the narcotics agents who arrest him: "In their experience the junkies were hopeless cases, the scum of society, far worse than criminals" (172). By allowing heroin addiction to be with one exception uniformly devastating, Street contributes to the lurid tradition of films—"The Man With A Golden Arm" and "A Touch of Evil" for example—which Lenny Bruce has in mind when he asks, "Isn't there one producer in Hollywood with guts who's hooked who will do a picture showing the bright side of it? The well-adjusted narcotics user and his family."21

Heroin destroys human attachments, as Street illustrates again and again. Both of his brothers detest him for the weakness that turns him into a shifty thief and a trial to their mother. By negating responsible human loyalties, heroin negates the meaning of life—and the means of cure. Nevertheless, some unmutilated part of Street's intelligence moves him to care for a group of diphtheric children and, ultimately, to fall in love with a young woman who persuades him to go to church: "Love for those kids on the island, love for Elenore had added a missing element which provided a more powerful incentive to break the habit than any purely selfish desires to regain health and strength" (238). After thirteen years of addiction, Street stumbling upon
the components of cure: hearth and home rout the poison invader. Like many addicts before him, Street holds out the hope of cure while warning against that first temptation:

This is the testimony of my own life. I think of it first as a warning to those who may be saved from the first step of the innocent sniff of joy powder or puff of marijuana. But also it is proof that, through the development of those sentiments of affection and loyalty and service which we take too much for granted, there is no such thing as a hopeless case. (246)

The roles of business man, husband, father, and taxpayer flow naturally from the withdrawal of heroin from the junkie.

Street's personal cure may seem distinctly unreal, but the institutional cures which he undergoes seem as coarse as one could hope. Periodically, he enters the various institutions located in New York's East River: "I reflected gloomily that my life was a succession of trips on this oily passage which New Yorkers call a river. Hart's, Blackwell's and Riker's had all been tried, and had done me no good" (214). New York's civil administration reduces Ludlow's fantastic island to serviceable barns on Blackwell's Island where addicts undergo a hyoscine cure which puts the addict into a coma for seventy-two hours: he wakes up twenty pounds lighter, and cured. Street documents the addict's first
confrontation with the forbidding institutions designed to process him into a state of health. Street also documents the overpowering tendency to relapse, even after months of abstinence. Street's history of problematic cures based upon temporary abstinence suggests a much more intimate source of addiction than the stalwart moralists of addiction could have conceded as possible for anyone above the beast; Cobbe, for instance, believes "there is no opium 'fiend' upon the face of the earth, who, if he had the strength to break the shackles by his own will, could be induced to return to it, so long as memory held a place in the chamber of his mind." Street, on the contrary, relapses ten minutes after being released from one of the city's "cures." I Was A Drug Addict capitalizes upon the transition between unregulated drug use and the subsequent severe police control, when New York was attempting to find some solution to the enigma of the addict's tendency to relapse. Street, for example, remembers the lobby of the maintenance clinic where the whole addict population congregated for practically free heroin:

... I saw a woman hand her infant to another female addict to hold while she crouched over to sink a needle into her thigh. Then she took back the baby and immediately began to nurse it. I saw this scene repeated several times before
I learned that the babies born of addict mothers and fed on their milk, speedily acquired a habit too and would wail endlessly if the mother was long deprived of her drug. Within a matter of a few minutes after she got a shot, the baby would get enough of it from the milk to be soothed. (208)

Street performs an estimable historical service, even while unconscionably exploiting such a sure thing as the purity of a baby's diet—pornography which neglects to wonder if the mother injected herself through her dress, or if she cared for her child.

It seems fitting that Street's collaborator collaborated with Morris L. Ernst to write Report on the American Communist. The prejudicial effects of the professional journalism behind I Was A Drug Addict sap its historical value. Black seems far away with his charming vacillations between compressed language and schoolish melodrama; between "Six feet away, I could feel the slugs hit him" (200) and "Gloom settled over the camp and Tragedy waited in the wings for his cue to stalk upon the stage" (198). Street's ideological opposition to his own past (some twenty-seven years distant) cuts him from his own experience, or at least the language of that experience. Junkie, published in the same year as I Was A Drug Addict, rushes in to fill the linguistic gap. Burroughs evokes the nuances of a disabused voice--
mobster and opium smoker compact—which finally serves as the literary language of the big city addict: "I could put down one of those nostalgic routines about the old German doctor who lived next door and the rats running around in the back yard and my aunt's electric car and my pet toad that lived by the fish pond."23 His memories merely "nostalgic routines," Burroughs blackmails cool, wrings moving messages out of photographs in the waste basket.

In the continuum between Street's and Burroughs' experiences of addiction in New York, Harvey Blackstock's Bitter Humour occupies a somewhat bizarre medial position, waiting as it does until 1967 to be published and, like You Can't Win and I Was A Drug Addict, referring to a period well past, in this case the Depression and World War II on the prairies and West Coast of Canada. Blackstock's professionalism toward crime recalls Black, as does his over-powering connection with prison, and his predilection to narcotics as a companion to the criminal life.

During the Depression, the seasonal migrations of vagrants and beggars surfaced as a matter of public conscience. To Black it must have all seemed quite familiar. In Bitter Humour the impossibility of work pushes the young Blackstock out to the freights. Passing through New Brunswick,
he is picked up for vagrancy and given two months in jail. The prospect of jail no longer intimidates him: "No matter what happened, the worst they could do was put me in jail and I'd already survived that experience once." And would many times more, each time forming new contacts with people who could instruct him in crime just as the Smiler and the Sanctimonious Kid had taught Black forty years before. The sense of society which prison imposes upon the prisoners conditions life on the outside. After every prison sentence, Blackstock dutifully carries errands out and smuggles cigarettes or dope back in. "In Calgary, I met a young fellow who had been in Lethbridge and who thought the only way to get by was stealing" (6). They become partners until caught and sentenced. Then "I teamed up with another fellow who had been to jail several times, mostly for riding freights, begging, and vagrancy. He had done some boosting, or shoplifting, but hadn't been caught at it yet" (23). They become partners until caught and sentenced. The picturesque coherence of Black's criminal society has disappeared, and in its place a society of absolutely cynical ex-convicts who do not even grant each other the luxury of a moniker--only the experience of prison matters.

Blackstock does not conceal the skepticism that governs
even the most professional thief's life: "We had to steal to survive, we thought, and when we did get caught, as we knew we inevitably would, we would go to jail whether the police liked us or not" (24). In Calgary he and yet another partner break into safes looking for drugs and money with the clear knowledge that they will be apprehended: "By now we knew, of course, that sooner or later we would get pinched and probably go to the pen. In the meantime we were enjoying ourselves" (94). Blackstock's fatalism proves to be perfectly justified. He spends well over twenty years serving time in Lethbridge and Okalla prisons, and New Westminster, Prince Albert, and Kingston penitentiaries.

The willingness to endure official punishment as a gesture of defiance easily figures as the most important prison virtue. Black, for instance, establishes his reputation when he serves three days in the Hole for the sake of a prison principle. Similarly, one prisoner says of Blackstock himself: "'He's young and he's tough and he just don't care. If you think I'm lying, just ask him if he didn't do six days at once in the black hole, and lose all his remission'" (27). Also the right convict must always confess to everything if he is caught: a detective offers Blackstock a reduced sentence for pleading "not guilty" so the others in on it could be tried. Outraged
negative response. On another occasion, an addict now:

The detective took me outside the door and told me, "I know you're getting your drugs from Vernie Epter, and if you want to set him up for me, I'll see that you don't get charged as an habitual. If you don't go along with me you will be charged."

I said, "If you know as much about me as you claim to, you should know that I don't do that kind of thing."

He said, "Yes, I know. But when the pressure is put on, a lot of fellows change their minds. Do you think Epter would do it for you? You could set him up, and he doesn't have to know it's you."

I said, "I'd know it was me, and I have to live with myself, whether I'm in jail or outside." (200)

Though Blackstock goes to trade school in prison—"I had learned more about stealing in the three years I'd done in Prince Albert than on all my other sentences combined" (128)—he inherits the strangely chivalrous code of the criminal precisely because he holds to his silence under pressure.

Addiction does not tremendously alter Blackstock's character as a criminal; he punches in safes as usual. But as Street had already experienced, the junkie is put at a distinct disadvantage so far as the police are concerned: "It's the easiest thing in the world for a policeman to frame a junkie if he wants to. All he needs to do is find narcotics in the room, or in the junkie's pocket when he
is frisking him. Who's going to believe a junkie against a policeman?" (135-36) Ironically, the little appreciated hardships of burglary occasion Blackstock's first use of drugs. Black observes that burglary subjects the thief to especially unhealthy conditions, such as lying in wet grass early in the morning. He even contracts tuberculosis as a result (which he cures with daily doses of crude castor oil). Similarly, Blackstock suffers from the inconveniences of the trade while working Vancouver's marine climate: "The wet weather and the hiding at night waiting for things to get just right to break into some place brought back rheumatic fever from which I had suffered as a child. I got crippled up so that I could barely walk" (37). Instead of going to a doctor, however, Blackstock consults a junkie friend who prescribes codeine phosphate in the mainline. In Vancouver "all the junkies admitted codeine was a poor substitute for opium, but at least it was legal, and some of them had switched for that reason" (38). Frequently arrested, naturally Blackstock withdraws in prison. One example: "When I got to my cell I was still high, which is what I had hoped would happen; but about eight o'clock at night the effects of the morphine started to wear off. From then on I was pretty sick for from ten days to two weeks" (160). No evidence of indescribable tortures--
Blackstock in fact dismisses the idea that an addict must overcome insurmountable difficulties in withdrawing from addiction:

I knew personally at least thirty people, mostly men, but a few women, who had been drug addicts and quit, and been off for at least five years. But these self-styled experts upon narcotics get their information from police records and such places. Police don't keep records of drug addicts who have quit. (253)

Blackstock blames cocaine and marijuana for the poor press that heroin and the other opium derivatives have received: "It is the effects of these drugs that give the drug addict the image of knifing or shooting people, or of jumping off high buildings, or committing sex crimes" (152-53). In a strange way, Blackstock answers Lenny Bruce's plea for the well-adjusted narcotics user. As a junkie, he marries for the second time: "My wife was a drug addict too, and we got along great" (131). He holds down a variety of jobs in between prison sentences in order to throw off police suspicion. The married couple even reduce their habits to week-ends, much the way De Quincey had saved opium for Saturday nights. They frequently visit friends in Calgary, other safe-crackers and convicts and boosters, and their wives. Despite these periods of domestic felicity, however,
Blackstock never spends more than a year at a time on the outside, and his story, like Black's, ultimately reduces to a statement on the powerful relationships existing between prison, crime, and addiction.

Between his first shot in Vancouver and his conversion to legitimate life in 1958, Blackstock associates more and more exclusively with junkies. After one sentence, he works for a few weeks in Calgary. When his companions come into town to visit the whores and the bars, Blackstock prefers to visit a doctor and receive a half grain shot of morphine: "After having a fix, I'd buy books and what other things I needed, and go to my room where I'd read and coast" (83). Blackstock emphasizes prison as a means of study: he goes through the twelfth grade solely by virtue of correspondence courses, as well as teaching himself how to make nitroglycerin. After a term at Lethbridge, he decides that he would like to try his hand blowing safes: "The fellow that was to be my partner for the next few months met me on the bus when I got to Calgary. We went to his room and had a fix of morphine. He told me he had a few safes lined up" (93). Prison and narcotics and crime congeal in this rented cell connecting two minds studying the execution of a criminal plan. Morphine acts as a sacrament to prison and its
meditative lessons, answering the needs of psychologies attending imprisonment as the source of fundamental knowledge, or that which reconciles absolute isolation with vital contact between men.
Chapter 5

JUNKIE, "IN SEARCH OF YAGE," AND NAKED LUNCH

But Hubbard wrote on and on this huge letter in the bar while the Chinese Laundryman watched him from across the street nodding.¹

The tendency is to consider Junkie as an example of tough naturalistic autobiography which details a particularly seamy side of urban life but which does not face up to the difficulties of technique which define a major literary effort such as Naked Lunch. Ihab Hassan, dedicated to an aesthetic of silence first intimated by Burroughs in Naked Lunch, regards Junkie primarily in terms of its content: "The interest of the book lies mainly in its cold depiction of the sordid and implacable world of addiction."² Norman Mailer stated (under oath) that "it is just a very good, hard-boiled sort of novel. It is a false novel. He wrote it to make some money; but is is well-written."³ Burroughs himself has done his best to downgrade Junkie's intentions: "I simply was endeavoring to put down in a more-or-less
journalistic style something about my experiences with addiction and addicts." Burroughs has even gone so far as to dismiss the book as born of boredom and inexperience: "I had nothing else to do. Writing gave me something to do every day. I don't feel the results were at all spectacular. _Junkie_ is not much of a book, actually. I knew very little about writing at the time." Gregory Corso reports Burroughs as saying, "Any man doing his job works to make himself obsolete." Acting upon Camus' provision that the artist must always be prepared to repudiate his own work, Burroughs declares his 1953 self obsolete and by so doing cuts adrift what may be the most informative book on modern drug addiction ever written—as well as a native example of American literature.

Perhaps more seductive than the dismissal is the use of _Junkie_ as a gloss, or a straightforward companion to the reading of _Naked Lunch_. Tony Tanner believes that "its [Junkie's] candor and its uncomplicated narrative simplicity provide many clues for the surreal works which were to follow. . . . here is the actual in which his vision is grounded." Though it is true that _Junkie_ can be used in this way, literary sleuthing for "clues" perhaps leads one to depreciate the book's bizarre sobriety, or what Allen Ginsberg refers to as "Bill's natural style:
Junkie gathers the various meanings of addiction and concentrates them in an idiom which amalgamates analytic and hip expression, the one parlance reinforcing the other in terms of affective control. Similar to that of Hemingway and Nathanael West, the style of Junkie serves as a defensive response to trauma, perhaps the linguistic counterpart to the "cellular stoicism that junk teaches the user." Though Junkie frequently goes beyond hard-boiled reporting (that is, toward the hallucinatory and the didactic), the disabused composure imposed by addiction has become an element of style, an enforced discipline, a way of life.

Unless it is measured against other drug confessions, Junkie's originality may be overlooked. And yet patent similarities do exist between Junkie and other voices in the literature of addiction. For example, Burroughs has pointed out that addiction is largely a disease of exposure; nevertheless, William Lee (Burroughs' pseudonym in Junkie and Naked Lunch) echoes De Quincey when he advances himself as being originally gifted in the areas of experience with which the use of drugs has been conventionally associated:

I was subject to hallucinations as a child. Once I woke up in the early morning light and saw little men playing in a block house I had made. I felt no fear, only a feeling
of stillness and wonder. Another recurrent hallucination or nightmare concerned "animals in the wall," and started with the delirium of a strange, undiagnosed fever that I had at the age of four or five. (7)

Furthermore, Lee's earliest memories recall the terror which in his maturity he would regard with apparently deadpan interest: "I was afraid to be alone, and afraid of the dark, and afraid to go to sleep because of dreams where a supernatural horror seemed always on the point of taking shape." De Quincey proposed the visionary young man scarred by childhood trauma as the ideal ground for opium; Lee provides the modern complement to the Romantic addictive personality--the "disturbed" child. Significantly, Lee posits the pacification of an eruptive subconscious life as irresistible to the young boy that he was: "I recall hearing a maid talk about opium and how smoking opium brings sweet dreams, and I said, 'I will smoke opium when I grow up!'" (7). From the beginning, Lee is marked for drugs, despite the fact that by the time he has grown up old hop smoking days are a subject for nostalgia ("Bart knew a few old relics from hop smoking times, spectral janitors, grey as ashes. . . ."12) and those "sweet dreams" noticeably absent.

Lee departs from De Quincey's formula of the addictive personality when he conceives of drugs as a means of
overcoming his sense of being shut out from meaningful life; he is the outsider who finally enters into the social and economic world through his tropism toward drugs. Born into the heart of American affluence ("With my trust fund I could live without working or hustling. I was still cut off from life as I had been in the Midwest Suburb")

Lee's life before narcotics is a continual drift from one unsatisfactory activity to another. Harvard, for instance, "was a fake English setup taken over by the graduates of fake English public schools" (9). Lee toys with European travel, graduate courses, judo, analysis--his analyst "finally abandoned analytic objectivity and put me down as an 'out-and-out con'" (10). Even the War fails to include Lee as a citizen in good standing: "I decided I was not going to like the Army and copped out on my nuthouse record--I'd once got on a Van Gogh kick and cut off a finger joint to impress someone who interested me at the time" (10).

Lee reacts to the illusions in American life by constructing negative postures--or covers--of his own. More importantly, however, the prosaic realities of American life figure as a factor in the etiology of Lee's addiction: "You become a narcotics addict because you do not have strong motivations in any other direction. Junk wins by default" (11).

Lee does discover one world which could have made junk
unnecessary:

By accident I met some rich homosexuals, of the international queer set who cruise around the world, bumping into each other in queer joints from New York to Cairo. I saw a way of life, a vocabulary, references, a whole symbol system, as the sociologists say. But these people were jerks for the most part, and after an initial period of fascination I cooled off on the setup. (9)

Lee clearly implies the real object of his search—a perspective, an epistemology, a language. In this respect it is notable that Lindesmith's discussion of opium addiction presupposes the individual's membership in social groups, and his ability to communicate with his fellows in terms of language symbols. Addiction is therefore confined exclusively to man living in society. It depends upon those complex functions which are made possible only by the existence of the symbolic structures in language.13

Lee descends to the junky-carny world in search of a social structure devoid of jerks—or a meaningful sound.

Along with drugs, the mystique of crime evokes instinctive sympathy in the adolescent Lee. The "symbol system" of You Can't Win offers an alternative to his suffocating origins, the "comfortable capsule . . . cut off from life in the city" (8). Unlike Black, however, who gains the Smiler, Lee's maiden forays into crime insure his isolation:
I saw there was no compromise possible with the group, the others, and I found myself a good deal alone. The environment was empty, the antagonist hidden, and I drifted into solo adventures. My criminal acts were gestures, unprofitable and for the most part unpunished. I would break into houses and walk around without taking anything. As a matter of fact, I had no need of money. (9)

Having fled St. Louis, Lee's early leaning toward crime develops considerably in New York during the wartime period: "I worked as a private detective, an exterminator, a bartender. I worked in factories and offices. I played around the edges of crime" (10). Lee makes the same descent into the New York underworld that the Editor had made over thirty years before in San Francisco. Predictably, one of Lee's gestures in crime (fencing a Tommy gun and a box of morphine syrettes) exposes him to drugs and he soon becomes addicted: "I came in contact with junk, became an addict, and thereby gained the motivation, the real need for money I never had before" (10). The economic realities of addiction transform Lee into a criminal, whether it be as a lush-roller or as a pusher. His history reaffirms the interaction between addiction and crime: the criminal environment allows exposure to narcotics, and addiction necessitates crime.

The chivalric loyalties of You Can't Win create the
radical security which sustains the "right" thief. The highly dedicated yegg society finds an approximate form in Junkie, though one perilously close to the spirit of Montana Blackie's toast and fatalistic prophecy: "The stool pigeon is the coming race." The agony of withdrawal makes the junkie especially vulnerable to police persuasion. Pushing in a small way to keep up his habit, Lee comes into contact with the whole spectrum of junkies capable of sudden losses of character. Lee assesses each customer in terms of his ability to hold onto silence under pressure: Gene Doolie, Chris, Nick, the nameless people scoring through Nick, they all represent the subversive weakness which threatens Lee's security:

The agent may come on with the old cop con: "I hate to send a young kid like you away. Sure you made a mistake. That can happen to anybody. Now listen, I'm going to give you a break, but you'll have to co-operate with us. Otherwise I won't be able to help you." Or else they just belt him in the mouth and say, "Where did you get it?" With lots of people that's all it takes. You could find every type informer, overt or potential, among my customers. (70)

Outside New York, the situation is, if anything, worse. In New Orleans, Pat informs Lee that "'the town is et up with pigeons . . . it's really tough'" (87). And in Mexico City, Ike reports: "'I know every hip in Mexico City. And
I wouldn't trust one of 'em. Not one" (123). At the close of *Junkie*, Bill Gains carries the news to Lee in Mexico City, and it is as though the whole society (and code) has collapsed: "Louie the Bell Hop went wrong. Tony and Nick went wrong, Herman didn't make parole. The Gimp got five to ten, Marvin the waiter died from an overdose!" (151). Moreover, Lee's old lush-rolling partner, Roy, has also gone wrong, subsequently hanging himself in the Tombs: "Roy had always taken an intolerant and puritanical view of pigeons. 'I don't see how a pigeon can live with himself,' he said to me once" (151).

Aside from the fear of defecting fellow junkies, Lee displays an almost pathological fear of being watched and consequently trapped. He is still the boy "afraid to go to sleep because of dreams where a supernatural horror seemed always on the point of taking shape." The recurrent symbol of Lee's distraught vigilance is, of course, the subway station where there is no secure place in which to roll a drunk: "149th Street is a station with several levels and dangerous for lush-workers because there are so many spots where cops can hide, and it isn't possible to cover from every angle" (45). And "Queen's Plaza is another station where it is impossible to cover yourself from every angle. You just have to take a chance" (47). While a pusher,
Lee delivers heroin to "a small place down several steps from street level. There was only one door. I always felt trapped when I went in there. The place gave me such a feeling of depression and danger that I could hardly bring myself to go through the door" (57).

Lee's awareness of impending disaster, rather than reflecting directly upon his own character, is almost a convention in the world of addiction and crime: "Pushing junk is a constant strain on the nerves. Sooner or later you get the 'copper jitters,' and everybody looks like a cop. People moving about in the subway seem to be edging closer so they can grab you before you have a chance to throw away the junk" (65). Lee's short (and relatively unsuccessful) career in crime underlines the electric tension which accompanies addiction in this century. That Lee and Gains, both well-educated and from well-to-do backgrounds, finally escape from the dynamics of New York addiction only testifies to the impossible condition of life which others less fortunate endure daily. Though absolutely corrupt, Mexico City (where Lupita, the local pusher, supports the police) offers a modicum of security to the benighted junkie whose character can no longer support him. "'Sure, I can score,'" Gains informs Lee. "'But if I stay in the States I'll wind up doing about ten years'" (151).
While *Junkie* declares a cool-but-wistful eulogy to the traditional criminal code, there is an inner circle of addicts who embody the virtues of Black's society of opium smokers and thieves. Inevitably, Lee gravitates toward the old-timers who represent the innate respectability of a departed era: Bob Riordan, for example, "was a dignified, white-haired man of seventy . . . an old-time con man, junk-pusher, and pickpocket. He looked the way bankers looked around 1910" (76). Unlike the younger addicts, "Bart was O.K. If there was a beef, he would take the rap without talking. Anyway, he had thirty years experience in junk and knew what he was doing" (59). George the Greek "decided who was right and wrong. George prided himself on his integrity. 'I never beat nobody!'" (43). Suitably, George has served time on three different occasions, earning his immaculate reputation in the process. Along with Gains and Lee himself, Izzy "was one of the 103rd Street boys. Izzy had done time for pushing, was known as a thoroughly right guy . . ." (58). The most memorable example of traditional criminal character, however, is Abe Green, the one-legged Brooklyn pusher:

"He (the agent) wakes me up in the middle of the night and starts beating me over the head with his gun. Wants me to give him my connection. I told him, 'I'm fifty-
four years old and I've never given you guys anything yet. I'll be dead first."

Telling about a stretch in Atlanta where he kicked a habit cold: "Fourteen days I was beating my head against the wall and blood came out my eyes and nose. When the screw came, I'd spit in his face."

Coming from him, these narratives had an epic quality. (77-78)

It is indicative of Lee's sympathies that while putting down almost every group that comes under his attention--average American citizens, police, homosexuals, teaheds, hipsters--he reserves moments of coded tenderness for the old-timers, especially those from 103rd Street: "The hipster-bebop junkies never showed at 103rd Street. The 103rd Street boys were all oldtimers--thin, sallow faces; bitter, twisted mouths; stiff-fingered, stylized gestures. . . . They all looked like junk" (42). Unlike Street, Lee commits himself to the urban character of junk; he makes the look and feel of junk his own:

You could always find a few junkies sitting in the cafeteria or standing outside with coat collars turned up, spitting on the sidewalk and looking up and down the streets as they waited for the connection. In summer, they sit on the island benches huddled like so many vultures in their dark suits. (41)

The image of old-time addicts waiting on the connection ultimately extends to the concept of the junk neighborhood,
"a point where dubious enterprise touches Skid Row" (118), the gravitational field charged with the spirit of junk: "I don't spot junk neighborhoods by the way they look, but by the feel, somewhat the same process by which a dowser locates hidden water. I am walking along and suddenly the junk in my cells moves and twitches like the dowser's wand: 'Junk here!'" (82) A kind of urban-Gothic chronicler of addiction, Lee's visual, and metabolic sensitivity to the spirit of junk—"A ghost in daylight on a crowded street"—raises both junk's domination over the junkie and images of resigned beauty.

In the reduced world of junk, there are essentially two activities (as opposed to perceptions): scoring for narcotics and avoiding police detection. In *Naked Lunch* Lee (still Burroughs' persona) emphasizes the ubiquitous presence of the police in the addict's physical and psychic life:

And always cops: smooth, college-trained state cops, practiced, apologetic patter, electronic eyes weigh your car and luggage, clothes and face; snarling big city dicks; soft-spoken country sheriffs with something black and menacing in old eyes color of a faded grey flannel shirt... (11-12)

During the "copper jitters," the Lee of *Junkie* "could feel the Federals moving steadily closer. It was a question of
time" (68). And significantly, *Naked Lunch* opens with the telepathic certainty that the police are closing in: "I can feel the heat closing in . . ." (1). As Lee makes so apparent, nothing so schools the American deviant as the fear of the police. In *Junkie* Lee confronts a Mexican cop: "I was not talking to a solid three-dimensional cop. I was talking to the recurrent cop of my dreams--an irritating, nondescript, darkish man who would rush in when I was about to take a shot or go to bed with a boy" (132).

To the junkie arrest means unusual punishment--the death of the junk self--as a matter of police procedure. Lee discusses with controlled indignation the legal background of the persecution of a way of life; in Louisiana, for example, "the State legislators drew up a law making it a crime to be a drug addict. They did not specify where or when or what they meant by drug addict" (90-91). This law subjected anyone with needle marks to seventy-two hours detention with the express purpose of extracting a confession from the kicking junkie. Taking advantage of the historical degradation and demeaning of the addict, the police exercise unparalleled power over the incarcerated junkie ("white junk," Burroughs calls it) by their ability to impose a state of withdrawal on the addict. Not only do they systematically break down the loyalties which sustain him, the police
routinely employ torture on the junkie.\textsuperscript{16}

It is difficult to underestimate the importance of withdrawal in Burroughs' writing: "No one knows what junk is until he is junk sick" (109) Lee says. In direct opposition to De Quincey, Burroughs has maintained that "junk narrows consciousness. The only benefit to me as a writer (aside from putting me into contact with the whole carny world) came to me after I went off it."\textsuperscript{17} In "Deposition: Testimony Concerning A Sickness" Burroughs gives more of an idea of what withdrawal means in relation to the "death route" of addiction:

Only excuse for this tired death route is THE KICK when the junk circuit is cut off for the non-payment and the junk-skin dies of junk-lack and overdose of time and the Old Skin has forgotten the skin game simplifying a way under the junk cover the way skins will. . . . A condition of total exposure is precipitated when the Kicking Addict cannot choose but see smell and listen. . . . Watch out for the cars. (xiii)

As Cocteau has already illustrated, the withdrawal from addiction puts the addict in touch with a rush of sensations and perceptions which had been frozen under the anesthetic influence of opium. The erotic subconscious which De Quincey had seen as a function of opium becomes in the 20th century a function of \textit{withdrawal}. Though the literature of addiction has consistently presented withdrawal as a struggle eminently
meaningful on the moral plane, Lee demonstrates that with­
drawal occasions changes in health, sexuality, personality, per­
ception, and memory which, taken together, prove of great personal and artistic value. Of course, *Naked Lunch* remains the classic exposition of withdrawal (followed by Cocteau's more epigrammatic report); nevertheless, *Junkie* performs a valuable service when it lucidly delineates the dislocations to be expected (and relished) through the course of withdrawal.

Appropriately, Lee's first experience with withdrawal takes place in the Tombs. Lee offers a description of the primary physical symptoms:

> My nose and eyes began to run, sweat soaked through my clothes. Hot and cold flashes hit as though a furnace door was swinging open and shut. I lay down on the bunk too weak to move. My legs ached and twitched so that any position was intolerable, and I moved from one side to the other sloshing about in my sweaty clothes. (40)

Later on, in a New Orleans jail, Lee again suffers involuntary withdrawal, though by this time he is experienced enough to generalize upon the various symptoms:

> People vary in the way junk sickness affects them. Some suffer mostly from vomiting and diarrhoea. The asthmatic type, with narrow and deep chest, is liable to violent fits of sneezing, watering at eyes and nose, in
some cases, spasms of the bronchial tubes that shut off the breathing. In my case, the worst thing is the lowering of blood pressure with consequent weakness, as in shock. It is a feeling as if the life energy has been shut off so that all the cells in the body are suffocating into a pile of bones. (103-04)

While approximating the language of medical symptomology—and Lee has attended medical school in Vienna—he must resort to metaphor to express the physical anguish of the junk-thaw, when "tout un printemps affole les veines, charriant glaces et laves de feu." Lee also goes beyond normal medical perceptions when he emphasizes the effect of withdrawal upon sexuality. Generally speaking, the standard symptomologies of withdrawal do not notice the acute sexual excitation incident to withdrawal, and if they do, no particular conclusions are drawn:

These symptoms, which are what we described under the name of abstinence phenomena, consist of trembling of the legs, neuralgias, pains, sweats, alternating dilation of the pupils, diplopia, yawning, dyspnoea, cough, pain in the region of the heart, weakness of the heart, thirst, diarrhoea, vomiting, sexual stimulation, albuminaria, vesical tenesmus, suppression of urine, etc.

One physician, however, writing in 1914, notices that in withdrawal "the sexual desire returns, often painfully and excessively and then subsides." An acquaintance of Lee's
performs a short routine upon this reverse image of the lascivious heroin addict of popular imagination:

"You know how it is when you start to come off the stuff." He indicated his genitals, pointing with all his fingers, then turning the hand palm up. "You go off right in your pants. I remember one time I was with Larry. You know that kid Larry. He was pushing a while back. I said, 'Larry, you got to do it for me.' So he took down his pants. You know he had to do that for me." (114)

What the medical perspective finds just another symptom, Lee develops into a demonic image which stands as an emblem for withdrawal:

My body was raw, twitching, tumescent, the junk-frozen flesh in agonizing thaw. I turned over on my stomach and one leg slipped off the bench. I pitched forward and the rounded edge of the bench, polished smooth by the friction of cloth, slid along my crotch. There was a sudden rush of blood to the genitals at the slippery contact. Sparks exploded behind my eyes; my legs twitched—the orgasm of a hanged man when the neck snaps. (105)

By the time of the Mexico City withdrawal, the phenomenon has become mere routine: "I drew my knees up, my hands clasped between the thighs. The pressure of my hands set off the hair trigger orgasm of junk sickness. I got up and changed my underwear" (129). We see in these observations of addiction obvious predictions of what will become a
major—and controversial—motif in Naked Lunch: the ceremonial hangings.

Lee likewise extends normal medical perceptions when he emphasizes the extreme garrulity of the withdrawing addict. During withdrawal,

My emotions spilled out everywhere. I was uncontrollably sociable and would talk to anybody I could pin down. I forced distastefully intimate confidences on perfect strangers. Several times I made the crudest sexual propositions to people who had given no hint of reciprocity. (130)

"When I come off the junk," Lee declares on another occasion, "I often run through a period of uncontrolled sociability and talk to anyone who will listen" (127). Dupré, a New Orleans associate, displays the same reaction to withdrawal: "When he was getting plenty of junk, Dupré was silent. Now he was garrulous" (114). Lee catalogues the social equivalent to the physical and sexual eruptions which attack the addict during withdrawal; the garrulity of the kicking junkie is just another symptom, a verbal excretion. The final suppression of the leeringly confidential Ancient Mariner in Naked Lunch—the apotheosis of Silence in the "Atrophied Preface"—can thus be seen as a figurative sleep, the sign of achieved cure.

The meaning of withdrawal does not end, however, with
physical, sexual, and social manifestations. Withdrawal occasions moments of poignant nostalgia, while at the same time it leads to a particularly threatening order of hallucination. A 19th century physician catches this fundamental juxtaposition: "Found her awake, violently delirious, chattering wildly about things that had occurred in her younger days--so far as she could be understood--talking to imaginary characters and believing the room to be filled with devils." 21 Those memories of "younger days"--signalled in Burroughs' work by the smell of burning leaves, piano music down a windy street, trains, carnivals and peep shows--exist in uneasy tension with the entropic hallucination which appears to be the graduating lesson of cure.

As Cocteau suggests, withdrawal stimulates the memory to an extraordinary degree. In a revealing passage Lee delineates the interplay between the lobotomized absence of addiction and the beguiling memories of junk sickness:

One morning in April, I woke up a little sick. I lay there looking at shadows on the white plaster ceiling. I remembered a long time ago when I lay in bed beside my mother watching lights from the street move across the ceiling and down the walls. I felt the sharp nostalgia of train whistles, piano music down a windy street, burning leaves. . . . I went into the bathroom to take a shot. I was a long time hitting a vein. The needle clogged twice. Blood ran down my arm. The junk spread through my body, an injection of death. The dream
was gone. I looked down at the blood that ran from elbow to wrist. I felt a sudden pity for the violated veins and tissue. Tenderly, I wiped the blood off my arm. "I'm going to quit," I said to myself. (128)

This episode involving the sharp dream of youth and the complementary death-in-junk results in the final resolution for cure which concludes *Junkie*. Where De Quincey conceived of opium as the mechanism whereby images of childhood could be analyzed and relived, Lee counters that opium is anti-dream and only in junk sickness does the memory return. The Rube in *Naked Lunch* symbolizes this terrible duality of death-dissolution and dream-innocence:

"The Rube has a sincere little boy look, burns through him like blue neon. That one stepped right off a *Saturday Evening Post* cover with a string of bullheads, and preserved himself in junk. His marks never beef and the Bunko people are really carrying a needle for the Rube. One day Little Boy Blue starts to slip, and what crawls out would make an ambulance attendant puke. The Rube flips in the end, running through empty automats and subway stations, screaming: 'Come back, kid!! Come back!!' and follows his boy right into the East River, down through condoms and orange peels, mosaic of floating newspapers, down into the silent black ooze . . . ." (3-4)

The personality, held intact under the influence of junk, breaks into two distinct parts—the degraded junkie and the innocent dream—when junk-sickness begins. The course
of withdrawal can be interpreted in terms of this progress from the narcissistic junkie-youth preserved in junk ("The old junky has found a vein . . . he push home the heroin and the boy who jacked off fifty years ago shine immaculate through the ravaged flesh, fill the outhouse with the sweet smell of young male lust" [NL 95-96]) to the harrowing recognition of dissolution which is, ultimately, the lesson of cure.

As most of the addicts in literature testify, the very beginning of addiction produces visions or sensations of a pleasant kind. When Lee takes his first shot, however, he serves notice of a marked malefic potential in the honey-moon of junk; in comparison with De Quincey's encomiums to the pleasures of opium, Lee's descriptions seem ominous indeed:

I had the feeling that some horrible image was just beyond the field of vision, moving, as I turned my head, so that I never quite saw it. I felt nauseous; I lay down and closed my eyes. A series of pictures passed, like watching a movie: A huge, neon-lighted cocktail bar that got larger and larger until streets, traffic, and street repairs were included in it; a waitress carrying a skull on a tray; stars in the clear sky. The physical impact of the fear of death; the shutting off of breath; the stopping of blood. (19)

Junk quickly ceases to generate images, however, until the
process of withdrawal takes place, and then even the marginal humanity of the first junk vision has vanished:

One afternoon, I closed my eyes and saw New York in ruins. Huge centipedes and scorpions crawled in and out of empty bars and cafeterias and drugstores on Forty-second Street. Weeds were growing through the cracks and holes in the pavement. There was no one in sight. (40)

More horrifying, however, is the Mexico City withdrawal:

When I closed my eyes I saw an Oriental face, the lips and nose eaten away by the disease. The disease spread, melting the face into an amoebid mass in which the eyes floated, dull crustacean eyes. Slowly a new face formed around the eyes. A series of faces, hieroglyphs, distorted and leading to the final place where the human road ends, where the human form can no longer contain the crustacean horror that has grown inside it. (135)

Reminiscent of De Quincey's demonic Malay and the tyranny of the human face (as well as Ivan Karamazov's disgusted analysis: "One reptile devours another . . . ." 22) Lee's withdrawal visions rely upon apocalyptic imagery to express the depression which accompanies cure: "The conversation had a nightmare flatness, talking dice spilled in the tube metal chairs, human aggregates disintegrating in cosmic insanity, random events in a dying universe" (141). Like any Dark Night of the Soul, the ordeal of withdrawal is
a voyage which changes utterly: "Like a man who has been away a long time, you see things different when you return from junk" (152).

Since Lee is writing from a post-cure perspective (or so the reader assumes), it is not surprising to encounter perceptions which reflect the entropic tendencies of withdrawal. Subway Mike, for instance, "looked like some specialized kind of underground animal that preys on the animals of the surface" (23). And Mary, who has a disease which is dissolving her bones, sets Lee to musing in a characteristic vein:

There was something boneless about her, like a deep sea creature. Her eyes were cold fish-eyes that looked at you through a viscous medium she carried about with her. I could see those eyes in a shapeless, protoplasmic mass undulating over the dark sea floor. (26)

At another time she wears the "expression of a masturbating idiot," and on yet another she expresses "monkey-like rage." In Mexico City Lee encounters a character mysteriously connected with junk: "His eyes are black with an insect's unseeing calm. He looks as if he nourished himself on honey and Levantine syrups that he sucks up through a proboscis" (119). And finally the kicking Gene Doolie serves as both subject and reflection of Lee's own psychic
interior, since in an accurate sense the withdrawing addict is what he sees:

Doolie, sick, was an unnerving sight. The envelope of personality was gone, dissolved by his junk-hungry cells. Viscera and cells, galvanized into a loathsome insect-like activity, seemed on the point of breaking through the surface. His face was blurred, unrecognizable. (71)

Burroughs simply trades in simile for metaphor when he creates the creatures of *Naked Lunch*.

It is probably dangerous to assume that the withdrawal experience completely governs the perceptions in *Junkie*, but it does appear that *Junkie'*s internal logic enforces the connection between withdrawal hallucinations and the novel's seriously satiric intentions; in other words, the satiric speculation which informs parts of *Junkie* can be seen as the deadpan reporting of the nightmare perceptions of withdrawal. Horror leads to outraged judgement of an unusually theoretical and systematic variety. In New Orleans, for example, Lee discusses homosexuals in terms of that "final place where the human road ends":

A room full of fags gives me the horrors. They jerk around like puppets on invisible strings, galvanized into hideous activity that is the negation of everything living and spontaneous. The live human being has moved out of these bodies long ago. But
something moved in when the original tenant moved out. Fags are ventriloquists' dummies who have moved in and taken over the ventriloquist. The dummy sits in a queer bar nursing his beer, and uncontrollably yapping out of a rigid doll face. (84)

The fags have become obnoxious posturing dolls, perceptually and satirically. And when Lee records (in distinctly Western terms) his damning first impressions of New Orleans, he reaffirms the connection between satiric theory and post-cure depression, since he too is one of the unrequited (both in New Orleans and at the end of Junkie):

But a complex pattern of tensions, like the electrical mazes devised by psychologists to unhinge the nervous systems of white rats and guinea pigs, keeps the unhappy pleasure-seekers in a condition of unconsummated alertness. . . . The drivers orient themselves largely by the use of their horns, like bats. (81)

While being a significant part of Junkie's content, withdrawal functions as a crucial determiner of its vision. The incredible plenum of withdrawal—epileptic physical suffering, sharp sexual rediscovery, the degrading search for a Wedding Guest, nostalgia, entropic hallucination—complicates the literary voice of the addict beyond measure.

The unrepentant self-sufficiency of Junkie results in part from the persuaded belief that the withdrawal experience
(and the junk world) invests the junkie with indispensable knowledge:

Junk is a cellular equation that teaches the user facts of general validity. I have learned a great deal from using junk. I have seen life measured out in eyedroppers of morphine solution. I experienced the agonizing deprivation of junk sickness, and the pleasure of relief when junk-thirsty cells drank from the needle. Perhaps all pleasure is relief. I have learned the cellular stoicism that junk teaches the user. I have seen a cell full of sick junkies silent and immobile in separate misery. They knew the pointlessness of complaining or moving. They knew that basically no one can help anyone else. There is no key, no secret someone else has that he can give you. (11-12)

Lee claims for junk its rewards, as De Quincey, Ludlow, Crowley, James Lee, and Cocteau had done before him. Though the question of advocacy can be asked, it is the wrong question. More to the point is, how effectively does Junkie establish once and for all the facts of addiction?

Whatever else, Junkie is an iconoclastic survey of the modern narcotics addict, especially when compared with works published under the auspices of the Treasury Department, and even with Street's I Was A Drug Addict: "A lot of nonsense has been written about the changes people undergo as they get a habit. All of a sudden the addict looks in the mirror and does not recognize himself" (34). Lee takes
it upon himself to set the record straight, never doubting that what he has learned from addiction can be successfully translated into "facts of general validity." Kerouac recalls Burroughs several years before the writing of *Junkie*:

He was a teacher, and it may be said that he had every right to teach because he spent all of his time learning; and the things he learned were what he considered to be and called "the facts of life," which he learned not only out of necessity but because he wanted to. . . . Now the final study was the drug habit. He was now in New Orleans, slipping along the streets with shady characters and haunting connection bars.23

Lee's down-to-ground pedagogy inevitably leads him to engage in debate the medical and political authorities who control public opinion toward drugs:

In 1937, weed was placed under the Harrison Narcotics Act. Narcotics authorities claim it is a habit-forming drug, that its use is injurious to mind and body, and that it causes the people who use it to commit crimes. Here are the facts: Weed is positively not habit-forming. You can smoke weed for years and you will experience no discomfort if your supply is suddenly cut off. I have seen teaheads in jail and none of them showed withdrawal symptoms. I have smoked weed myself off and on for fifteen years, and never missed it when I ran out. . . . Weed does not harm the general health. (30)

Sensing that Lee had gone too far, the editors of the Ace
edition of *Junkie* provided the following footnote (the "frightened footnotes" as Ginsberg called them$^{24}$) to keep orthodoxy clearly in view: "Authorities maintain that the marijuana smoker usually forms a psychological habit pattern; under present laws, the use of marijuana is in itself a crime." And Lee goes so far as to impugn the integrity of the Narcotics Bureau:

Now that the Narcotics Bureau has taken it upon itself to incarcerate every addict in the U.S., they need more agents to do the work. Not only more agents, but a different type of agent. Like during prohibition, when bums and hoodlums flooded the Internal Revenue Department, now addict-agents join the department for free junk and immunity. (146)

This charge receives another disclaimer from the editors: "This statement is hearsay and the publisher accepts no responsibility for its accuracy." The most memorable example, however, of Lee's drive toward combative conclusions is his speculation involving the long-term effects of addiction on the human organism:

When you stop growing you start dying. An addict never stops growing. Most users periodically kick the habit, which involves shrinking of the organism and replacement of the junk-dependent cells. A user is in a continual state of shrinking and growing in his daily cycle of shot-need for shot completed.
Most addicts look younger than they are. Scientists recently experimented with a worm that they were able to shrink by withholding food. By periodically shrinking the worm so that it was in continual growth, the worm's life was prolonged indefinitely. Perhaps if a junkie could keep himself in a constant state of kicking, he would live to be a phenomenal age. (11)

Predictably, Lee's assumption regarding the cellular impact of withdrawal "is not the view of recognized medical authority," and his image of the addict as potential Methuselah "is contradicted by recognized medical authority." Though Lee's zeal to teach may lead him into specious pseudo-science, the essential mission remains that of the dedicated field reporter bringing back information which has either been suppressed or overlooked. The "frightened footnotes" are thus entirely appropriate, dramatizing as they do Lee's adversary relationship with recognized medical and legal opinion.

Lee's lectures-speculations oftentimes bristle over the historical degradation of the 20th century addict, but the fundamental human drama of Junkie is the traditional search for cure which every drug confession eventually comes to dramatize. Lee attempts a number of cures, but none of them are more than equivocally successful; the temptation of a shot usually brings him back to junk after short periods
of abstinence. In Mexico City, for example, "I started the cure five times. I tried reducing the shots, I tried the Chinese cure, but nothing worked" (127). Lee actually reminds one of Ludlow with his feverish attempts to alleviate the distress incident to withdrawal. In goof balls, alcohol, antihistamines, benzedrine, Ike's solution involving cinnamon, cloves, and sage (always something) Lee searches for the perfect substitute: "Once, in Texas, I kicked a habit on weed, a pint of paregoric, and a few Louis Armstrong records" (40). Ultimately futile home grown cures such as this underline the wasting of the will which has appeared over and over again as an inherent factor in addiction: "It gave me a terrible feeling of helplessness to watch myself break every schedule I set up as though I did not have control over my actions" (127). Lee continually emphasizes in his search for cure his desire to reactivate the non-junk will . . . the goal, it would seem, of any enlightened governmental program.

As in Street's time, government institutions designed to withdraw the addict play a significant role in Junkie. Needless to say, they are signally ineffective. The addict enters a cure to cool off or reduce his habit, but rarely to eventually withdraw for good. During a junk drought, for example, Roy opts to go to Riker's Island for the
"thirty-day cure": "This is not a reduction cure. They don't give any junk, or even a sleeping tablet. All they offer the addict is thirty days' detention. The place is always full" (37). But it is Lexington, of course, which stands as the symbol of institutional inefficacy in treating junkies. Lee enters Lexington junk-sick and checks out junk-sick, eventually curing himself and staying off junk for four months in Texas. Nothing like Ludlow's dream island, Lexington does give to the addict a renewed understanding of his identity as an addict. Just as prison schools the criminal, Lexington gathers together junkies who contemplate junk with special lovingness, assisted by the garrulity which, as Lee has pointed out, is inherent to withdrawal. Lee records in tape recorder fashion the style and symbolism of the back-and-forth flow of conversation committed to junk:

"So there we were in County. Goddamn both of us shitting in our pants like a goose. Hell, when I bit into that orange it was so bitter. Must have been fifteen or twenty grains in it, shot in with a hypo. I didn't know she had that much sense."

"The guard says to me, 'Drug Addict! Why you sonofabitch, you mean you're a dope fiend! Well, you'll get no medicine in here!'"

"So I hit Philly sick as a sonofabitch."
"Well, the croaker says, 'Okay, how much do you use?'
"Ever use powdered De Laudid? Lots of guys killed themselves with it. About as much as you can put on the end of a toothpick. The big end, that is, no more."
"Cook it up and shoot it."
"On the nod."
"Loaded."
"That was back in '33. Twenty-eight dollars an ounce."
"We used to make a pipe out of a bottle and a rubber tube. When we got through smoking, we'd break the bottle."
"Cook it up and shoot it."
"On the nod."
"Sure you can shoot cocaine in the skin. It hits you right in the stomach."
"H and coke. You can smell it going in." (75-76)

As Alexander King has noticed, a stay at Lexington reaffirms the addict's connection with the masonic world of junk. 25 (In a Mexican jail: "The junkies were grouped together, talking and passing the junkie gesture back and forth" [126].)

In Junkie Lexington is a clearing house where young junkies encounter the old-timers, those retrograde characters whose routines summon the traditions of junk--hitting the pipe, burning down a croaker, lucky scores--the whole "symbol system." Lee is fascinated but leaves still sick--and cures himself. It is significant that when Lee does get around to making his Mexico City stand against junk-death, he sends Old Ike away.

Despite prolonged periods of self-punishing drunkenness
and subsequent uremia, the Mexico City cure was for Lee-Burroughs as chimerical as the cures which preceded it, as the casebook of *Naked Lunch* indicates. Within the structure of *Junkie*, however, the Mexico City cure is crucial for the reason that it is the last one. Lee does receive a shot of morphine and cocaine from Old Ike and he does take a sociable shot with Bill Gains, which obviously suggests that his resolution for cure is somewhat tentative. Nevertheless, Lee's experimentation with Peyote toward the end of *Junkie* and his dedicated interest in Yage suggest a development in Lee's conception of how to obtain "momentary freedom from the claims of the ageing, cautious, nagging, frightened flesh" (153). Lee's new interest apparently precludes junk on a basic biological level: "The decision to quit junk is a cellular decision, and once you have decided to quit you cannot go back to junk permanently any more than you could stay away from it before" (152). The new obsession with Yage distances Lee from junk just as De Quincey had distanced himself from his *Confessions* by his announcement of personal cure. Instead of normal health, however, Lee still hankers after transcendence:

I decided to go down to Columbia and score for yage. . . . I am ready to move on south and look for the uncut
kick that opens out instead of narrowing down like junk. Maybe I will find in yage what I was looking for in junk and weed and coke. Yage may be the final fix. (153)

Junk was the wrong drug—but the right idea. When James Lee went to South America, he encountered a Yellow Fever epidemic and returned to England disappointed. Some forty years later, William Lee (soon to come out from underneath that cover) readies himself for the expedition.

Burroughs' 1953 South American letters to Ginsberg (published as "In Search of Yage" in The Yage Letters, 1963) redefine the stoical lessons of withdrawal in terms of the pioneering search through native areas for an indigenous mind-altering drug. "In Search" proposes a definite (if ultimately illusive) objective—locating, taking, and assessing Yage (also referred to as Ayahuasca or Bannisteria Caapi)—whereas evasion and flight structure the action of Junkie. Nevertheless, Burroughs' reliance upon junk metaphors argues for the survival of the junk-withdrawal personality as expressed in Junkie. Ominously, Bill Gains appears in the first letter to remind Burroughs of his 103rd Street origins: "I was getting off junk and he kept nagging me why was I kidding myself once a junkie always a junkie. If I quit junk I would become a sloppy lush or go crazy taking
cocaine. ... Junk is a cause with him.\textsuperscript{26} Burroughs enters Bogota "thanking God I didn't hit this town junk sick" (12). In the same city there is "a damp chill that gets inside you like the inner cold of junk sickness" (13). And the brujo (or medicine man) who prepares a portion of Yage for Burroughs recalls the old-timers from 103rd Street: "There was a sly gentleness about him like an old time junkie" (28). Burroughs also resurrects the sagacious Chinaman as the symbol of junk:

At 5 o'clock had a few drinks in a Chinese restaurant, where the owner picked his teeth and went over his books. How sane they are and how little they expect from life. He looked like junk to me but you can never be sure with the Chinese. They are all basically junkies in outlook. (45)

Yage may be the object of the immersion into the jungle, but junk governs the composition of the field reporter's notes. Lee's attempt to repudiate junk in favor of the open-ended Yage was in part a structural stratagem (an open door at the end of the novel) and also a persuaded heightening of Yage to a potentially transcendent solution to the dynamics of narcotic addiction. Perhaps sadly, Yage does not live up to these great expectations. For "In Search" at any rate, Gains is probably right--"once a junkie always a junkie."
Consequently, the search for Yage easily translates into the nerve-wracking kinetics which dominated the course of *Junkie*. For example, Burroughs' fearful intuitions of a menacing environment can be seen as the natural response of the American deviant—whether as the solitary youngster marked for crime and drugs, the New York hustler, the addict destined to relive the painful emergence of withdrawal, or the lone traveler in alien territory. Recalling Lee's reaction to New Orleans, Burroughs notices that in Popayan "a curious, negativistic hostility pervades the place" (15). Macao provokes this same vague feeling of dread: "Nothing out of the ordinary but in all my experiences as a traveler—and I have seen some God awful places—no place ever brought me down like Macao. And I don't know exactly why" (20). The apprehension that he might be forever held in suspension keeps Burroughs constantly on the move. In Macao an old German tells him: "'I hate this place but what is a fellow to do? I have my business here. My wife. I'm stuck'" (19). Burroughs takes steps to insure that the same thing does not happen to him, though the fear of being cornered invades him frequently. Guayaquil: "Nightmare fear of stasis. Horror of being finally stuck in this place. This fear has followed me all over South America. A horrible sick feeling of final desolation" (38). And in Peru: "This place gives
me the stasis horrors. The feel of location of being just where I am and nowhere else is unendurable" (43). By the last letter of "In Search," this adversary relationship with South America has intensified, provoking in Burroughs the inconsolable perception of entropic deterioration which Lee had experienced in Mexico City during withdrawal:

Every night the people will be uglier and stupider, the fixtures more hideous, the waiters ruder, the music more grating on and on like a speedup movie into a nightmare vortex of mechanical disintegration and meaningless change. (46)

To escape his own perceptions "I wanted to leave Lima right away. This feeling of urgency has followed me like my ass all over South America. . . . Where am I going in such a hurry? . . . Suddenly I have to leave right now" (46). Having discarded hope of Yage deliverance, Burroughs reveals the true force which galvanizes him into such furious movement--the horrific perceptual implications of the withdrawal experience.

In Junkie Lee presents a short preview of the Yage experience when he discusses his experiments with Peyote (another native hallucinogen) in Mexico City. A companion remarks to Lee that some junkies have been able to quit narcotics with the use of Peyote: "'It seems like they
didn't want junk when they started using peyote" (149). Clearly, this remark predicts Lee's optimism regarding Yage's power to make junk unnecessary. And beyond this, Yage's reputed efficacy in allowing contact with the Indian mentality is foreshadowed by Lee's experience with Peyote:

Our faces swelled under the eyes and our lips got thicker through some glandular action of the drug. We actually looked like Indians. The others claimed they felt primitive and were laying around on the grass and acting the way they figured Indians act. (149)

Lee, however, is having none of it: "I didn't feel any different from ordinary except high like on benny." When Lee does experience Peyote visions, they gravitate inevitably toward "the final place where the human road ends":

In one dream, I was coming down with rabies. I looked in the mirror and my face changed and I began howling. In another dream I had a chlorophyll habit. Me and about five other chlorophyll addicts are waiting to score on the landing of a cheap Mexican hotel. We turn green and no one can kick a chlorophyll habit. One shot and you're hung for life. We are turning into plants. (150)

Lee's Peyote experience performs in miniature the Yage experience--the optimism regarding kicking junk for good, the presumed telepathic contact with Indians, and the
recurrence of the horrified perception of the return to
the "crustacean horror."

More than anything else, it is Yage's reputed telepathic
potential which seduces Lee into accepting it as a possible
salvation from his narrowed-down life as a junkie: "Yage
is supposed to increase telepathic sensitivity. . . . I
do want usable knowledge of telepathy. What I look for
in any relationship is contact on the non-verbal level of
intuition and feeling, that is, telepathy" (152). It
should be noticed, however, that Lee proposes an increase
in a mode of communication directly related to his cellular
sensitivity to junk neighborhoods—as well as to his
customary method of "receiving" for the most part hostile
places and personalities. When Lee meets Herman, for
example, "waves of hostility and suspicion flowed out from
his large brown eyes like some sort of television broadcast.
The effect was almost like a physical impact" (17). And
then there is Gene Doolie:

When one personality meets another for
the first time, there is a period of
mutual examination on the intuitive
level of empathy and identification.
But it was impossible to relate one's
self to Doolie in any way. He was simply
the focal point for a hostile intrusive
force. (60)
In Panama, the civil servants, instead of sending out hostile emanations, send nothing at all: "You can not contact a civil servant on the level of intuition and empathy. He just does not have a receiving set, and he gives out like a dead battery" ("In Search" 9). Part of the dream of Yage is the non-verbal contact with less discouraging, more like-minded individuals—or "the perfectly spontaneous, perfectly responsive companion," as Alan Ansen styles him.27 Paul Bowles reports that Yage is, more than any other, a group drug, its particular property being the facilitation of mental telepathy and emotional empathy among those who have taken it. He Burroughs insisted that with it communication was possible with the Indians, although it made him violently ill.28

The paradox (so reminiscent of James Lee) is that Burroughs had to travel alone into forbidding environments to establish a means of communication--and then into situations where the only others around were Indians.29

"In Search" is a frustrating collection of letters because of the brevity of Burroughs' description and analysis of the awaited Yage state of being. For example, Burroughs' first dose of Yage occasions dreams of a composite city (the forerunner to the Composite City in Naked Lunch), but he leaves Yage's role in the dream up in the air:
"I can not say whether these dreams had any connection with Yage" (21). Burroughs eventually describes one Yage session, but contents himself with the front end of the experience:

Blue flashes passed in front of my eyes. The Hut took on an archaic far-Pacific look with Easter Island heads carved in the support posts. The assistant was outside lurking there with the obvious intent to kill me. I was hit by violent, sudden nausea and rushed for the door . . . . An uncontrollable mechanical silliness took possession of me. Hebrephrenic meaningless repetitions. Larval beings passed before my eyes in a blue haze, each one giving an obscene, mocking squak (I later identified this squaking as the croaking of frogs)--I must have vomited six times. I was on all fours convulsed with spasms of nausea. I could hear retching and groaning as if I was someone else. (29-30)

Burroughs then takes six nembutals and, despite some fever, apparently sleeps without further incident. While being suggestive, Burroughs does not systematically assess the implications of Yage. For example, the final sentence of his description faintly evokes the phenomenon of personality transfer, but the reader must wait until the later books to get any idea what this means on an imaginative level—rampant metamorphoses in Naked Lunch, for instance, or the "Who Am I To Be Critical?" chapter of The Soft Machine, where Burroughs' persona changes bodies and outlook with
a young Indian after a medicine man gives them a dose of Yage. More immediately important, however, is the noticeable similarity between the state of Yage intoxication and the state of withdrawal. Burroughs' 1956 letter to The British Journal of Addiction formally recognizes this unusual affinity: "The similarity between withdrawal phenomena and certain drug intoxication is striking. . . . Paranoid ideas are frequent. Bannisteria Caapi specifically reproduces the state of withdrawal." Burroughs also notices the pre-eminence of the color blue in withdrawal and the tendency of "familiar objects . . . to stir with a writhing furtive life." Though it is apparent that something happened in Columbia which prompted Burroughs to affirm his original speculations regarding Yage, one is forced to the bizarre conclusion that Burroughs' search through South America resulted in an approximate duplication of the metabolic and perceptual chaos which is withdrawal.

"In Search," then, is a travel book which displays scientific, political, and social interest--but not terribly informative on the subject of Yage and telepathy. As Yage recedes in importance, the search becomes everything, occasioning a new mythology for Burroughs himself, one which lifts his life from the degrading polarity of street-corner and local precinct cell. By entering the aboriginal
jungle (where the drug taker's archetypal role of healer and prophet still manifests itself\textsuperscript{32}) Burroughs constructs surprisingly legitimate sources of authority. The realities of deviancy would make such an extension impossible in the United States: "South America does not force people to be deviants. You can be queer or a drug addict and still maintain position. \ldots In the U.S. you have to be a deviant or exist in dreary boredom. \ldots Make no mistake all intellectuals are deviants in the U.S." \textsuperscript{41} Burroughs discovers a new respectability in South America as a scientific adventurer into largely unassessed areas. Instead of the author of a junkie's confession, he spreads the word among his associates in Columbia that he has written a presumably technical book on marijuana. William Burroughs Jr. recalls that "there was a general conspiracy in the family to convince me that Bill was an explorer, probably because of his South American sortie for Yage \ldots ."\textsuperscript{33} A deviant embarrassing to the family has all of a sudden transformed himself into a scientist-explorer--almost (like James Lee) a romantic legend.

As has been noticed, Burroughs remains faithful to his junk origins, but in his new role as explorer-scientist he seems nothing like the junk-sick character drifting into town on the look out for the junk quarter: "For a jungle
trip you need medicines: snake bite serum, penicillin, entreoviolformo and aralen are essentials. A hammock, a blanket and a rubber bag known as a tula to carry your gear in" (13). On the surface, it would seem that nothing could keep such a considered assault on the jungle from succeeding. And yet the story of "In Search" is one of continual hassles and delays, most of them deriving from the inefficient bureaucratic network which impedes movement through Columbia during civil war: "Travel in Columbia is difficult even with the soundest credentials. I have never seen such ubiquitous and annoying police" (25-26). Burroughs is actually put under town arrest in one Columbian village (for a clerical error in his passport) and on another occasion is forced to remain in a village until an airplane arrives:

Sure you think it's romantic at first but wait til you sit there five days onna sore ass sleeping in Indian shacks and eating yoka and some hunka nameless meat like the smoked pancreas of a two toed sloth and all night you hear them fiddle fucking with the motor . . . . (33)

Burroughs presents the humorous image of an intrepid explorer who cannot manipulate the cumbersome machinery of the modern world well enough to even get into the jungle, let alone
accomplish his announced mission. When he finally does
score for specimens of Yage, it is as though the primitive
drug was waiting just outside the city limits. A German
landowner hears the nature of Burroughs' interest: "A half
hour later I had 20 pounds of Yage vine. No trek through
virgin jungle and some old white haired character saying,
'I have been expecting you my son.' A nice German 10 minutes
from Macao" (28). Burroughs ridicules the myth he has
constructed for himself.

Ever since *Innocents Abroad*, travelling Americans have
been making fun of their own pretensions. By deflating the
explorer myth, Burroughs enters into this lively tradition
based upon misadventure:

On my way back to Bogota with nothing
accomplished. I have been conned by
medicine men (the most inveterate drunk,
liar and loafer in the village is in-
variably the medicine man), incarcerated
by the law, rolled by a local hustler
(I thought I was getting that innocent
back woods ass, but the kid had been to
bed with six American oil men, a Swedish
Botanist, a Dutch Ethnographer, a Capuchin
father known locally as The Mother
Superior, a Bolivian Trotskyite on the
lam, and jointly fucked by the Cocoa
Commission and Point Four). Finally I
was prostrated by malaria. (19-20)

The influence of commerce, science, religion, radical politics,
and foreign aid stand between Burroughs and that "innocent
back woods ass"--between Burroughs and the original South America. Comically, Burroughs presents himself as certainly as dedicated to the blandishments of attractive and willing boys as he is to the mission at hand. Of course, *Junkie* predicted these sudden lapses of attention--"I should have been more alert, of course," Lee remarks, "but I never could mix vigilance with sex" (85)--but the difference is that Burroughs now sees the humor in the situation:

_Ho hum dept._ Rolled again. My glasses and a pocket knife. Losing all my fucking valuables in the service. This is a nation of kleptomaniacs. In all my experience as a homosexual I have never been the victim of such idiotic pilferings of articles of no conceivable use to anyone else. Glasses and traveller's checks yet. Trouble is I share with the late Father Flanagan--he of Boy's Town--the deep conviction that there is no such thing as a bad boy. (42)

And to make the expedition more chaotic, Burroughs seeks assistance at the University of Bogota where in Kafkaesque fashion "people rush out of offices and claim some object from the litter in the hall and have it carried back into their offices. The porters sit around on crates smoking and greeting everybody as 'Doctor!'" (12). Burroughs joins an expedition with the Cocoa Commission in which strife between the British and Columbian contingents makes any
research impossible. The search for Yage deteriorates (as does Burroughs' cosmic vision) in an absurd shambles. He actually seems lucky to have come out of the journey with any information--or personal effects--at all.

What distinguishes "In Search" from Junkie is Burroughs' newly-enacted faculty for self-ridicule, even while (let it be noted) taking the formal objectives of the expedition--information on telepathy, local folkways, the political atmosphere--to be of maximum importance. Of course, this parodic impulse can be explained in part by the relative informality of writing to a sympathetic friend, especially when compared with the chilling chore of writing from exile to a generally hostile public, as Burroughs had done in Junkie. Nevertheless, Burroughs, by the writing of "In Search," has formally developed the concept of the routine, the influence of which spills over into all the letters. The routine: black satire intended to shock and amuse, morality and humor in an obscene position, "the lecture and the Tom Sawyer handstand meant to impress the work's blaue Blume."34

The one routine which remains intact is the parody of the true love confession, the Billy Bradshinkel routine added as a postscript to the first letter. The routine is apparently prompted by a nostalgic outburst in the body of
the letter: "I remembered a prohibition era road house of my adolescence and the taste of gin rickeys in a mid west summer. (Oh my God! And the August moon in a violet sky and Billy Bradshinkel's cock. How sloppy can you get?)" (8)

In the routine Burroughs sees just how sloppy he can get, spinning a tearful tale out of the death a young homosexual love. Before anyone gets the idea he means it, however, he adds, "And I got a silo of queer corn where that come from. Another routine: A man who manufactures dreams to order. Any kind you want and he guarantees you'll believe they happened just that way—(As a matter of fact I have just about sold myself Billy Bradshinkel)" (9). In a routine such as this one Burroughs discovers a technique whereby he can entertain attacks of nostalgia (The Professor in Naked Lunch: "'The nostalgia fit is on me boys and will out willy silly . . . boys walk down the carny Midway eating pink spun sugar . . . " [84]) and then dismiss them as disgusting and embarrassing wet dreams. During the routine, Burroughs would undoubtedly agree with the Nathanael West of The Dream Life of Balso Snell: "An intelligent man finds it easy to laugh at himself, but his laughter is not sincere if it is thorough. . . . The ritual of feeling demands burlesque and, whether the burlesque is successful or not, a laugh. . . ."35

The same question of the thoroughness of Burroughs'
laugh arises with the viciously and scatologically satiric routines which implicate Burroughs as a satirist of such overweening disgust that, like the satyrs of formal Elizabethan satire, the mud sometimes splatters back on himself. 36

Before the case becomes so extreme, however, Burroughs can seem nothing more than a practical spoiler, a harmless version of A.J. in Naked Lunch: "Recall walking by some American women in the corridor who looked like officers' wives. One of them was saying, 'I don't know why but I just can't eat sweets.' 'You got diabetes lady,' I said. They all whirled around and gave me an outraged stare" (7). 37 Decidedly more purulent is the dream that Burroughs records: "The English and French delegates did shit on the floor, and tearing the Treaty of Seville into strips with such merriment did wipe their backsides with it, seeing which the Spanish delegate withdrew from the conference" (35). But of course the most notable example of black satire, "Roosevelt After Inauguration," is announced in "In Search" ("Enclose a routine I dreamed up. The idea did come to me in a dream from which I woke up laughing--" [42]) but waited until being published by Floating Bear to appear in public, having been "bricked out of the City Lights Volume by paranoid printers in England." One sample selection:
Roosevelt forced that august body [The Supreme Court] one after the other, on threat of immediate reduction to the rank of Congressional Lavatory Attendants, to submit to intercourse with a purple assed baboon, so that venerable, honored men surrendered themselves to the embraces of a lecherous snarling simian, while Roosevelt and his strumpet wife and the veteran brown nose Harry Hopkins, smoked a communal hookah of hashish, watch the lamentable sight with cackles of obscene laughter. ... In the course of time, the Supreme Court came to consist of nine purple assed baboons, and Roosevelt, claiming to the only one able to interpret their decisions, thus gained control of the highest tribunal in the land.38

In this fashion Burroughs becomes a political spoiler, reducing the sacred cows to purple assed baboons. The point, however, is not really whether this is effective Swiftian satire. More important, Burroughs has found a technique whereby he can distance himself from the two complementary directions in which withdrawal drags human consciousness--toward nostalgia and toward entropic hallucination. He has imposed upon withdrawal a workable literary form.

The real ancestry of the routine goes back to Junkie, where so often characters carry on what amount to talking jags, never depending upon veracity to carry the story but rather the humor and interest it can arouse. Jack, for
example, "was an inveterate liar who seemed to lie more for himself than for any visible audience" (15). And Joe the Mex "was a liar, and like most liars, he was constantly changing his stories, altering time and personnel from one telling to the next" (43). And there is Bill Gains: "One of Bill's most distasteful conversation routines consisted by detailed bulletins on the state of his bowels" (59). And then there is Old Ike, who will always tell a story if there is anyone to listen: "'I remember once out by Mary Island. We was on the boat and the Colonel got drunk and fell in the water and come near drowning with his two pistolas. We had a hell of a time to get him out.' Ike blew through the needle" (137). The routine, while being firmly based in his junk experience—the garrulous junkie either feeling sociable after a shot or suffering the verbal excretion which accompanies withdrawal—is Burroughs' studied response to the keen poignance and the fearsome desolation of withdrawal. The routine will serve as his major means of self-defense in *Naked Lunch*.

It is not productive to righteously promote, or undermine, *Naked Lunch*’s position as one of the more interesting and challenging novels in post-War America. The *Times Literary Supplement* graphically illustrated the futility of resolving the issue that *Naked Lunch* creates in its
"Ugh" correspondence, the question finally settling down comfortably into filth and its artistic uses. As with Crowley's notorious *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*, the uncritical outrage, and rapture, precipitated by *Naked Lunch* 's appearance (as *The Naked Lunch* in the 1959 Olympia Press edition) indicates nothing so much as individual reactions to drug addiction, sadistic eroticism, and what might be called the idiom of degeneracy (or urban decadence). Burroughs has remarked that "some people have much more tolerance for unusual happenings than others." Perhaps it is as simple as that. Certainly lack of tolerance allowed *Naked Lunch* to become (indisputably) a "footnote in the history of censorship," and certainly something as indefensible refuses to take from *Naked Lunch* the significance of an extraordinary mind interpreting the personal implications of opiate addiction: the novel is at least worthy of the same respect accorded De Quincey's *Confessions*. At the Boston trial Ginsberg had this to say: "He [Burroughs] really confessed completely, put everything down so that anybody could see it. . . . There is absolutely nothing hidden or left out." It seems entirely appropriate that this special emergence from death to life--withdrawal--should be the occasion for such a bringing forth.

The opening words of *Naked Lunch* plunge the reader
(or, more appropriately, the listener) into a consciousness imprisoned by fear: "I can feel the heat closing in, feel them out there making their moves, setting up their devil doll stool pigeons, crooning over my spoon and dropper I throw away at Washington Square Station . . . ." Reminiscent of the Editor's "hophead hunches," the telepathic prescience of the narrator (who we assume to be the familiar William Lee) operates as an alert system, touching off adrenal fear. It is difficult to determine, however, whether the "copper jitters" are a legitimate assessment of the situation (anyone can be an enemy, even old friends) or an unnerving fantasizing paranoia; the "jitters" assist survival (by ordering evasion and flight) but they also dismantle any sense of well-being. As in *Junkie*, the cumulative pressure of pushing junk to unreliable customers creates the basic anxiety of the pusher: "And if my kid customers ever hit the stand: 'He force me to commit all kinda awful sex acts in return for junk' I could kiss the street good-bye" (7). The conception of the police as malevolent voodoo technicians--"I knew they were out there powowing and making their evil fuzz magic, putting dolls of me in Leavenworth" (5)--underscores Lee's utter helplessness: he is a hunted man with no means of defense other than intuition and flight.

The extension of this overwhelming fear of police
interference is the "stasis horror" which had sent Burroughs himself into headlong travel through South America and eventually to terminal addiction in Tangier. In the first chapter of *Naked Lunch* Lee flees from New York and pushes into the heart of America (going west, strangely enough, instead of south, as in *Junkie*):

> And the U.S. drag closes around us like no other drag in the world, worse than the Andes . . . and what hits you when you get off the Malmo Ferry in (no juice tax on ferry) Sweden knocks all that cheap, tax free juice right out of you and brings you all the way down . . . . But there is no drag like U.S. drag. You can't see it, you don't know where it comes from. (12)

Wholesale denunciations such as these tell us more about Lee's habitual reaction to location than they do about the actual environment which he encounters. No place offers any security to a psyche dominated by the fear of "an irritating, dunderscript, darkish man who would rush in when I was about to take a shot or go to bed with a boy." Evil stalks the internal landscape: "America is not a young land: it is old and dirty and evil before the settlers, before the Indians. The evil is there waiting" (11). Anterior to the bitter social criticism with which Burroughs joins such inversely patriotic writers as Henry Miller and Nathanael
West ("In lifeproof houses they hover over the young, sop up a little of what they shut out" [11]) is the persuaded suspicion that behind the forms of civilization, just out of sight, a malignant force is at work. As early as the preface of *Junkie*, this conviction has sponsored adolescent gestures of freedom: "The environment was empty, the antagonist hidden, and I drifted into solo adventures."

Lee's flight can be seen as not simply an evasion of the police but as a radical means of pacifying the native dread swollen to incredible proportion by the realities of addiction.

Along with the "copper jitters" and the "stasis horrors," the opening chapter records examples of drug-induced psychoses, all of which invoke extreme states of fear. Old Ike reminisces: "I was travelling with Irene Kelly and her was a sporting woman. In Butte, state on Montany, she gets the coke horrors and run through the hotel screaming Chinese coppers chase her with meat cleavers." Ike also remembers "this cop in Chicago sniff coke used to come in form of crystals, blue crystals. So he go nuts and start screaming the Federals is after him and run down this alley and stick his head in the garbage can" (18). Lee recalls taking a morning speedball (a combination shot of morphine and cocaine): "1890 cops with black mustaches block the doors and lean
in through the windows snarling their lips back from blue
and bold embossed badges . . . . Purposeful schizophrenic
detectives sniff at your chamber pot" (19). In Cuernavaca
or Taxco (he is not quite sure which) Lee and Jane visit
a pious teahead who "is putting down junk and coming on
with tea": "I take three drags, Jane looked at him and
her flesh crystallized. I leaped up screaming 'I got the
fear!' and ran out of the house" (20). In the context of
the first chapter, the "coke horrors" and the "tea fear"
provoke similar states of acute anxiety. Significantly,
the only remedy for the "coke horrors" is its natural
opposite, morphine: "Sit back and play it cool and shoot
in plenty of the GI M" (19). The same might be said of the
"copper jitters," the "stasis horrors," the "tea fear"--
and the disruptive effects of withdrawal.

These various syndromes of fear might seem random reactions
of particularly vulnerable individuals if it were not that
Burroughs clearly establishes withdrawal as a central source
of fear: "I have noticed two special reactions of early
withdrawal: (1) Everything looks threatening; (2) mild
paranoia. The doctors and nurses appear as monsters of evil" (242). Undoubtedly withdrawal is not the only source of
fear in Naked Lunch. Burroughs notes, for example, that
the "section describing The City and the Meet Café written
in state of Yage intoxication . . . " (109). And what is more, he has stated that "I owe many of the scenes in 'Naked Lunch' directly to the use of cannabis." Nevertheless, in Burroughs' system the presence of these other drugs leads us back to withdrawal:

The similarity between withdrawal phenomena and certain states of drug intoxication is striking. Hashish, Bannisteria Caapi (Harmaline), Peyote (Mescaline) produce states of acute sensitivity, with hallucinatory viewpoint. . . . Paranoid ideas are frequent. (243)

The grotesque creatures that populate Naked Lunch can best be approached in terms of the transformations effected by withdrawal (along with all the other jitters, horrors, and fears). Instead of an actual stool pigeon or a narcotics agent or a pusher, Lee perceives "monsters of evil" reduced to loathsome mutations according to their compulsions-- Willy the Disk (a human radar gadget fed on junk), Bradley the Buyer (an anonymous policeman who eventually feeds on the torture he imposes), and "Fats" Terminal (the archetypal pusher fed by the junkies he supposedly services). Lee sees in the major symbols of American addiction that "final place where the human road ends"; as in Junkie, the perceptions of withdrawal involve berserk paranoia which only on recollection emerge as systematic satire.
The rushing voice which opens *Naked Lunch* defends itself from incapacitating fear by assuming the role of fast-talking con man who cannot stop talking until he has fleeced his mark, the "young, good looking, crew cut, Ivy League, advertising exec type fruit" (1). Though it is possible to explain Lee's startling exhibitionism in the first chapter as a predatory W.C. Field's routine, or as a means of discharging the pressure from his close call with the agent in the white trench coat, it seems more likely that Lee is again laboring under the influence of the involuntary garrulity which results from withdrawal: "I was uncontrollably sociable and would talk to anybody I could pin down. I forced distastefully intimate confidences on perfect strangers" (*Junkie* 130). The cellular panic of withdrawal occasions an almost physical need to shock and enthrall, an amused relish for ghoulish anecdotes. Jack's routine in *Junkie* suggests the lineage of this disturbing antic sense:

"My partner was going through the joint. The guy was sleeping, and I was standing over him with a three-foot length of pipe I found in the bathroom. The pipe had a faucet on the end of it, see? All of a sudden he comes up and jumps straight out of bed, running. I let him have it with the faucet end, and he goes on running right out into the other room, the blood spurting out of his head ten feet every
time his heart beat." He made a pumping motion with his hand. "You could see the brain there and the blood coming out of it." Jack began to laugh uncontrollably. "My girl was waiting out in the car. She called me--ha-ha-ha!--she called me--ha-ha-ha!--a cold-blooded killer." He laughed until his face was purple. (18)

Rather like the English voice of In Our Time ("It was absolutely topping") Lee disguises disgusting memories as appetizing light entertainment:

"Ever see a hot shot, kid? I saw the Gimp catch one in Philly. We rigged his room with a one-way whore-house mirror and charged a sawski to watch it. He never got the needle out of his arm. They don't if the shot is right. That's the way they find them, dropper full of clotted blood hanging out of a blue arm. The look in his eyes when it hit--Kid, it was tasty.

. . ." (2)

This burst of sado-erotic conversation aimed at the fruit functions as a noisy interlude within the major movement of the first chapter: the flight from both the actual police and, one feels more importantly, the desolated landscape of his dislocated perceptions.

Despite the gush of talk and movement, however, the narrative of the first chapter occasionally slows down almost to silence--or sight--when the bumptious William Lee becomes a kind of medium for junk-sick junkies everywhere:
. . . Bart knew a few old relics from hop smoking times, spectral janitors, grey as ashes, phantom porters sweeping out dusty halls with a slow old man's hand, coughing and spitting in the junk-sick dawn, retired asthmatic fences in theatrical hotels, Pantopon Rose the old madam from Peoria, stoical Chinese waiters never show junk sickness. Bart sought them out with his old junky walk, patient and cautious and slow, dropped into their bloodless hands a few hours of warmth. (4-5)

Somehow so appropriately, the urban character of the old-time junkie presents itself in stilled poetry which hushes the rapping addict, disperses him as widely as America dispersed Whitman:  

The world network of junkies, tuned on a cord of rancid jissom, tying up in furnished rooms, shivering in the junk-sick morning. (Old Pete men suck the black smoke in the Chink laundry back room and Melancholy Baby dies of an overdose of time or cold turkey withdrawal of breath.) In Yemen, Paris, New Orleans, Mexico City and Istanbul . . . The living and the dead, in sickness or on the nod, hooked or kicked or hooked again, come in on the junk beam . . . . (6)

Lee sees back into the past through the contemplation of junk, the "panhandler of dreams, past invading the present, rancid magic of slot machines and roadhouses" (11). The nostalgia which accompanies withdrawal becomes a dirge to
Black's pre-War criminal world: "(Through the bars of East St. Louis lies the dead frontier, riverboat days.)" (11) Whether Bill Gains "huddled in someone else's overcoat looking like a 1910 banker with paresis" (4), or "The Old Chinaman [who] dips river water into a rusty tin can, washes down a yen pox hard and black as cinder" (7), the aggrieved gentility of the addict soothes the mind electrified with fear.

Due to the generally held belief that Naked Lunch chronicles the progress of a particular cure (specifically, Burroughs' apomorphine cure, ca. 1956), the temptation is to discover in the novel a linear structure according to how one supposes a drug cure to take place. The Lee we meet at the beginning of Naked Lunch should therefore be quite different from the one we meet in the concluding "Hauser and O'Brien" chapter. McConnell believes, for example, that the stylistic development toward the "absolutely denotative language" of Burroughs' 1956 letter to The British Journal of Addiction (included as an appendix to the Grove Press editions) suggests the process of withdrawal: "Bracketed between the diminishing realism of the induction and the growing realism of the denouement, the Interzone section is forced inevitably into the fictive shape of a withdrawal symptom . . . ." To identify
"growing realism" with effected cure, however, seems a dubious procedure. By virtue of a misleading premise, McConnell has arrived at a defensible conclusion.

To take tough, realistic narration as evidence of cure results in ludicrous inconsistencies in Burroughs' work up to and including _Naked Lunch_. The style of the "Hauser and O'Brien" chapter roughly corresponds with the hardboiled style of _Junkie_. Are we to assume, then, that _Junkie_ composed itself in an exclusive language of cure? The realism of the concluding chapter deteriorates in the last twenty lines, becoming fragmented and obscurely speculative. Has there been an interruption in the cure? The "Atrophied Preface" (the surreal postscript which follows the "Hauser and O'Brien" chapter) returns full-force to the collage organization of various parts of "Interzone." Does Burroughs intend to suggest a relapse? Furthermore, Burroughs demonstrates that he can manage concrete details of observed reality during the supposed withdrawal sections (in the "Hospital" chapter, for example). Imposing a structure upon _Naked Lunch_ in terms of style does not assist in discovering the presence, or the significance, of cure in the novel.

A close study of the story of Hauser and O'Brien does help the consideration of where _Naked Lunch_ has been and
where the invalid-survivor is going. As McConnell notices, this final chapter departs from the fleeting tenor of the middle of the novel by presenting the reader with a straightforward, consecutive plot. Briefly, the vaudeville cop team of Hauser and O'Brien are ordered to pick up a man named William Lee at a hotel on 103rd Street. They enter Lee's room while he is tying up for a shot. In return for being allowed to take the shot, Lee promises to set up a well-known pusher. After, taking the shot--"I pressed the plunger down with my thumb, feeling the junk pound through my veins to feed a million junk-hungry cells, to bring strength and alertness to every nerve and muscle" (211-12)--Lee squirts alcohol into Hauser's eyes with his syringe, gets a gun out of his suitcase, and shoots both detectives. He immediately hits the streets, scores for fifty dollars worth of heroin. After spending the night in the Everhard baths, he calls the Narcotics Department, asking to speak with either Hauser or O'Brien. The Department claims never to have heard of the detectives. Driving away in a taxi, Lee concludes that he has been "occluded from space-time" and that "the Heat was off me from here on out" (217).

As is obvious, Lee is still very much a junkie. His first thought after killing the detectives is obtaining enough heroin to remain mobile. It was Lee's lack of junk
in Junkie which resulted in his first arrest--"... I was already sick and did not have the energy to leave town" (39). In the final chapter junk militantly insures Lee's survival: junk stimulates the body, and the accoutrements of junk--the syringe and alcohol--serve as an effective weapon. Perhaps more important, however, is the return to the crucial moment of both Junkie and the opening chapter of Naked Lunch--the heat closing in on the vulnerable New York addict. In psychologically portentous fashion the "Hauser and O'Brien" chapter reworks Lee's relationship to the "recurrent cop of my dreams ... who would rush in when I was about to take a shot or go to bed with a boy."

"Hauser and O'Brien" may evoke the old 103rd Street scene, but it is clear that the story takes place in a different time and features a radically altered Lee. Most strikingly, Lee has aged, has become himself one of the old-timers, as have Hauser and O'Brien: "They been on the City Narcotics squad for 20 years. Oldtimers like me. I been on the junk 16 years" (209). Instead of going back to the memory of his life in New York during the Forties, Lee seems to be constructing a fantasy in present time, somewhere in the middle Fifties. O'Brien himself had arrested Lee for a violation of Public Health Law 334--"That was about 15 years ago. My first arrest" (213).
Apparently, Lee gives himself the chance to imagine himself not as he was then (helpless) but as he imagines himself to be now—capable, assured, on the offensive. Lee discharges a sixteen-year-old obsession through a fantasy cop killing. Like the routine man in "In Search," Lee "manufactures memories to order. Any kind you want and he guarantees you'll believe they happened just that way."

When Lee discovers that Hauser and O'Brien no longer exist in present time—that there are no more Anglo-Saxons on the squad—it is problematic whether the cop killing fantasy represents a meaningful psychological achievement or a gratuitous episode which recedes in importance, leaving the auspicious knowledge that the fantasy is no longer necessary, like junk. Certainly the fantasy (the junk origin revisited) fades away like an old film, sharp yet incorporeal—and Lee himself fades into an irretrievable past, leaving the cured Burroughs to remember, lament, and go forward.

Within the story of Lee and Hauser and O'Brien are hints of a new source of identity which distinguishes Lee from the garrulous junkie of the first chapter. Even the fantasy police know Lee to be something more than a run-of-the-mill junkie. First of all, the Lieutenant gives the two detectives unusual orders: "Don't take time to shake
the place down. Except bring in all books, letters, manuscripts. Anything printed, typed or written" (209). Lee the junkie has apparently been promoted to Lee the subversive underground writer. It is possible that Lee is recalling his New Orleans arrest when his letters served as incriminating evidence (the Federal agent who read his letters at that time was Houser) but it seems more likely that Lee has found a new identity (a new "reference system") which exists in tension with the junk self. After Lee kills the two detectives, he gathers up his essential materials: "My hands were already reaching for what I needed, sweeping my notebooks into a briefcase with my works, junk, and a box of shells" (213). Lee has become in the fantasy a kind of composite junkie and writer, incapable of division until the final realization that the junkie belongs to the past and the writer to the future.

The final twenty lines of Naked Lunch require close inspection to see how difficult a separation takes place between the old 103rd Street self and the adventurous writer of prophetic science fiction:

In the cab I realized what had happened. . . . I had been occluded from space-time like an eel's ass occludes when he stops eating on the way to Sargasso. . . . Locked out. . . . Never again would I have a Key, a Point of Intersection. . . . The Heat was off
me from here on out. . . . relegated with
Hauser and O'Brien to a landlocked junk
past where heroin is always twenty-eight
dollars an ounce and you can score for
yen pox in the Chink Laundry of Sioux
Falls. . . . Far side of the world's mirror,
moving into the past with Hauser and O'Brien . . .
clawing at a not-yet of Telepathic Bureauc-
racies, Time Monopolies, Control Drugs,
Heavy Fluid Addicts:
"I thought of that three hundred years
ago."
"Your plan was unworkable then and
useless now. . . . Like Da Vinci's flying
machine plans. . . ." (217)

Lee-Burroughs' junk self joins Hauser and O'Brien in "a
landlocked junk past" recalled by an anonymous Lexington
addict in Junkie: "That was back in '33. Twenty-eight
dollars an ounce" (75). Similarly, sixteen years of
addiction separates Lee-Burroughs from the frontier Chinese
laundry of Black's world of opium smoking thieves. As with
Cocteau's cure, there is a sense of heartbreak barely
mitigated by the prospect of unimpeded literary (and cinematic)
production. Schooled in the dynamics of addiction, Burroughs-
as-author appears at the very end of Naked Lunch as a
futuristic, esoteric, controversial force in literature,
the manufacturer of literary "flying machine plans." The
"Hauser and O'Brien" chapter is an allegory of deliverance
followed by a difficult exegesis of the relatively straight-
forward text.
Other paradigms of cure help focus the significance of this final occlusion from space-time. One obvious example of an allegorical performance of cure occurs in the "Hospital" chapter where Burroughs-as-patient is noticing the "last, all-out yen" which "seems to gain a dream power" (57). The fantasy of the Guard immediately follows. Fortunately for Burroughs, the Guard spends most of his time grooming since no one has ever arrived at the Frontier before. The Guard is wearing "a uniform of human skin, black buck jacket with carious yellow teeth buttons . . . . " (Earlier Burroughs mentions in a note that "junkies lose their yellow fangs feeding the monkey" [15].) The Guard apparently watches over the perimeters of the junk world--to walk across the border is to escape from addiction. Dramatically, Burroughs proposes himself as a lone survivor. Despite the Guard's incredulity, "I walk through" (58). Though a slight (and one suspects premature) allegory sandwiched between factual hospital observations and hilarious routines, the fantasy of the Guard outlines a Junkie's Progress, one which signals Burroughs determination for cure, as well as signalling one possible way of formulizing his triumph over the "nightmare interlude of cellular panic" which is withdrawal. "Hauser and O'Brien" likewise signals a fugitive discovery of the will to resist the demoralizing
dynamics of addiction.

Turning back to the main body of *Naked Lunch*, however, one misses a sense of consecutive movement toward the momentous—if disguised—showdown of the "Hauser and O'Brien" chapter. The apparent tracklessness of *Naked Lunch*'s interior is due in part to the fact that the allegorical inner debate over addiction does not account for the totality of the novel. In fact, it is difficult at times to relate to each other a variety of authorial presences—the confessing addict, the satiric prankster, the political analyst, the moralist, the scientist, the innovative literary technician. But the opening and closing chapters suggest the governing role of addiction within the intentions of the novel. Though *Naked Lunch* can be assessed as something more than a report upon the psychological, social, and economic conditions of the junkie as recollected during withdrawal, it nevertheless remains that the novel consistently and variously attempts to house addiction-withdrawal in a literary structure, an endeavor at once mechanical and Romantic. It may well be that *Junkie* is more informative regarding the street facts of addiction, but *Naked Lunch* reaches for perceptual disruptions which *Junkie* (due to limitations of technique) could only imply as abstract possibilities.

To find the self-declaring addict in *Naked Lunch* one
would presumably turn to the "Hospital" chapter which features such promising subtitles as "Disintoxication Notes," "Withdrawal Nightmares," and "Habit Notes." But, as with so many other sections of Naked Lunch, this section displays some difficulty in maintaining its form before "time jumps like a broken typewriter" and another fantasy takes over.

Certainly, however, Burroughs provides some useful information regarding "the nightmare interlude of cellular panic, life suspended between two ways of being"--the familiar paranoia, the color blue, everyone looking like a drug addict, dreams of junk, hospital routine, the sordid days of Algier and terminal addiction, the effects of cocaine, how to hit a vein by instinct, and so on. The one formally recognized withdrawal nightmare summons once again the fear of persecution and the addict's compulsion to defend himself:

A mirror-lined café. Empty. . . . Waiting for something. . . . A man appears in a side door. . . . A slight, short Arab dressed in a brown jellaba with grey beard and grey face. . . . There is a pitcher of boiling acid in my hand. . . . Seized by a convulsion of urgency, I throw it in his face. . . ."

(56)

In more casual recordings Burroughs reproduces the random shifts from concrete observation to dream-routine:

Using a new type sleeping pill called
Soneryl. . . . You don't feel sleepy. . . . You shift to sleep without transition, fall abruptly into the middle of a dream. . . . I have been years in a prison camp suffering from malnutrition. . . . The President is a junky but can't take it direct because of his position. So he gets fixed through me. . . . (67)

Having scented an entertainment, Burroughs goes on to discuss the Osmosis Recharge whereby the President and Burroughs come into unspeakable contact. In fact it is difficult to decide whether the "Hospital" chapter exists as a sincere attempt to reproduce the state of withdrawal with factual field notes (the routines thus being data) or as a chance to create amusing juxtapositions:

> The lavatory has been locked for three solid hours. . . . I think they are using it for an operating room. . . .
> NURSE: "I can't find her pulse, doctor."
> Dr. BENWAY: "Maybe she got it up her snatch in a finger stall." (59)

Burroughs transforms into fragmented bits of reporting and burlesque the oppressively solemn hallucinations common to drug confessions since De Quincey; he replaces penitence with irreverent humor; he allows the comic writer to move into the narrative and goose the factual reporter into unseemly hilarity.

This same apparent schizophrenia attacks the sections
donated to the recovery of the Yage state, where again we would expect a certain commitment to hard information, especially since Yage duplicates the "sickness and delirium" of withdrawal, the occasion, Burroughs claims in "Deposition: Testimony Concerning A Sickness," of the entirety of Naked Lunch. And to a certain extent Burroughs does play the role of psychic experimenter, presenting his vision of the Composite City as the certain result of Yage. Burroughs goes back to the ambience of South America to capture the taste and smell of Yage: "Cooking smells of all countries hang over the City, a haze of opium, hashish, the resinous red smoke of Yage, smell of the jungle and salt water and the rotting river and dried excrement and sweat and genitals" (108). More importantly, however, Burroughs characterizes Yage as the antithesis to withdrawal paranoia: "Images fall slow and silent like snow. . . . Serenity . . . All defenses fall . . . everything is free to enter or go out. . . . Fear is simply impossible" (109). And provocatively, metamorphosis appears as a direct function of Yage: "I feel myself turning into a Negress, the black color invading my flesh . . . Convulsions of lust . . . My legs take on a well rounded Polynesian substance" (109). Despite such suggestive variants to withdrawal, the chapter donated to Yage deteriorates into a series of routines involving the
diplomatic brujo, Clem and Jody, and the Prophet. Again the irrepressible spoiling voice of the withdrawing addict (or the comic writer) fractures any sense of consecutive movement toward considered opinions on Yage. It is as though the scientist can only occasionally quell the garrulous junkie who is waiting only for a crack of silence to speak and speak and speak.

The hemmorrhage of talkativeness which accompanies withdrawal finds formal recognition in the body of Naked Lunch. Indiscreet talkers roam through the pages of the novel figuratively urinating--or ejaculating--into their victims' ears. One character remarks, for example, that "I was after being raped myself by a pride of rampant bores" (142). Nothing compares, however, with the Rampant Bores who escape from Benway's Reconditioning Center in Freeland: the "intellectual avant-gardist" who injects his victims with bulbocapnine and spouts scientific "gibberish"; the English Colonial ("So after the third pink gin when he gets to know you, he shifts to dysentery. 'Most extraordinary discharge. More or less of a white yellow color like rancid jissom and stringy you know'" [38-39]); the South American explorer who uses a blow gun with curare darts to paralyze his prey; the exhibitionist who displays trophies received for disgusting degradations ("Stole an opium suppository
out of my grandmother's ass" [41]); and the hypochondriac who requires a straitjacket in order to show his suppurations and scars to the unwilling bystander. Burroughs continually warns the reader of Naked Lunch against the talkative reprobates who have grabbed the microphone and will speak until forcibly cut off. The Professor notices that "if this prolixity be not cut short will succumb to the infirmities of age and join her daughter in formaldehyde" (86). As suspect as the Professor is the Wise Man:

"... and some old whitehaired fuck staggers out to give us the benefit of his ripe idiocy. Are we never to be free of this grey-beard loon lurking in every mountain top in Tibet, subject to drag himself out of a hut in the Amazon, waylay one in the Bowery? 'I've been expecting you, my son.' And he makes with a silo of corn. 'Life is a school where every pupil must learn a different lesson. And now I will unlock my Word Hoard..."

"'I do fear it much.'

"'Nay, nothing shall stem the rising tide.'

"'I can't stem him, boys. Sauve qui peut.'

"'I tell you when I leave the Wise Man I don't even feel like a human. He converting my orgones into dead bullshit.'"

(116)

"And I got a silo of queer corn where that come from," Burroughs writes to Ginsberg, sabotaging the Billy Bradshinkel routine and suggesting the disgust with which he beholds his
own uncontrollable imagination.

The image of the compulsive talker does not exhaust itself in terms of withdrawal and self-ridicule. The Professor's lecture on the Ancient Mariner provides a key to yet another extension of the meaning of the garrulous withdrawing addict:

"He [the Mariner] may be rambling, irrelevant, even crude and rampant senile. But something happens to the Wedding Guest like happens in psychoanalysis when it happens if it happens. If I may be permitted a slight digression . . . an analyst [sic] of my acquaintance does all the talking--patients listen patiently or not. . . . He reminiscences . . . tells dirty jokes (old ones) achieves counterpoints of idiocy undreamed of by The County Clerk. He is illustrating at length that nothing can ever be accomplished on the verbal level. . . . He arrived at his method through observing that The Listener--The Analyst--was not reading the mind of the patient. . . . The patient--The Talker--was reading his mind. . . . That is the patient has ESP awareness of the analyst's dreams and schemes whereas the analyst contacts the patient strictly from front brain. . . . Many agents use this approach--they are notoriously long-winded bores and bad listeners. . . . (87-88)

This passage dignifies the compulsive speaker with a rationale and a purpose beyond the verbal excretion caused by withdrawal. The Professor proposes garrulity as a source of mysterious self-discovery for the Listener-Reader,
as well as a form of disguise for the Speaker-Agent. The reader must be prepared to read the "rambling, irrelevant, even crude and rampant senile" voices in Naked Lunch as significant variants of the confessing voice which means to be taken dead seriously. The great Benway, for example, stands out as the most loquacious medical horror in the novel, typifying Buchenwald attitudes toward medical experimentation--Iris's pure sugar diet or his purely aesthetic operations. The irony is that Benway occasionally serves as Burroughs' mouthpiece on political subjects: "A bureau takes root anywhere in the state, turns malignant like the Narcotic Bureau, and grows and grows, always reproducing more of its kind, until it chokes the host if not controlled and excised" (134). Though exceptional for many reasons, Naked Lunch's refusal to consider character as independant of the confessing addict--and its dedication to withdrawal as a literary mode--defines its special integrity.

Another example of a withdrawal symptom which undergoes radical extension in Naked Lunch is the sexual eruption symbolized by the ceremonial hangings. Repudiating any erotic intention with these controversial scenes, Burroughs writes in the "Deposition" that "certain passages in the book that have been called pornographic were written as a tract against Capital Punishment in the manner of Jonathan
Swift's *Modest Proposal*" (xii). Despite Burroughs' protest, the hanging scenes recall a mode of sado-masochistic eroticism (Roland in *Justine*, for example) which seems to have more to do with the apocalyptic potential of the orgasm than the execution of Caryl Chessman. More important, however, than the erotic effects of the hanging sequences (which are inscrutably personal) are the correspondences which Burroughs develops between demonic sexuality and withdrawal. As has been noticed, Lee's involuntary orgasm during withdrawal evokes the image of the hanged man: "Sparks exploded behind my eyes; my legs twitched--the orgasm of a hanged man when the neck snaps" (*Junkie* 105). In the hanging scenes of *Naked Lunch* orgasm triggers off the memories of youth associated with withdrawal: "He stand up screaming and black blood spurt solid from his last erection, a pale white statue standing there, as if he had stepped whole across the Great Fence, climbed it as innocent and calm as a boy climb the fence to fish in the forbidden pond . . ." (95). The juxtaposition of demonic orgasm against nostalgic memories occurs frequently through the hanging sequences. When Mark reaches orgasm, "a train roar through him whistle blowing . . . boat whistle, foghorn, sky rocket burst over oily lagoons . . ." (95). Like piano music down a windy street and the smell of burning
leaves, the sound of trains comes to stand for an attack of nostalgia incident to orgasm (and junk sickness): "Two boys jacking off under railroad bridge. The train shakes through their bodies, ejaculate them, fades with distant whistle" (81). One character is actually "working on the most marvelous invention . . . a boy who disappears as soon as you come leaving a smell of burning leaves and a sound effect of distant train whistles" (111). This complex matrix involving withdrawal, demonic orgasm, nostalgia (and possibly moral allegory) is a rich literary correlative to the psycho-sexual search for absolution-satiety.

The poetic mode which Burroughs discovers in the process of withdrawal is perhaps most fully realized in the at turns analytic and intentionally delirious "Atrophied Preface"--the retrospective commentary on the junkie's progress toward cure and authorship. Due to its manifest usefulness as a resource for things to say about Naked Lunch-as-literary-experiment, the "Atrophied Preface" (included in the 1959 Olympia Press edition) can easily be overlooked as a forum for some of Burroughs' most characteristic writing on the subject of addiction-withdrawal; despite outbursts of problematic literary criticism, the withdrawal perspective has become a literary instinct, a manneristic interpretation of a particularly suggestive state of being. The "Atrophied
"Preface" is less a commentary upon the body of *Naked Lunch* than a reworking of the withdrawal experience—an attempt to say it all again. A passage which can be taken to mean that *Naked Lunch* is about withdrawal actually triggers memories of withdrawal within the "Atrophied Preface" itself:

Lee The Agent is taking the junk cure . . . space-time trip portentously familiar as junk meet corners to the addict . . . cures past and future shuttle pictures through his spectral substance vibrating in silent winds of accelerated Time. . . . Pick a shot. . . . Any shot. . . . (218)

Burroughs goes on to pull out snapshots of past cures:
"Formal knuckle biting, floor rolling shots in a precinct cell. . . . 'Feel like a shot of Heroin, Bill? Haw Haw Haw!'" (218). More pictures flow into the narrative, this time from Central America where "In Search" began: "Tentative half impressions that dissolve in light . . . pockets of rotten ectoplasm swept out by an old junky coughing and spitting in the sick morning. . . . Old violet brown pictures that curl and crack like mud in the sun: Panama City . . ."

(218-19). After Gains and Lee have bought all the paregoric possible in Panama, "Gains back to Mexico City. . . . Desperate skeleton grin of chronic junk lack glazed over with codeine and goof balls . . ." while Lee enters South America and
withdrawal: "And Lee back to sex and pain and time and Yage, bitter Soul Vine of the Amazon" (219). Oddly enough, it is Cannabis (in the form of Majoun) which occasions acute anxiety in a villa outside Tangier—"and suddenly don't know where I am" (220). Just as Lee jumping up screaming "I got the fear" begins the openly hallucinated routines and allegories of Naked Lunch, Cannabis paranoia overcome ("I decide to play it cool and maybe I will get the orientation before the Owner shows") precipitates authoritative statements on literature, politics, and mysticism. The withdrawal experience (symbolically reproduced with the overdose of Majoun) can now be controlled and put to work.

It is possible, then, that the "Atrophied Preface" is a more refined example of what can be called the language of withdrawal (first attempted by Crowley and extended by Cocteau). It is the language of a consciousness afflicted by memory, reminiscent of Proust and Durrell if it were not that memory accompanies physical pain: "Powder trains burn back through pink convolutions of tumescent flesh... set off flash bulb of orgasm... pin-point photos of arrested motion... smooth brown side twisted to light a cigarette" (234). What might start out as a mock-heroic routine winds up as a bitter dose of nostalgia:
My Viking heart fares over the great brown river where motors put put put in jungle twilight and whole trees float with huge snakes in the branches and sad-eyed lemurs watch the shore, across the Missouri field (The Boy finds a pink arrowhead) out along distant train whistles, comes back to me hungry as a street boy don't know how to peddle the ass God gave him. . . . (230)

And what begins as straight pornography ends with a nostalgic Mid-west image: "Johnny on all fours and Mary sucking him and running her fingers down the thigh backs and light over the outfields of the ball park" (225). The presence of withdrawal as a principle of composition enriches shards of poignant memory: "In a vale of cocaine and innocence sad-eyed youths yodel for a lost Danny Boy" (229) or "'Come and jack off . . .' 1929" (227) or Ginsberg's example of sad resignation: "'Motel . . . Motel . . . Motel . . . broken neon arabesque . . . loneliness moans across the continent like fog horns over still oily waters of tidal rivers" (225-26).

Amid the nostalgia and the routines of the "Atrophied Preface," however, the listener does indeed hear a new voice. Like De Quincey's confessor turned literary theoretician, Burroughs attempts to radically reduce the intentions of Naked Lunch:
There is only one thing a writer can write about: what is in front of his senses at the moment of writing. . . . I am a recording instrument. . . . I do not presume to impose "story" "plot" "continuity" . . . Insofar as I succeed in Direct recording of certain areas of psychic process I may have limited function. . . . I am not an entertainer.

(221)

Of course, this comment does not reflect the experience of *Naked Lunch*, but it does suggest what Burroughs thought at the time of writing the "Preface" regarding the imaginative restoration of the withdrawal experience. By reducing his writing to the recording of psychic process, Burroughs promotes his writing to the status of fact, traditionally the most sought after status in the literature of addiction. Burroughs apparently believed that his credibility goes up in relation to the distance that he can achieve from any taint of literary facility; he transforms his hallucinations into symptoms which can be dispassionately discussed and demonstrated, rather like an anthropologist making field reports of uninvestigated areas.

The field reporter gives way, however, to the voice of the addict freed to make dark prophecies: "The black wind sock of death undulates over the land, feeling, smelling for the crime of separate life, movers of the fear frozen flesh shivering under a vast probability curve" (223-24).
The major tension of much of Burroughs' work—the desire to make apocalyptic prophecies against the obligation to document "the junky naked in sunlight," or Burroughs' perceptions—never quite resolves itself, even when it is believed that Burroughs is always teaching, whether when presenting the facts (letting the facts speak for themselves) or reading the dark events in the wind, dangerously close to "the tiresome old prophet can bore the piss out of you in any space-time direction" (226). Burroughs obviously feels that *Naked Lunch* had been something more than anthropology, much more.

*Naked Lunch* is a blueprint, a How-To Book. . . . Abstract concepts, bare as algebra, narrow down to a black turd or a pair of ageing cajones. . . . How-To extend levels of experience by opening the door at the end of a long hall. . . . Doors that only open in *Silence*. (224)

Repressive newspapers maintain that "'above all the myth of other-level experiences must be eradicated'" (224). *Naked Lunch* attempts to prove otherwise ("I know from my own experience that telepathy is a fact," Lee asserted in *Junkie*). The fatalistic certainties of withdrawal—"The Planet drifts to random insect doom" (224)—make of transcendence an urgent necessity:
This is Revelation and Prophecy of what I can pick up without FM on my 1920 crystal set with antennae of jissom. . . . Gentle reader, we see God through our assholes in the flash bulb of orgasm. . . . Through these orifices transmute your body. . . . The way OUT is the way IN. . . . (229)

Memory (via the orgasm express) leads to transcendence and God. Which is to say, the ordeal of withdrawal leads the junkie to God.

The conclusion of the "Atrophied Preface" for the most part abandons routines, opinions, and prophecies while documenting the "final cure" which signals the completion of Naked Lunch. Instead of the allegory of "Hauser and O'Brien," cure does indeed seem to be "in front of his senses." The scene begins with "Walking in a rubbish heap to the sky . . . scattered gasoline fires . . . smoke hangs black and solid as excrement in the motionless air . . . smudging the white film of noon heat . . . " (234). Lee-Burroughs companion "walks beside me . . . a reflection of my toothless gums and hairless skull . . . flesh smeared over the rotting phosphorescent bones consumed by slow cold fires" (234). (Burroughs' special symptom was the Cold Burn.) A seemingly gratuitous act of violence--immolation with gasoline of a group of natives--signals the completed cure: "white flash. . . . mangled insect screams . . . I woke up
with the taste of metal in my mouth back from the dead . . ." (234). Instead of the persuaded, righteous voice of cure which we might expect, the last words of the "Atrophied Preface" propose no answers ("There is no key, no secret someone else has that he can give you," Lee observes in *Junkie*):

> He stood there in a 1920 straw hat somebody gave him . . . soft mendicant words falling like dead birds in the dark street. . . .
> "No . . . No more . . . No mas . . ."
> A heaving sea of air hammers in the purple brown dusk tainted with rotten metal smell of sewer gas . . . young worker faces vibrating out of focus in yellow halos of carbide lanterns . . . broken pipes exposed. . . .
> "They are rebuilding the City."
> Lee nodded absently. . . . "Yes . . . Always . . ."
> Either way a bad move to The East Wing. . . .
> If I knew I'd be glad to tell you. . . .
> "No good . . . no bueno . . . hustling myself. . . ."
> "No glot . . . C'lon Fliday"

The prophet and the scientist are stilled in the poetry of loss and resignation; the addict's vision of disintegration controls the final moments. And as a final seal, the image of the Chinaman appears yet once again, this time to forbid to the white addict (who had proved himself "so unreliable, dishonest and wrong") opium, security, and warmth.
In "Deposition: Testimony Concerning A Sickness" (included as the introduction to the Grove Press editions of *Naked Lunch*) Burroughs adds the voice of the socially concerned ex-addict to the panoply of voices which make up the casebook of *Naked Lunch*. He urges in unusually earnest tones action against the proliferation of the misery born of junk. Following a major convention of the drug confession, Burroughs introduces the imaginative history of his addiction with a solemn warning against the death-in-life which he has undergone; he has come full circuit, from advocate claiming for junk its due rewards to a persuaded opponent; no longer a way of life, "the junk virus is public health problem number one of the world today" (xii). The hyperbole and melodrama associated with the literature of addiction finds a perhaps unexpected purveyor: "I awoke from The Sickness at the age of forty-five, calm and sane, and in reasonably good health except for a weakened liver and the look of borrowed flesh common to all who survive The Sickness" (v). The addict delivered from a victimized state of moral invalidism steps forward to state the political and economic realities of addiction. The "Deposition" is the *Das Kapital* of the junk world.

Though biologically reformed, Burroughs is still hostile toward the institutions which degrade and exploit the drug
user. He clearly implies, for example, that scientific and medical integrity has been sacrificed to political objectives:

There is no evidence that the use of any hallucinogens results in physical dependence. The action of these drugs is physiologically opposite to the action of junk. A lamentable confusion between the two classes of drugs has arisen owing to the zeal of the U.S. and other narcotic departments. (vi)

Moreover, the much-publicized drive to arrest "higher-ups" only confirms the institutional decision to perpetuate the junk business, since "as long as junk need exists, someone will service it" (viii). And furthermore, even though the prospect of universal cure exists in apomorphine, Burroughs predicts that it will be blocked by "interested or unbalanced individuals as the junk virus is shot out from under them. Junk is big business; there are always cranks and operators" (xii). Hardly ideologically reformed, Burroughs returns to the real world politically disabused.

Like so many other reformed addicts, Burroughs is not in the least shy about suggesting the solution to the drug problem. Either addicts should be freely given daily supplies of junk (as in Great Britain or in the United States from 1919-1922) or else the apomorphine should be used in
order to cure the junkie: "The vaccine that can relegate the junk virus to a land-locked past is in existence" (viii-ix). Apomorphine apparently regulates metabolism without evincing any specific pain-killing or euphoric effects of its own, sounding very much like James Lee's "Elixir of Life":

Apomorphine is a metabolic and psychic regulator that can be discontinued as soon as it has done its work. The world is deluged with tranquilizers and energizers but this unique regulator has not received attention. No research has been done by the large pharmaceutical companies. I suggest that research with variations of apomorphine and synthesis of it will open a new medical frontier extending far beyond the problem of addiction. (xi-xii)

It is almost eerie to think back upon all the other miracle cures: Ludlow's fantastic island, Cobbe's mystery cure, Cole's temperance testimony, Crowley's resurrection of the Will, James Lee's "Elixir"—and the countless quack nostrums laced with the drug whose hold they purported to break.

Thankfully, "Post Script. . . . Wouldn't You?" complicates the sober tone of the first part of the "Deposition," suggests that behind the analytic veneer is indeed the leering con man who is unconscionably selling some bogus cure: "Bill's Naked Lunch Room. . . . Step right up. . . . Good for young and old, man and bestial. Nothing like a little snake oil to grease the wheels and get a show on
the track Jack" (xiv). Though the style may be of the
carny barker, however, the message is consistently anti-
junk. There are no charming old-timers to spin junk yarns:
"I Don't Want To Hear Any More Tired Old Junk Talk And Junk
Con" (xiii). The "Post Script" may read like the soup after
the sermon, but in reality it is a bitter requiem to the
whole junk "reference system"--the secure, sociable opium
smokers, the lowly "dross eaters," the "needle boys," "the
world network of junkies tuned on a chord of rancid jissom."
And yet it is never really good-bye. Fittingly, the next
stage of Burroughs' literary career--the cut-ups of The
Exterminator, The Soft Machine, The Ticket That Exploded, and
Nova Express--exhausts itself in attempting to extend the
implications of the withdrawal-Yage perspective first
intimated in Junkie and brought to poetic culminatio in
Naked Lunch.
INTRODUCTION


3 The Hashish Club: An Anthology of Drug Literature, ed. Peter Haines (London, 1975), I, 20. Paradoxically perhaps, Haines includes in his anthology laudanum visions as examples of the creative use of "soft drugs." It should be noted that "Kubla Khan" belongs more appropriately in Haines' collection than in the literature of addiction, as I have defined it. Coleridge was a closet addict who served as a symbol of addiction rather than as a voice committed to representing addiction to the public. Similarly, the myriad of stories which include opium--Edwin Drood, The Moonstone, "Ligeia," Dorian Gray--adopt opium as a more-or-less effective literary convention rather than as a dreadfully important subject in itself.


5 Jeannette Marks, Genius and Disaster: Studies in Drugs and Genius (1926; rpt. Port Washington, N.Y., 1968), pp. 26-27. Another example of spurious speculation comes from a physician-critic who finds the spectre of cocaine everywhere in turn-of-the-century America: "The style of the cocainist is a smooth, continuous, involved flow of words, leading in no direction and almost never ending. This delusionary state may be protracted for a long time, and can be seen in works of fiction, in poetry, and even in medical


CHAPTER I


5 "Cocteau's Opium is of course about Cocteau, and only incidentally does it describe the delights of the addicted and the miseries of the cured. About opium itself Cocteau does not discover a great deal that is new, either from a scientific or personal angle." Margaret Crosland and Sinclair Road, trans., "Introduction by the Translators," *Opium: The Diary of a Cure*, by Jean Cocteau (London, 1957), p. 11.
"Suspira de Profundus: Being a Sequel to the Confessions of an English Opium Eater," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 57, No. 353 (March 1845), 270.

"Suspira de Profundus," p. 270.


"... now it was that upon the rocking waters of the ocean the human face began to appear; the sea appeared paved with innumerable faces, upturned to the heavens: faces imploring, wrathful, despairing, surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations, by centuries: --my agitation was infinite,--my mind tossed--and surged with the ocean." Confessions, p. 332.


Appendix to Confessions, 1822, p. 123.


London Magazine (Dec. 1821); rpt. in Confessions, ed. Alethea Hayter, p. 120.

Thomas De Quincey: His Life and Writings, H. A. Page (London, 1877), II, 273.


It is interesting to see what a powerful influence books such as The Arabian Nights exercised. One example from perhaps an unexpected source: "The Orientals, fired by fevered minds, invented fabulous and magnificent tales, never to be surpassed. From the very beginning, these people lived in a fantastic world, a world of unreality, and it was just as natural for them to talk about fairy-like palaces beyond the mountains as it is for us to discuss the Great Silent Power of the sky that putters around in space, chewing stars. The basic difference was that these people lived under another sun and ate fruit instead of meat." And smoked hashish? Knut Hamsun, Mysteries, trans. Gerry Bothmer (New York, 1971), p. 118. For a more detailed account of Orientalism in France during this period see Emanuel J. Nickel Jr., The Artificial Paradise in French Literature (Chapel Hill, 1969), pp. 60-80.


Oeuvres, p. 569.

Oeuvres, p. 309.

Cocteau, p. 90.
"It is clear from Baudelaire's correspondence that he had probably begun the use of opium by 1842, and that his use was recurrent from that time forward. It is also probable that Baudelaire, even though he may have tried opium for the first time out of curiosity or as a result of De Quincey's work, was introduced to the consistent use of opium as a result of his illness, syphilis." Mickel, p. 135.

Letter to Mme Aupick in Mickel, pp. 133-34.

Oeuvres, p. 583.

Burroughs, Junkie, p. 153.


CHAPTER II


Keeley, pp. 156-57.

H. H. Kane, Opium Smoking in America and China (New York, 1881), p. 72.
6 "What Shall They Do To Be Saved?" Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 35, No. 207 (August 1867), 72. Subsequent references to Ludlow's influential article will be cited in the text.


8 Opium Eating: An Autobiographical Sketch (Philadelphia, 1876), p. 83. All future references are to this edition.

9 Keeley, p. 147.


13 "Correspondence," p. 458.

14 Aside from his drug connection, Ludlow was perhaps best known for his travel book, The Heart of the Continent: A Record of Travel Across and In Oregon, With an Examination of the Morman Principle (New York, 1870). A reviewer perhaps summed up the almost charming pretensions peculiar to Ludlow: "He understands everybody at a glance, and he such an old, shrewd traveller!" The Atlantic Monthly, 26 (July 1870), 121.


16 "Correspondence," p. 458.

18 William Rosser Cobbe, Doctor Judas: A Portrayal of the Opium Habit (Chicago, 1895), p. 301. All future references are to this edition.

19 Crothers, p. 59.

20 Crothers, p. 130.

21 See Morgan, pp. 39-61.


23 Blair sounded a similar note when he claimed that opium "led me into many errors and even unjustifiable acts of immorality, which lowered me in the estimation of my acquaintances and friends, who saw the effect but never dreamed the cause" (53). Cobbe, however, seems closer to the genteel norm: "The opium neophyte is never, like the victim of hasheesh, led into Phryne worship . . . . opium has only scorn for the lustful" (107). Common attitudes toward drugs and eroticism will be discussed in later chapters.

24 For a concise history of the medical profession's erratic attitude toward the junkie during the early 20th century see King, pp. 33-58.

CHAPTER III


3 Stevenson apparently wrote a rough draft, burned it, and then wrote the final copy of _Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde_, all this in three days. Fairly good evidence he was using a stimulant of some kind, especially since he was ill at the time. Dr. Myron Shultz argues that he was in fact taking cocaine in "The 'Strange Case' of Robert Louis Stevenson," _Journal of the American Medical Association_, 216, No. 1 (5 April 1971), 90. An interesting parallel can be drawn here. In Crowley's novel a certain character, Jabez Platt, goes through a metamorphosis which sounds very much like Mr. Hyde: "He seemed to have shrunk. His black clothes had fitted him like the skin of a well-conditioned porpoise. Now they hung loosely like a toad's. . . . There was a hungry, hunted look in his eyes. Of course, I could see instantly what was the matter with him; he had been taking heroin." Aleister Crowley, _The Diary of a Drug Fiend_ (New York, 1923), p. 284. It should be noted that this character owns a cocaine factory in Switzerland. The important thing, however, is the peculiar endurance of imagery relating at once to Mr. Hyde and drugs. All future references to the _Diary_ are from this edition.

4 Cocteau, p. 82. All future references are to this edition.


6 Crothers, p. 112.

7 John Symonds describes a period just before the writing of the _Diary_ when Crowley unsuccessfully tried to withdraw: "Everything bored him. He was unable to count his money, inspect bills, enjoy a meal or a drink; he grew indifferent to washing and shaving; his memory became dull;
his creative life stopped." This description of Crowley describes some of Sir Peter's reactions to withdrawal almost exactly. The Great Beast: The Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley (St. Albans, 1973), p. 317.


10 It might be recalled that King Lamus rules over "Telepylus," the stronghold of the Laestrygonians in The Odyssey. Crowley thus solicites the rumours that he is a cannibal.

11 "He [Lamus] insisted on our regarding ourselves as pioneers of science and humanity. We were making an experiment; we were risking life and reason for the sake of mankind." The Diary, p. 188.

12 Responding to the repressive interpretation of the Harrison Act, Lester Volk, a Congressman from New York, spoke to the House of Representatives in 1922, pointing to this very phenomenon: "An undeniable effort is now being made whereby physicians are to be denied any discretion and power in the prescribing of narcotic drugs and to force all those addicted to the use of these drugs into hospitals exploiting 'questionable cures.'" Alfred R. Lindesmith, The Addict and the Law (Bloomington, 1965), p. 148. There is also reason to believe that the people responsible for the repressive interpretation of the Act, at least in New York, were financially interested in the hospitals advertising "questionable cures." See Allen Ginsberg, Allen Verbatim: Lectures on Poetry, Politics, Consciousness, ed. Gordon Ball (New York, 1974), p. 42.
13 Stephenson, p. 134.

14 Symonds, p. 327.


16 Nova Express, p. 13.

17 Crowley's Confessions, p. 386.


19 Stephenson, p. 136.

20 Stephenson, p. 150.

21 Ed Sanders researches the connections between Crowley's arm of the O.T.O. (Ordo Templi Orientis) and sects prominent in Los Angeles during Manson's time: "The hype was similar to other groups including Manson's: tearing down the mind through pain persuasion, drugs and repetitive weirdness--just like a magnet erases recording tape--and rebuilding the mind according to the desires of the cult." The Family: The Story of Charles Manson's Dune Buggy Attack Battalion (New York, 1972), p. 156.


23 The tendency to allay fatigue has made stimulants popular in military circles. One example: "During the Spanish Civil War it [benzedrine] was placed in ships' survival packs. Almost simultaneously it was issued to German paratroopers for routine operational use." Allen Geller and Maxwell Boas, The Drug Beat (New York, 1969), p. 240.
24 Junkie, p. 11.


26 It might be recalled that Chaucer's Dreamer has "suffred this eighte yeer" from insomnia.

27 Naked Lunch, p. v.

28 Junkie, p. 128.

29 Naked Lunch, p. 243.

CHAPTER IV


2 Alfred R. Lindesmith, Opiate Addiction (Bloomington, 1947), pp. 146-47.


4 Junkie, p. 12.

5 Lindesmith, p. 187.

6 Kane, p. 2.

7 Kane, p. 81.

8 Cobbe, p. 132.
9 Kane, p. 3.

10 Street, p. 19. All future references are to this edition.


13 Morgan, p. 121. All future references to "A Modern Opium Eater" are from this reprint, the original appearing in *American Magazine*, 77 (June 1914), 31-34.

14 For the canonization of this bizarre brand of racism see Sax Rohmer, *The Mystery of Dr. Fu-Manchu* (London, 1913).


16 "... in a 1928 census of federal prisoners ... there were two prisoners serving sentences for narcotic offenses for every one incarcerated for liquor-law violations. Drug offenders constituted one-third of the total federal prison population (2,529 out of 7,138; the numbers are small because many federal convicts were then farmed out to state institutions, but the ratio is typical)." King, p. 44.

17 *Junkie*, p. 55.

18 Cocteau, p. 64.

19 *Junkie*, p. 8.

20 *Junkie*, p. 55.

21 "Lenny Bruce--American," Fantasy Records, No. 7011.
22 Cobbe, p. 116.

23 Junkie, p. 7.


CHAPTER V


5 Writers at Work, p. 145.

6 Corso, note on Burroughs, The Outsider, No. 3 (Spring 1963), p. 35.


10 *Junkie*, p. 12. All future references are to this edition.

11 "Addiction is an illness of exposure. The stringent measures of the American Narcotics Department, their vociferous insistence that addiction is a police and not a medical problem, spread the infection among young people." *The Job*, p. 145.

12 *Naked Lunch*, p. 4. All future references are to this edition.

13 Alfred Lindesmith, *Opiate Addiction*, p. 89.


15 In *Naked Lunch* Burroughs develops Queen's Plaza into a powerful poetic image: "Stay away from Queen's Plaza, son... Evil spot haunted by dicks scream for dope fiend lover... Too many levels" (198).

16 See Brown v. Mississippi for the Supreme Court's 1936 decision that "torture to extort a confession" is a denial of due process.

17 *Writers at Work*, p. 150.

18 Cocteau, p. 23.

19 Terry and Pellens, p. 439.

20 Terry and Pellens, p. 455. Another physician is not quite certain what happens to the sexual function during addiction and withdrawal, but he does know it is extreme: "The genital function suffers. Impotence, irritation, priapism, nymphomania, and paralysis of the sexual functions are more or less common." Crothers, p. 113.
21 Keeley, pp. 82-83.


24 *Writers at Work*, p. 286.


26 *The Yage Letters*, p. 7. All future references are to this edition.


28 Bowles, "Burroughs in Tangier," *Big Table*, No. 2 (Summer 1959), p. 42.

29 It should be recalled that James Lee never took drugs with white men. Burroughs does take Yage with a young Dane who quickly vomits: "He evidently thought I had tried to poison him and he was saved only by this prompt reaction of his hygenic Scandinavian gut. I never knew a Dane that wasn't bone dull" (45)

30 *Naked Lunch*, p. 242. This article is included as an appendix to the Grove Press editions.
"Although Burroughs does find and take yage (four experiences are mentioned) the emphasis, as the title implies, is on the search, not the drug itself." Robert Menzies Whitelaw, "Themes in the Work of William Burroughs," Diss. Univ. of Mass. 1970, p. 41.


Ansen, p. 39.

West, The Dream Life of Balso Snell (New York, 1963), p. 27.


Kerouac tells another story of Burroughs-as-spoiler: "The funny thing is that when Bull was in Venice he was invited to an elegant party in a Palace, and when he appeared at the door, with his old Harvard friend Irwin Swenson the hostess held out her hand to be kissed--Irwin said: 'You see in these circles you must kiss the hand of the hostess, customarily'--But as everybody stared at the pause in the door Bull yelled out 'Aw gee, I'd rather kiss her cont!' And that was the end of that." Desolation Angels, p. 309.

Floating Bear, No. 9 (1961), unpaginated.

The controversy, begun by an adverse review of Naked Lunch in the Times Literary Supplement, November, 1963, eventually included such writers as Edith Sitwell and Anthony Burgess and carried on well into 1964.

The Job, p. 37.

42 "Boston Trial," p. 87.


44 Ernest Hemingway, In Our Time (New York, 1930), p. 43.

45 Frank D. McConnell claims, for example, that Burroughs is "our most seriously Whitmanian novelist." "William Burroughs and the Literature of Addiction," The Massachusetts Review, 8, No. 4 (Autumn 1967), 680.


48 There has been preparation for this return to Naked Lunch's 103rd Street origins. In "The Algebra of Need" (the chapter directly preceding "Hauser and O'Brien") Burroughs echoes the ending from the first chapter: "A teahed leaps up screaming 'I got the fear!' and runs into Mexican night bringing down backbrains of the world" (209). (Depressed backbrain is an element of both schizophrenia and addiction.) Susan Sontag urges the reader of Naked Lunch to grasp "not the 'content,' but the principles of (and balance between) variety and redundancy . . . ." Against Interpretation (New York, 1961), p. 35. Perhaps the return to the basic 103rd Street obsession is the kind of thing she has in mind.

49 For an alternative sense of an ending to Naked Lunch see "The Conspiracy," Kulchur, No. 1 (Spring 1960), pp. 5-8. This short piece (originally to have been included in Naked Lunch) outlines Lee's commitment to wising up the marks to the impending danger of widespread contamination by an absolutely addictive "anti-dream drug" the effects of which can only be offset by a drug "that increases the symbolizing faculty"--a variation of Yage. The drama has shifted from the sense of personal overcoming to a practically intergalactic reference: "There is a secret now in the hands of ignorant
and evil men. A secret beside which the atom bomb is a noisy toy. . . . And like it or not I was involved.

50 "Most survivors do not remember the delirium in detail. I apparently took detailed notes on sickness and delirium. I have no precise memory of writing the notes which have not been published under the title Naked Lunch" (v).

51 David Lodge voices the logical objection to Burroughs claim that the hanging scenes involve systematic satire on capital punishment: "... it is doubtful whether the uninformed reader would see any connection at all between the Orgasm Death Gimmick and Capital Punishment. It may be that the disgust Mr. Burroughs feels for Capital Punishment has been transferred to the antics of his sexual perverts, but the reverse process which should occur for the reader is by no means to be relied upon." "Objections to William Burroughs," Critical Quarterly, 8, No. 3 (Autumn 1966), 207.

52 Clearly Naked Lunch does involve such features as "plot" and "continuity." Just as clearly it entertains (in the routines, for example). Burroughs later conceded that he was "perhaps going a bit far" in the "Atrophied Preface": "One tries not to impose story plot or continuity artificially but you do have to compose the materials, you can't just dump down a jumble of notes and thoughts and considerations and expect people to read it." The Job, p. 48.
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