THE THEME OF SUFFERING
IN
THE NOVELS OF JACK KEROUAC,
LEONARD COHEN, AND WILLIAM BURROUGHS

by

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 1968

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of

English

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
September, 1970
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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the theme of suffering and its resolution in the novels of Jack Kerouac, Leonard Cohen, and William Burroughs, three avant-garde contemporary writers. It discusses most of their work in a general way, with reference to the theme of suffering; and it also analyses in a much more detailed manner *The Subterraneans* by Kerouac, *The Favorite Game* and *Beautiful Losers* by Cohen, and *Naked Lunch* by Burroughs.

Cohen envisions man as a suffering being who experiences his pain in many different ways. He criticizes the old ritual patterns in which suffering once took its form - the pattern of religion which teaches man that suffering is good, and History which teaches that the cycle of civilization operates only in terms of the torturer and his victim. He rejects, too, the contemporary form of pop art which ignores the fact that suffering is a very real and overwhelming part of man. Having lost the old ritual patterns of suffering, man feels alienated from his own personal pain. Through the magic of good art, Cohen feels, man can regain entrance to his own being, for by experiencing another's suffering in art, he can regain his own awareness of suffering. If we misinterpret or misuse our own pain, we become one of Cohen's 'losers,' for we lose the core of our being to false ritual. Cohen believes the ancient notion that suffering deepens character, and he argues that man, through an understanding of his own pain, becomes a richer and better person, more capable of recognizing the magic which exists along with pain. For magic does exist with pain, and in art we gain a momentary entrance into this world of magic.
Through the investigation of self and the uniqueness of self, man comes to recognize the uniqueness and magic of all. The artist takes on the role of prophet visionary showing all men that "magic is afoot."

Jack Kerouac suffered a different form of pain — a pain which originated in his desperate search for innocence. His Catholic heritage taught him that the world of mind and spirit could see God, while the physical body was the realm of the sinful and guilty. His life became a quest in search of an innocence in which man could transcend his guilt and shame and become beatific. Kerouac named the entire beat generation beatific; but he could not evade his feeling of guilt and shame within his own life, and he fluctuated throughout life between ecstatic idealism and hopeless despair. His strong mother fixation was a major cause for the split between his sense of idealism and the life of the physical body — and his mother became associated in his mind with those aspects of consciousness he considered 'ideal.' Yet Kerouac also longed for freedom and individuality, realms of experience outside his mother's hold. He expressed his life within his art, showing his tension and anguish from the pull of these two forms of experience. Kerouac's final interpretation of suffering paralleled the Catholic vision, for art became, in his life, a means of personal confession and penance.

William Burroughs' despair is expressed through fear and rage, and a figurative comparison with 'paranoia' defines the range of his suffering fairly closely. Burroughs fears perse-
execution from society which controls man through his need, fearing especially the implosive and depersonalizing forces of society which threaten to degrade and annihilate man. Man's own body takes part in this social degradation, for it is man's body which succumbs to addictive need. Burroughs strives to preserve his sense of inner reality and freedom at all costs. He purges his own personal sense of fear through his art, and art becomes, in his use of it, a social act of exorcism. He shouts the unspeakable and becomes a priest in a cultural purification rite; he shows the absurdity of man's reality in the form of comedy and dream and these become the source of his release. He defends himself against social control by his ability to exaggerate the power of society to the point of the grotesque, and art becomes the written form of his protest.
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INTRODUCTION

In the late 50's and early 60's two writers from the avant-garde scene, Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs, gained a momentary national prominence with their novels, On The Road (1955) and The Subterraneans (1958) by Kerouac, and Naked Lunch (1959) by Burroughs. Seven years later, a Montreal poet, Leonard Cohen, made the best seller list with his novel Beautiful Losers (1966). Each of these novels created a critical stir, aggravating many literary specialists because of their "carefree" style, "haphazard" structure, "coarse" language, and "indeterminate" aim.

The public was also divided in opinion about these novels. To a generation of mothers who had hidden Lady Chatterley's Lover in the bottom of their closets in order to protect their children, Naked Lunch and Beautiful Losers were gross and unfit to read - as well as incomprehensible. On The Road and The Subterraneans, written in a more standard form of English, with only slight suggestions of homosexuality, were viewed less harshly, though Kerouac himself, innovator of the new beat culture, was at first a suspicious figure. A new generation of young people, however, those who were aware of the avant-garde scene, were attracted to and delighted by the novels - they understood them, liked them, and accepted them as a part of their contemporary view of life.

One of the most revealing facts about these authors and their novels is this striking division of opinion about them - most readers are either for or against them - few are impartial. The opinions not only of the general public but also of most
literary critics seem determined by their acceptance or rejection of the values which Kerouac, Cohen, and Burroughs espouse. These values represent the end-product of a long and subtle battle for a new form of consciousness, a battle fought in the realms of literature, politics and philosophy. A sketching of some of the major figures and attitudes in this battle of consciousness may help to clarify many of the assumptions which Kerouac, Cohen, and Burroughs accept, as well as the ideas and feelings which they find fundamental to life.

Freud was a central figure in this quest for a new form of consciousness. He suggested, in Civilisation and Its Discontents, the terms of the argument between society and the individual (the two opposing forces in this battle of consciousness), when he recognized the essential antagonism between the demands of instinct and the restrictions of civilization. The conflict defined by Freud formed the basis for the theories of Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse, two contemporary social analysts who have done much to further a 'dialectic of liberation.' In Life Against Death, Brown suggests that the essence of contemporary society lies in the repression of the individual, a repression which creates an ever-increasing sense of guilt in man. Sublimation, the alternative to repression, does not eliminate guilt, but furthers the alienation of sexual energy from the body, thereby increasing man's sense of guilt about his own physical being.

Herbert Marcuse discusses much the same theory of repression in a political context. He argues that a society which has long
encouraged delayed satisfaction, work, productiveness, and security destroys men through its trend towards repressive affluence. Society manages individual needs, and in doing so, makes of man a predictable machine.

Both Brown and Marcuse insist that a general change in consciousness is desperately needed within the contemporary world. Brown encourages man's return to his body, while Marcuse asserts the value of immediate satisfaction, pleasure, play, and receptiveness. The values which they offer have become the general assumptions of a whole counter-culture, one which firmly believes that, if a man can re-spiritualize himself and his immediate environment, then there is hope of his survival. Otherwise the repressive forces of society, whose influence extends over thought, emotion, and senses, will succeed completely in their degradation and depersonalization of man.

Both Brown and Marcuse believe the artist is the person who can best instigate the change in contemporary consciousness. Marcuse claims that the struggle for a real form of freedom requires the 'Great Refusal' of youth to succumb to repressive forces, and that this refusal can be formulated without punishment only in the language of art. Brown, going one step further, asserts that the artist is the savior of man. "If man's destiny is to change reality until it conforms to the pleasure principle, and if man's fate is to fight for instinctual liberation, then art appears in the words of Rilke, as the Weltanhuang of the last goal. Its contradiction of the reality principle is its social function, as a constant reinforcement of the struggle
Several important artists, especially D. H. Lawrence and Henry Miller, had considered themselves instigators in the fight for a new form of consciousness long before Kerouac, Burroughs, and Cohen arrived on the scene. D. H. Lawrence's works were all didactic, espousing a vital phallic regeneration, while to Henry Miller, the artist was by definition an outlaw from society. "The task which the artist implicitly sets himself is to overthrow existing values, to make of the chaos about him an order which is his own."²

Brown and Marcuse also suggest the form which the artist's vision should take. They clearly espouse a counter-doctrine, a new system of values, myths, and powers. Central to their values is a belief in the sacredness and integrity of the individual, who has long been ignored in favor of the social establishment. Brown and Marcuse faced a dilemma - how to return meaning and value to self, how to re-awaken men to the fact that they themselves are the source of vitality and energy, the source of enthusiasm, sensitivity, beauty, and life. Was it possible to re-awaken an individual who had long been classified by his role, his social insurance number, his conformity and anonymity? Was it possible to change the definition of self-consciousness, to give to this definition a sense of growing and becoming, a sense of self awareness and perception? Could people come to relate to one another in this subjective sense? Could this in turn finally make man a life-oriented animal?
For Brown and Marcuse the way to re-establishing a feeling of vitality lay in discovering a new way of perceiving the particulars of existence. Man's life, made up of particulars, had to be re-affirmed, so that each individual would not lose irreparably his being as it moved from moment to moment. Man must learn to play once again, to re-awaken his receptive senses to all - to perceive the 'magical' quality in every moment of being alive. This ecstatic awareness of the particular moment, which Brown and Marcuse suggest, was used by contemporary authors, particularly Cohen, to re-define the word magic itself. Men could no longer afford to view magic, felt these artists, as a mysterious powerful influence descending upon themselves from outside, producing the illusion of a new world through charm and spell. Magic for the avant-garde artist was defined anew - it was his own ability to transform experience. He contained within himself the mysterious power of imagination which could create a new and unique world within art. He did not depend upon the power of an external influence to charm and spell, but instead upon his own ability to charm men into new worlds with his own words. Each man contained the power of magic within himself, and if only he could re-discover this magic within his own being he could be saved.

Kerouac, Cohen, and Burroughs have all experienced in their own private way the dilemma of the sensitive man faced by a repressive culture, and each has taken the central values of the counter-culture as his own. For each, the individual life is the centre of value, a life composed of a multitude of particular
experiences. All see that consciousness defines a man - a consciousness moving from moment to moment which can be captured in written form. It is in style that the uniqueness of this written consciousness is made apparent - through the choice and structure of the particular detail - and each of these authors works carefully with style, with the re-definition of structure as well as content. The first chapter of this thesis describes the new way in which Kerouac, Cohen, and Burroughs understand and use style.

Each of these writers reveals the magic of his imagination, recreating the external world as a part of his own private vision, transforming experience into the magic of his art. Each charms the reader, compelling him to enter the unique reality which the author has prepared for him.

But to me the most fascinating and compelling quality of the novels of Kerouac, Cohen, and Burroughs lies beyond their sensationalism, their avant-garde awareness, and even their espousal of the magical quality of the individual. Upon first reading these novels, I found myself trying to grope with, to understand the suffering which seemed so much a part of their being. Behind the humour of Burroughs and Cohen, I felt a pain, while Kerouac's novels expressed directly his attempts to deal with the suffering which he felt. An understanding of their background, as analysed by Brown and Marcuse, explained some of their most important feelings. Yet an understanding of their background alone, and of the cultural source of their feeling, could not explain fully their private experience. The suffering which they experienced was a suffering new to me and yet not new - basic and yet unique and private. This thesis is, ultimately, my attempt to understand
the suffering which Burroughs, Cohen, and Kerouac experience, and to consider their efforts to resolve this suffering.

FOOTNOTES: INTRODUCTION


CHAPTER I - STYLE

Before discussing the theme of suffering within the novels of Kerouac, Cohen, and Burroughs, it is important to suggest the significance of style to their work, for all three consider style of great consequence.

Burroughs, Cohen, and Kerouac re-create reality for the reader by developing their own personal visions, and the many variants of their style help them to achieve this task. "Every style embodies an epistemological decision, an interpretation of how and what we perceive."¹ For these contemporary writers attempting to comprehend the immediates of a complex existence, this decision rests in a personal aesthetic dedicated to the destruction of old forms. Both Burroughs and Kerouac wrote dramatically of their stylistic innovations, while Cohen wrote by borrowing the innovations of others, especially those of Ginsberg and Burroughs. Their statements about style suggest a basic desire to destroy a formal ordering of experience no longer valid to their perception of the outside world; to go beyond this order towards a chaos, disruption, and irrationality which much more clearly reveals experience as it actually takes place.² They aim to reveal in all honesty the particulars of their own perception, and they desire a direct communication between reader and writer, a communication uninhibited by the structured demands of formal prose. In revolutionizing style, they also alter perception, giving the reader a new view of reality as they themselves see it. Burroughs, Cohen, and Kerouac try to transform most aspects of style (point of view, technique, the use of time, space, and action, the use of metaphor and language) in their effort to
create a new aesthetic relevant to their sense of immediate experience.

Burrough's fear of the 'Word' which imprisons man within a world of time, body, and shit determines the form of his stylistic innovations. By conquering the Word, man can escape into freedom and space where he can fully affirm his own individuality. The 'Word' is the enemy which must be conquered at all costs. "To speak is to lie. I will tell you: 'THE WORD.' Alien Word 'THE'. 'THE' Word of Alien Enemy imprisons 'THEE' in Time. In Body. In Shit. Prisoner come out. The great skies are open. I Hassan i Sabbah RUB OUT THE WORD FOREVER." It is the Word which creates the logic, the Logos, of the death machine which Burroughs attacks so harshly. Burroughs believes the straight declarative sentence, which he himself defines as the "whole either-or proposition," to be a great error in Western thought. "Either-or thinking is just not accurate thinking. That's not the way things occur, and I feel the Aristotelian construct is one of the great shackles of Western civilization." Words, he feels, serve also as a shadow, coming between the eye and the world to prevent an original contact between the seeing self and reality. "To speak is to lie."

He uses the "Cut-Up-Method" to conquer the 'Word,' the world of logic and pre-determined sentence, to re-establish spontaneity and freedom; a method best described in a letter he wrote to Allen Ginsberg in 1960, shortly after Brion Gysin had introduced him to cut-ups. "Take the enclosed copy of this letter. Cut along the lines. Re-arrange putting section one by section three and section two by section four. Now read aloud and you will
hear my voice. Whose voice? Listen. Cut and re-arrange in any combination. . . .Don't think about it. Don't theorize. Try it! . . .With any poems any prose." The cut-up method destroys the old structures of paragraph and sentence - it is a gesture in defiance of external molding, an act of spontaneity in an increasingly manipulated world. "You cannot will spontaneity. But you can introduce the unpredictable spontaneous factor with a pair of scissors." This method is not entirely new to Burroughs, for something similar was attempted by Tristan Tzara and the Dadaist-Surrealist movement. They too, in a calculated attack on the conscious controlling mind, created written works by relying on chance, random association, and nonsensical juxtaposition.

Burroughs destroys old concepts of reality with his cut-ups, but these same cut-ups"also help us to develop a new mode of consciousness, a way of responding which has little to do with the casual unilinear structure of Western thought, but which has more in common with 'hieroglyph systems' and the 'Chinese ideographs' and random photographs of street scenes. What Burroughs wants is 'blocks of association' rather than lines of thought. . . .His battle then is mainly with the old use of words." Burroughs used the cut-up method originally to defeat the power of the word as a written structure, but he soon came to see its implications as a stylistic device in other ways. It could also be used with sound through the creation of arbitrary sound tracks in which speakers followed one another in haphazard
juxtaposition. Since "what we see is determined to a large extent by what we hear," the use of cut-ups at an auditory level freed man even more.\(^8\) *Naked Lunch* is often a very auditory novel, a novel of voices intruding rapidly and haphazardly upon one another.

While Burroughs exploits the cut-up method most fully in his later novels, *The Soft Machine*, *The Ticket That Exploded*, and *Nova Express*, he hints at this method in *Naked Lunch*.

The Word is divided into units which be all in one piece and should be so taken, but the pieces can be had in any order being tied up back and forth in and out fore and aft like an interesting sex arrangement. This book spills off the page in all directions, kaleidoscope of vistas, medley of tunes and street noises, farts and riot yipes and the slamming steel shutters of commerce, screams of pain and pathos and screams plain pathetic, copulating cats and the outraged squawk of the displaced bullhead, prophetic mutterings of brujo in nutmeg trances, snapping necks and screaming mandrakes, sigh of orgasm, heroin silent as dawn in the thirsty cells. . . . (*Naked Lunch*, p. 229)

According to Brion Gysin, the cut-up method was used in *Naked Lunch* without the author's full awareness of the method he was using. "The final form of *Naked Lunch* and the juxtaposition of sections were determined by the order in which the material went - at random - to the printers."\(^9\) Or as Burroughs suggests:

> You can cut into *Naked Lunch* at any intersection point. . . . I have written many prefaces. They atrophy and amputate spontaneous like the little toe amputates in a West African disease confined to the negro race and the passing blonde shows her brass ankle as a manicured toe bounces across the club terrace, retrieved and laid at her feet by her Afghan hound. . . .

*Naked Lunch* is a blueprint, A How To Book. . . .

(*Naked Lunch*, p. 224)

The narrator's consciousness provides the only link for the images and "blocks of association" so prevalent in the novel, a con-
sciousness which haphazardly cuts off old memories with new jokes, cuts in upon moments of anguish with incidental sights and sounds. "... I am a recording Instrument [says Burroughs]... .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... ." (Naked Lunch, p. 221).

The narrator's fragmented consciousness records the horror of his nightmare vision - an ugly dream world of fluid time and space, of merging scenes and characters. The novel lacks one central character as all characters fuse into one, for in this junkie dream all blends together into one gigantic hallucination of the grotesque.

In an excerpt called "The Future of the Novel" Burroughs suggests the reasons for his choice in subject matter to be partially due to style.

In my writing I am acting as a map maker, an explorer of psychic areas, to use the phrase of Alexander Trocchi, as a cosmonaut of inner space, and I see no point in exploring areas that have already been thoroughly surveyed -

... to travel in space is to travel in time -

If writers are to travel in space time and explore areas opened by the space age I think they must develop techniques of physical space travel - certainly if writing is to have a future it must at least catch up with the past and learn to use techniques that have been used for some time past in painting, music, and film.10

Burroughs explores the depths of paranoid suffering, using the technique of fluid time, space, and action to give his distorted vision a more authentic reality. He uses surrealistic exaggeration to give the effect of paranoid drug hallucination - an
exaggeration which also expresses the extremity in his cry of despair. Floating time, space, character and setting adds to the reality of this junk world while the image of a metamorphic disintegration suggests his horrified fear of the invasion of evil.

Burroughs exploits pornography and obscenity, more obvious features of *Naked Lunch* in a similar gesture of social defiance. His direct references to excrement and sexual deviation insult the barriers of a society which censors these 'degrading' aspects of experience.

In English speaking countries, says Burroughs, the weight of censorship falls on sexual words and images as dangerous to an economic system depending on mass production and a large public of more or less uncritical consumers. In any form censorship presupposes the right of the government to decide what people will think, what thought material of word and image will be presented to their minds. I am precisely suggesting that the right to exercise such control is called in question.

He questions this right dramatically within his novels, criticizing a society which threatens his existence in terms of the pornography and obscenity which it itself created.

But though the miasma of surrealism, cut-ups, and pornography defies a society which perpetuates the 'Word,' it contains also a definite line of allegory, for in the destruction and defiance of the old there lies a hope for a new kind of existential being. Amidst a series of erratic images Burroughs places direct didactic statement - warnings of evil and prescriptions for good. The style of *Naked Lunch* contains such a prescription, a cutting across old barriers of language to reclaim spontaneity and freedom.
The 'Word' can be conquered, and man can be free.

History contains in Cohen's vision much the same flaws and horrors of Burroughs' Word, and History must be destroyed in a similar way before a new perception of reality can be created. It is History which influences men to make false mental connections, to see logic where no logic exists. Science and religion aid History in maintaining a false system of names and logical structures - all three conspire to create a social mythology alienated from an authentic experience of the moment. In the first section of Beautiful Losers Cohen gives us the Attempts of the narrator, a former historian, to overthrow History, to conquer the powerful hold of this intellectual ordering of reality which has little to say about his own personal existence. His struggle is far from easy, for History creates an order in his life whose loss he greatly fears, and it is only with much agony and pain that the narrator attains his release.

Book One gives us the "History of Them All" from the narrator's point of view, a personal confession of his own anguish and suffering as he attempts to extricate himself from official History; a blending of fantasy and fact which gives us insight into the personal reality - 'History' of the main characters. The narrator's confession fuses and confuses historical fact with personal revelation. He begins his study of Catherine Tekawitha as a historian but ends with personal insights into her private existence which give him courage in his own efforts to re-order reality. Catherine Tekawitha, once a part of official History, becomes a part of the history of his own personal quest. As the
novel begins the narrator longs to dig through History to the reality of her person - he bombards her with questions in order to discover just what is going on "under that rosy blanket" (Beautiful Losers, p. 3). He longs for a language which can reach her, a language comparable to Indian hiro-duoue, which can pierce the mysterious curtain which hangs between all talking men, "beguiling intellect with the noise of true emotion" (Beautiful Losers, p. 9).

From a historical point of view Catherine Tekawitha has long been dead - she remains alive and vital only in the mind of the narrator. Her historical existence, however, cannot describe the reality which she has for him - he demands something more vital and authentic. "Catherine Tekawitha, who are you? Are you (1656 - 1680)? Is that enough?" (Beautiful Losers, p. 3). A dead historical past is not enough, it must be converted instead into a part of the narrator's present, just as his similar memories of Edith and F fuse into one booming consciousness of a present which includes all. The narrator reveals the vitality and life of Edith and F within his own consciousness, though they too 'in actual fact' have long been dead. Cohen forces us to recognize the absurdity of such actual fact, the absurdity of time sequences which define existence in terms of past and present without any recognition of how false and arbitrary such distinctions are. He shows us how easy it is to move from past to present, from memory to historical fact, and how each gains significance only as it becomes a part of an operating consciousness. Book One presents the past of the narrator, a past recited from
the perspective of the tree-house, told in the present tense - what the narrator was, what he is, and what he will be are all a part of what he is - his being. What Edith and F are are also a part of his being - they exist as realities through his own vital perception of them. They are all a part of him as he too was inextricably a part of them when they were alive. "We preserve each other," F states in his letter to the narrator, "I was your adventure, and you were my adventure, I was your journey and you were my journey, and Edith was our holy star" (Beautiful Losers, p. 194). Both character and time exist only within the consciousness of a man - they cannot be arbitrarily defined by the impersonal theories of history, science, and religion.

Cohen interweaves historical fact with the personal obsessions of the narrator, using a technique which often appears as haphazard as Burroughs' cut-up method. The narrator's mind turns easily from fact to fantasy, striving to gain a sense of clarity amidst a hazy reality. He discovers that fantasy contains a reality equal to that of History, a fantasy which rejects a world of names for a more intuitive experience of existence. He feels dissatisfied with his own arbitrary attempts to create external order - through the writing of lists which give the appearance of intellectual organization and through the use of foreign languages which make "a good corset" (Beautiful Losers, p. 81). He grows tired of many facts, those facts which seem to be only arbitrary intrusions upon his search for truth. "I'm tired of facts, I'm tired of speculations. I want to be consumed by unreason" (Beautiful Losers, p. 58). Facts begin to appear as absurd as
they really are when used alone outside any meaningful context. "The Indians invented the steam bath. That is just a tidbit" (Beautiful Losers, p. 162).

"The straining man perched on a circle prepares to abandon all systems" (Beautiful Losers, p. 48). The narrator, by taking one step to the side, finds himself surrounded by irrationality and chaos - he discovers absurdity. His initial despair at the disintegration of his ordered historical universe gradually disappears as he grows to see that the perception of chaos gives man freedom - for in this perception lies the first step in creating a new order.

A saint does not dissolve the chaos; if he did the world would have changed long ago. I do not think that the saint dissolves the chaos even for himself, for there is something arrogant and warlike in the notion of a man setting the universe in order. It is a kind of balance that is his glory. He rides the drifts like an escaped ski (Beautiful Losers, p. 121).

The narrator attains such a balance of chaos, he uses his confusion as a butterfly net with which to capture magic. In his perception of chaos he comes to see the unity of all as a unity of his own consciousness as it relates and joins.

All the disparates of the world, the different wings of the paradox, coin-faces of the problem, petal-pulling questions, scissors-shaped conscience, all the polarities, things and their images and things which cast no shadow, and just the everyday explosions on a street, this face and that, a house and a toothache, explosions which merely have different letters in their names, my needle pierces it all, and I myself, my greedy fantasies, everything which has existed and does exist, we are part of a necklace of incomparable beauty and unmeaning (Beautiful Losers, p. 21).

Cohen's style reveals the disintegration and reintegration of the narrator's consciousness, and it is through the narrator's
dilemma that we grow to see most fully the falsity of History and the magic of the moment. He uses unusual devices to draw our attention away from the usual, to make us perceive reality in a new and slightly absurd way. Yet he shows that there exists a more fundamental unity for man than the arbitrary imposition of rational structure – the unity of one man’s consciousness as he collects and mods within his own mind the meaningful parts of his own personal experience of history.

It is such personal experience which provides the material for Kerouac’s writing, while Kerouac’s belief in each moment of consciousness closely parallels Cohen’s. For Kerouac the self contains the potential of all – it is there to be investigated in all of its depth and to be exalted in all of its glory. "If there is any absolute, states Charles Olson, it is never more than this one, you, this instant, in action." It is this absolute self which Kerouac believes in, and his works reveal this self moving from moment to moment.

Through his style Kerouac explores the possibilities within every moment – mentally wandering from association to association, from sight, to sound, to action in his attempt to come to terms with the full meaning of each instant within his own experience. His work concentrates heavily on the writing journey, a journey without any definite destination, with many side-tracks and enticing paths. Every action, every thought, every association takes on significance because it is a part of Kerouac’s own being. Jazz, the music of inner freedom, of improvisation, becomes the pattern for his writing – as its melody merges with the improvi-
sations and the improvisations begin to dominate. Jazz swings in and with the moment, and it is this swinging which Kerouac long to capture within his writing - assimilating the rhythms, the sounds, the life of all.

His technical innovations stem from his belief in the spontaneous flow of consciousness - a responding consciousness which picks up and recites the many particulars of life. Kerouac dismisses the traditional conventions of language which interfere with the continuous flow of the mind - conventions which inhibit in much the same way as Burroughs' Word and Cohen's History. He works much more completely at the level of language, trying to capture the rhythms of speech as they actually occur. His sentences become "exchanges of force" in Charles Olson's sense, expressions of energy and motion to be transferred directly to the reader. His erratic punctuation tries to capture the breath of speech, to show the essential irrationality of a rambling mind filled with associations. Kerouac breaks down the barriers of traditional prose in every way he can in his effort to attain a direct communication outside the intrusive formalities of language. His list of essentials of spontaneous prose is a manifesto of rebellion equal to the words of Hassan Sabbah and P's revelation of magic. It describes most clearly and concisely Kerouac's dream of a possible freedom which only writing can bring about.

Belief and Technique For Modern Prose: List of Essentials
1. Scribbled secret notebooks, and wild typewritten pages, for yr own joy
2. Submissive to everything, open, listening
3. Try never get drunk outside yr own house
4. Be in love with yr life
5. Something that you feel will find its own form
6. Be crazy dumb saints of the mind
7. Blow as deep as you want to blow
8. Write what you want bottomless from bottom of the mind
9. The unspeakable visions of the individual
10. No time for poetry but exactly what is
11. Visionary tics shivering in the chest
12. In tranced fixation dreaming upon object before you
13. Remove literary, grammatical, and syntactical inhibition
14. Like Proust be an old teahead of time
15. Telling the true story of the world in interior monologue
16. The jewel centre of interest is the eye within the eye
17. Write in recollection and amazement for yourself
18. Work from pity middle eye out, swimming in language sea
19. Accept loss forever
20. Believe in the holy contour of life
21. Struggle to sketch the flow that already exists intact within the mind
22. Don't think of words when you stop but to see picture better
23. Keep track of every day the date emblazoned in your morning
24. No fear or shame in the dignity of yr experience language and knowledge
25. Write for the world to read and see your exact pictures of it
26. Bookmovie is the movie in words, the visual American form
27. In Praise of Character in the bleak inhuman Loneliness
28. Composing wild, undisciplined, pure, coming in from under, crazier the better
29. You're a Genius all the time
30. Writer-Director of earthly movies Sponsored and Angeled in Heaven

Essentials of Spontaneous Prose

Set-Up. The object is set before the mind, either in reality, as in sketching (before a landscape or teacup or old face) or is set in the memory wherein it becomes the sketching from memory of a definite image object.

Procedure. Time being of the essence in the purity of speech, sketching language is undisturbed flow from the mind of personal secret idea-words, blowing (as per jazz musician) on subject of image.
Method: No periods separating sentence structures already arbitrarily riddled by false colons and timid uselessly needless commas - but the vigorous space dash separating rhetorical breathing (as jazz musician drawing breath between outblown phrases) - "measured pauses which are essential to our speech" - "divisions of the sounds we hear" - "Time and how to note it down." (William Carlos Williams)

Scoping. Not "selectivity" of expression but following free deviation (association) of mind into limitless blow-on-subject seas of thought, swimming in sea of English with no discipline other than rhythms of rhetorical exhalation and expostulated statement, like a fist coming down on a table with each complete utterance, bang! (The space dash) - Blow as deep as you want, satisfy yourself first, then reader cannot fail to receive telepathic shock and meaning excitement by same laws operating in his own human mind.

Lag in Procedure. No pause to think of proper word but the infantile pileup of scatological build-up words till satisfaction is gained, which will turn out to be a great appending rhythm to a thought and be in accordance with Great Law of timing.

Timing. Nothing is muddy that runs in time and to laws of time - Shakespearian stress of dramatic need to speak now in own unalterable way or forever hold tongue - no revisions (Except obvious rational mistakes, such as names or calculated insertions in act of not writing but inserting).

Centre Of Interest. Begin not from preconceived idea of what to say about image but from jewel centre of interest in subject of image at moment of writing, and write outwards swimming in sea of language to peripheral release and exhaustion - Do not afterthink to improve or defray impressions, as, the best writing is always the most painful personal wrung-out tossed from cradlewarm protective mind - tap from yourself the song of yourself, blow! - now! - your way is your only way - "good" - or "bad" - always honest, ("ludicrous"), spontaneous, "confessional," interesting because not "crafted". Craft is Craft.

Structure of Work. Modern bizarre structures (science fiction etc.) arise from language being dead, different themes give illusion of "new" life. Follow roughly outlines in outfanning movement over subject, as river
rock, so mindflow over jewel centre need (run your mind over it once, arriving at pivot, where what was dim formed "beginning" becomes sharp necessitating "ending" and language shortens in race to wire of time-race of work, following laws of deep form, to conclusion, last words, last trickle - Night is The End.

Mental State. If possible write without "consciousness" in semi-trance (as Yeats' later "trance-writing") allowing sub-concious to admit in own uninhibited interesting necessary and so modern language what conscious art would censor, and write excitedly, swiftly, with writing-or-typing-cramps, in accordance (as from centre to periphery) with laws of orgasm, Reich's "beclouding of consciousness" Come from within out - to relaxed and said.

2. These authors do not view the chaos, irrationality, and disruption which they see as completely negative forces, for the perception of this chaos makes possible the creation of a more meaningful personal order.


5. Another of Burroughs' statements quoted by Tony Tanner.


7. These are Tanner's own opinions, p. 563.


11. Leonard Cohen also humorously exploits both pornography and obscenity in a similar defiance of the morally righteous.


13. Cohen makes fun of reason and logic in a variety of ways showing the full fallacy of reasoning and syllogism. For example: The king of France was a man. I was a man. Therefore I was the king of France (Beautiful Losers, p. 31).

14. Elliott Gose in his review of Beautiful Losers lists a number of Cohen's new and unusual devices: reproduced advertisements, a series of poems to the Virgin composed from a Greek conversational handbook, a separate footnoted poem, several sections of "pointless monosyllabic dialogue," an expressionistic rendering of a modern song, and a charming verbal rendition of a Charles Atlas advertisement, the cartoon strip Hero On the Beach.


Jack Kerouac stands out as a major figure of the 1950's - important not only as a writer, but also for his role as father of the new beat culture. He tried to fashion his life around his beliefs, and his writing, which was largely autobiographical, expressed the values which he felt were most real. As with any innovator, he faced problems which were new and unique, problems from which those who later accepted his way of life did not suffer. He suffered the conflict of the new and the old cultures within his own life, and his attempt to resolve his suffering was in many ways a failure. In the analysis of Kerouac which follows it must be remembered that he was an innovator, that he was stepping into areas of life which were new and unknown, and that his suffering was often intense just because he was incapable of resolving it.

The question of innocence and guilt concerned Kerouac at all times and he strove to assure himself that he was innocent in a world which he considered sick and evil. Kerouac longed to be outside a world of sick mortality where man had constantly to face the imperfection of his own body. He wanted all experience to be innocent, pure, and free, as he also wanted all men to be alive, good, and spontaneous. But as a physical man he felt the shortcomings, fears, and guilty of his own body, as he also perceived intellectually the shortcomings of the society surrounding him which made man an ugly and corrupt being.

He suffered from a sense of guilt and shame, but in terms appropriate to his Catholic religion, he came to see suffering as a form of release - for by suffering in a Christ-like way he
could appease his guilt and thus rise above evil, to attain a new sense of innocence. In this state of innocence he became a prophet visionary revealing evil to others. His attempt to escape suffering by suffering, however, ended in hopeless paradox, for he could never quite transcend his feelings of inadequacy and horror.

Kerouac continued his quest in search of innocence throughout most of life, turning at different times to religion, nature, drink, friendship and art in his attempt to relate innocence to a suffering world. Yet Kerouac could never appease his own sense of private suffering, he could never transcend his pain as he believed others could.

He saw innocence as the essential quality of his friends, naming an entire beat generation a generation of beautitude. In "Beatific: On The Origins of a Generation," Kerouac described his new awareness of the meaning in the word "beat." While "...beat originally meant poor, down and out, sad, sleeping in subways...," it came to have for Kerouac at his moment of insight the meaning of "beautitude." The members of the "beat" generation were in his eyes those special beings who experienced "beautitude," who transcended suffering in a way impossible to him. They became the heroes of his novels - Dean Moriarty (Neal Cassady), Japhy Ryder (Gary Snyder), Adam Moorad (Allen Ginsberg), Old Bull Lee (William Burroughs) - each representing to him the alter-ego, the innocent man he wished to be but could not because of his own sense of impoverishment.

Kerouac elevated even the average member of the beat world, giving him the heroic stature of victim and sufferer. He saw the
member of the beat sub-culture - whether poet, hoodlum, or junkie (The Town and The City), or plain bum (Dharma Bums) as a god because of his unique relationship to the world of pain. As a victim of the social order, the beat character suffered greatly, he was the innocent lamb preyed upon by the lion. Through his suffering he attained a form of innocence, he was alienated in a Christ-like way from the evils and corruptions of society - for evil was a force outside him for which he was not personally responsible: "...the great Dracula figure of modern disintegration and madness, the wise genius behind it all, the Devil if you will, is running the whole thing with his string of oaths and hexes." 2

The adventures of his special heroes - Dean (Cody) and Japhy turn into a quest, a pilgrimage in search of a new value system, a protest against the old. Through their actions these characters dissociate themselves from society and go in search of a life form which will authentically express their being. They experience a joy in life from moment to moment, taking upon themselves the role of Nietzschean supermen, transcending morality within their own lives through their liberation into vitality. 3 They participate in the world of Dionysus, the god of dynamic existence, who reconciles man with nature. Japhy revels in the dynamics of the natural world while Dean considers all life holy and every moment precious, making the whole of America his natural playground. In terms of their society they inhabit the realm of the irrational and absurd, the lower, dark world of music, self-forgetfulness and intoxication - all parts of the experience
of the god Dionysus. Man celebrated Dionysus in earlier barbaric fashion by sexual promiscuity, a feature prominent in the experience of Japhy and Dean and to the subterranean sub-culture to be considered later. In their passion for life they rise above the repressive order of society, transcending the moral ideology which tries to justify it. They are on the road travelling towards a new life experience; and they cannot be judged by the old. Even though often involved in a series of petty crimes, as seen especially in the life of Dean Moriarty, they are innocents in Kerouac's eyes, for they transcend the terms of corruption which their society designates. Sal, the Kerouac figure in *On the Road*, reveres Dean, the Holy Goof; for Sal he epitomizes "Beat - the root, the soul of Beatific." \(^4\) "...Dean by virtue of his enormous series of sins, was becoming the Idiot, the Imbecile, the Saint of the lot," for his actions ignore the world of morality in which other men are chained (*On the Road*, p. 160). Dean races through society with "the tremendous energy of a new kind of American saint" (*On the Road*, p. 161). In *Visions of Cody* Kerouac argues for "the goodness of this hero and his position as an Archetypal American Man." \(^5\)

Dean's belief in the holy quality of every moment and thing links him to a philosophical tradition of Liebnizian optimism which evades the whole question of evil. Many of his expressions reflect a philosophy similar to Pope's "Whatever is is right," and to Candide's "best of all possible worlds." This tradition contains an essential element of amorality: incapable of dealing with evil in philosophical terms, it tends to ignore its exist-
ence. Rather than reaching an elevated transcendence it often becomes pure naivete, an evading of that which is unpleasant to face. Kerouac finally stumbled over this point, for while he could argue the innocence of his heroes who insisted upon the holiness of all existence, he could not evade the morality of good and evil within his own life. While he longed to enter the world of Dionysus, the underground world of the subterraneans, he was forced to face the strength of morality's demands upon him, demands long ingrained within him by his religion and home life. With the growing pessimism of his later years, Kerouac turned from a belief in the innocence and beatific quality of his heroes, considering Cody only an aggravating and child-like friend in Big Sur.

Kerouac continued his search for a method of relating suffering to innocence in his investigation of religious doctrine. He had grown up in the Catholic religion, and this religion continued to affect a large number of his ideas throughout life. In Maggie Cassidy (1959), Kerouac describes his early conception of the Catholic way of life:

God spoke to me from the Crucifix:—'Now it is morning and the good people are talking next door and the light comes in through the shade—my child you find yourself in a world of mystery and pain not understandable—I know angel—it is for your good, we shall save you, because we find your soul as important as the soul of the others in the world—but you must suffer for that, in effect my child, you must die, you must die in pain, with cries, frights, despairs—the ambiguities—the terrors!—the lights, heavy, breakable, the fatigues, ah!... (Maggie Cassidy, p. 43).

Christ could save the young boy Jack Kerouac, if he suffered in equal fashion: "I stopped at the phosphorescent Crucifix of
Jesus and inwardly prayed to sorrow and suffer as He and so be saved" (Maggie Cassidy, p. 62). As a child Jack had seen his young brother Gerard sacrificed in terms of this vision. Gerard, the young angel-boy, seems placed upon earth to experience the 'goodness of suffering' in a momentary preparation for his life with God. He acts as a young prophet and guide showing within his actions and thoughts the truth of existence. Gerard senses the holiness of life, feeling horror at the cruelty and corruption within the world. He recognizes in despair that no change will occur in the world, it will continue in its cycle of woe and suffering for "sin is sin and there's no erasing it - we are spiders. We sting one another" (Visions of Gerard, p. 42). Yet Gerard envisions another truer world, a world of innocence and purity with God. He can escape the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth through his recognition of the essential innocence underlying all. But in terms of the Catholic way of life presented to Kerouac by God, Gerard must suffer to attain this world. Christ-like in his own purity and innocence, he suffers the horrors of existence and the pains of his mortal body. Christ through his suffering saves mankind, while Gerard, through his, makes his younger brother Jack aware of both a special experience of purity and innocence and the way to attain this experience through suffering. "I had no objection to acting like a lamb because my mother'd told me so many stories about my little brother died at nine who was so lamby, Gerard, would rescue mice from traps and bring back health in little cardboard boxes. . ." (Maggie Cassidy, p. 90).
The Catholic vision influences Kerouac permanently and his later analysis of Buddhist theory in *Dharma Bums* emphasizes much the same attitude towards suffering and innocence. Kerouac's interpretation of Buddhism again defines the world as one of mystery and pain where "all life is suffering" but "the suppression of suffering can be achieved." Sex and lust cause birth while birth is the cause of suffering. Buddhism divides reality into the realm of experience, which is the wider world of suffering and woe, and the greater reality of man's "truebody" or "starbody." Though the basic terms of innocence and suffering remain similar to the Catholic vision, the pattern for attaining the world of 'truebody' differs. Instead of gaining purification through suffering, man alters his awareness of suffering, making it unimportant in his own mind, so that while the body may continue to suffer, the mind can suppress such agony, living a life of purity above the prison of birth, death, and rebirth. While Kerouac fights to justify a philosophy of suppressed suffering in *Dharma Bums*, his works make up the story of his own personal anguish, which is one he can never really go beyond. "The whole thing forms one enormous comedy, seen through the eyes of poor Ti Jean (me), otherwise known as Jack Dulous, the world of raging action and folly and also of gentle sweetness seen through the keyhole of his eyes" (*Visions of Cody*, Preface). His inability to take upon himself the Buddhist way of life stems also from his deep commitment to a Catholic morality closely associated with the Catholic terms of suffering. Man must undergo punishment for his sins to obtain the goodness of another world. Kerouac's
interjection of Rosie's suicide in the midst of his tale of his and Japhy's Buddhist quest for innocence in Dharma Bums suggests his implicit awareness and fear of the judgment of a world still embedded within suffering. Rosie fears that a cop is going to arrest all the Dharms bums for their sins, and their primary sin seems to be one of evasion, of ignorance of the agonized world surrounding them. Of this they are guilty.

Kerouac strives to reconcile and blend his Buddhist and Catholic ideas in The Scripture of the Golden Eternity (1961), which reveals his own momentary personal vision of religious truth. In this scripture his view of the world and society changes little - the cause of the world's woe continues to be birth, "...that evil thing called sex and rebirth" (The Scripture, quotations 24 and 31). What is important to this work is his changed conception of self - he sees himself fully for the first time as equal to his brother Gerard, becoming the innocent visionary prophet whose task it is to show the world its essential woe, to lead it into the way of innocence. Kerouac gains a sense of pure innocence at the moment of his vision; he attains the role of god figure after years of searching into the ways of gods. In his vision he experiences selflessness, rising above that ego where most of his moral dilemmas and conflicts had formerly been acted out. The church which had once carried him from savior to savior, leads him in his vision to recognize finally that he himself is his own savior and the possible savior of other men. He "was awakened to show the way, chosen to die in the degradation of life, because he is Mortal Golden Eternity"
(The Scripture, quotation 4). He, as Gerard, is "a special solitary angel sent down as a messenger from Heaven to tell everybody that their pecking society is actually the Satanic society and they are all on the wrong track" (Big Sur, p. 94). Kerouac takes upon himself the role of artist visionary - through his artistic revelations he will express the truth.

Kerouac develops as a Romantic artist, an artist who projects his innocence and guilt upon the universe, fluctuating between ecstatic idealism and hopeless despair. The religious ideal of purity and innocence in which he, as artist, partakes, often succumbs to the world of suffering and guilt which makes up so large a part of the life of Kerouac the man.

The Romantic artist of the nineteenth century became almost an archetypal myth with a pattern of actions and responses associated with his being. He was the sensitive man elevated above society and often persecuted by social forces. He experienced life in terms of extremes - while on the one hand he held the possibility of ideal visions, on the other he lived in the deepest of emotional hells. His art took the form of confession - a confession of his excessive guilt and suffering caused through his inability to live out his ideal vision. He viewed woman with both joy and terror - wanting to obliterate himself within her being which represented to him the essential power of earth and nature and yet fearing the horror of her darkness. She was the femme fatale in his eyes and his love for her reminded him of death - his death within her. He projected onto nature too, the two oppositions constantly present within his own mind. On
the one hand nature contained purity and innocence, on the other an aspect of terror. He used his agony and pain, the very real part of his existence, as the material for art. Pain, then, became a very vital part of his existence, the source of his inspiration. In *The Romantic Agony*, Mario Praz describes the Romantics' use of pain as a major source of feeling "...for the Romantics beauty was enhanced by exactly those qualities which seem to deny it, by those objects which produce horror; the sadder, the more painful it is, the more intensely they relish it."

This general archetype describes Kerouac fairly closely, as it also describes his two Romantic heroes Nietzsche and Baudelaire. In his youth Kerouac had participated casually with a group of young bohemian artists who espoused the vision of Rimbaud, Nietzsche, Yeats, and Rilke: "to plunge to the bottom of the abyss, Heaven or Hell what matter? and all those other Rimbaud sayings and Nietzschean. . ." (*Vanity of Dulouz*, p. 224). At this time he wrote an important note in his diary on Nietzsche's vision of art: "Nietzsche: Art is the highest task and the proper metaphysical activity of life" (*Vanity of Dulouz*, p. 26). Through art as Nietzsche advocated it, man could transcend existence and the morality which justified this existence, creating in his own work of art his personal order amidst the chaos surrounding him. Nietzsche favored the experience of liberated Dionysian art, an experience which (as shown previously) became the life style of many of Kerouac's ideal heroes. The group of artists known as the naturalists grew out of Nietzsche's artistic theory, but unlike Nietzsche's supermen they were not completely
able to transcend the visible world, and vacillated between hope and despair, poetic joy and terror, rebellion and submission. Kerouac followed their pattern, for while at one point he longed for a religious art capable of complete transcendence through its presentation of the ideal, he discovered he lived within a real world where pain could only imperfectly be recreated into ideal beauty. His suffering most often failed to inspire a vision of the golden eternity, leading instead to increased anguish and self pity. Only at his moment of complete nervous breakdown did he envision innocence once more.

For a moment I see blue Heaven and the Virgin's white veil but suddenly a great evil blur like an ink spot spreads over it, 'The devil! - the devil's come after me tonight! tonight is the night!' that's what! - But angels are laughing and having a big barn dance in the rocks of the sea, nobody cares any more - Suddenly as clear as anything I ever saw in my life I see the Cross (Big Sur, p. 167-68).

But his vision compensated poorly for the agony of mental disintegration which he had experienced, for somehow the writing of a book could never make ideal a desperate pain and anguish: "And I realize the unbearable anguish of insanity." "There's a tightening around the head that hurts, there's a terror of the mind that hurts even more, they're so unhappy and especially because they can't explain it to anybody or reach out and be helped through all the hysterical paranoia they are really suffering more than anyone in the world and I think in the universe" (Big Sur, p. 164). Though Kerouac could explain his suffering in Big Sur, this explanation did little to make his vision ideal. During this period of nervous tension he thought of Nietzsche once more, but of Nietzsche as a man not a superman: "Everything is
possible, even Nietzsche knew that, 'Ain't nothing wrong with old Nietzsche - Xcept he went mad too!' (Big Sur, p. 132).

Baudelaire, the French Romantic, was the archetypal artist figure who extended and enlarged upon Nietzsche's vision. Leo Pericpied, another Kerouac figure, identifies strongly with Baudelaire in The Subterraneans, a novel considered later in this chapter, taking his ideal conception of Baudelaire as a pattern for his own artistic life style. Baudelaire, the Romantic artist par excellence, alternated between his experiences of spleen and ideal, spleen being a world of ennui, despair, outrage, and disgust; and ideal the escape into artistic vision, the recreation of the actual into beauty. Art substituted for religion in Baudelaire's vision; through art man could transcend ugly reality to re-enter a world of child-like inspiration, gaining purity by giving ugliness an artistic reality completely foreign to its original being. "In every man, at every hour, [said Baudelaire], there are two simultaneous postulations, one towards God and the other towards Satan. The invocation to God or spirituality, is a desire to mount higher, the invocation to Satan, or animality, is the joy of descending." Kerouac could easily identify with these particular terms, for he, too, felt a simultaneous attraction towards both spirit and body, defined as the realms of spirituality and animality by the Catholic church. Baudelaire still considered the eternal struggle between ideal and reality a moral battle; he, unlike Nietzsche, never conceived of a way of life completely outside morality. While he spent his entire life rejecting the moral premises of his society, he rejected them in
their own terms, experiencing his vision of spleen in terms of Christian evil and hell. He advocated the joys of evil, for evil was the source of inspired vision, yet this in ways was closely parallel to the Catholic concept of suffering as necessary before a vision of goodness could be achieved. Kerouac, who was also incapable of transcending the moral terms of church and home, found within Baudelaire a form of Romantic vision closely connected to his own beliefs; he, like Baudelaire, could create from his suffering within the underworld of self and society, the flower of art. Kerouac's life as revealed in The Subterraneans was parallel to Baudelaire's - both he and Baudelaire felt strong mother fixations, both had negro mistresses, and both found within art and creation a form of outlet and release. Kerouac, like Baudelaire, confessed his shame in his art, and shame was the necessary precedent in his mind to heroism: "Shame... that key to immortality in the Lord's grave... that key to courage... that key to heart" (Maggie Cassidy, p. 106). Baudelaire felt that the only great figures among men were the poet, the priest, and the soldier. "The man who sings, the man who sacrifices, and the one who is sacrificed." Kerouac felt much the same way, elevating the humble victim to the stature of hero whose glory the poet artist could sing.

He himself was often the humble victim to be elevated through song, for most of his works centre upon his own pain and agony. In Big Sur his mental anguish, "his groaning soul," is central to the novel, and he describes even the autobiography of his early years, Vanity of Dulouz, as "the story of the techniques of
suffering in the working world, which includes football and war" (Vanity of Dulouz, p. 103). In Dharma Bums, On The Road, and Visions of Gerard he searched for a sense of sacredness which could obliterate suffering, while The Subterraneans reveals the full anguish of the rejected lover. Art serves the function of penance in his life, for confession, the first step towards innocence within the Catholic church, becomes in art form his step outside guilt. He confesses himself a suffering victim, overwhelmed at times by a sense of inadequacy; but humble confession releases him from inadequacy, it purifies him, makes him capable of envisioning and participating within the experience of innocence. He expiates his sense of guilt and shame in art form: "pain which won't be eased by writing this, but heightened, but which will be redeemed..." (The Subterraneans, p. 25).

Kerouac considered the personal mythology he developed in his novels to be also a social mythology - through insights into his own character he revealed the soul of America. He saw America as representative of the personal extremes within himself, and the question of whether Kerouac is the product of a conflict, or whether he created the conflict and projected it onto society, is a debatable one. But regardless of origin the conflict existed in his mind.

The fathers of America had attempted to blend two separate ideals in the making of America - the ideal of reason, order, and progress, and the ideal of freedom and individuality. With the growing expansion and complexity of American society, the extension of social forces and demands began to hinder the ideal of
personal freedom. The individual came into conflict with his society, which he felt drastically limited his individuality by narrowing the possibilities for his development to the demands of social order. A subversive tradition arose which affirmed the ideal of freedom above all others, and which came to consider the social establishment as an enemy, for it numbed and destroyed the uniqueness of man, recreating him in the mold of a social robot. The American artist took upon himself the subversive role, and came to experience his suffering in terms of the conflict between these two ideals within himself. Kerouac followed this tradition, partially externalizing the conflict through his creation of a hero fighting outside the social order for his own individual being. He used the image of television to suggest the terrifying control over mind and emotion, which relegates suffering to the lives of those on the screen, reducing man's experience of his own being to a participator's response.

Colleges are nothing but grooming schools for middle-class non-identity which usually finds its perfect expression on the outskirts of the campus in rows of well-to-do houses with lawns and television sets in each living-room with everybody looking at the same thing while the Japhys of the world go prowling in the wilderness to hear the voice crying in the wilderness. . . (Dharma Bums, p. 32).

Kerouac's heroes as described before, choose the life outside society, transcending the code of social morality in their quest for individual liberation. Kerouac fights out the terms of the social fight within himself, and his unresolved tensions make him the perfect archetype for American society. The Romantic extremes of ideal against reality therefore take on the appearance of social criticism in Kerouac's work. He failed finally in his
attempt to appease his suffering through his art, for the very role of artist in America placed him on the side of the subversive tradition. Reconciliation of the conflict between individuality and social responsibility became impossible as long as he took his art seriously, for in arguing the greater value of a vision of innocence, he was condemning the social world surrounding him.

He turned in despair to less satisfactory means to attain a feeling of purity and innocence, consuming vast amounts of liquor to escape from the horror of reality in the pleasures of intoxication. In *Satori in Paris* he reflected upon the reason for his drinking: "As I grew older I became a drunk - Why? Because I like ecstasy of the mind" (*Satori in Paris*, p. 28). When a conflict becomes so insurmountable and overwhelming that a man can deal with it no longer, he longs for death, and death became Kerouac's final form of release. Leo Perceptied viewed death as comforting and heroic in *The Subterraneans*: "...seeing none of my virtues which anyway had long been drowned under years of durgtaking and desiring to die, to give up, to give it all up and forget it all, to die in the dark star..." (*The Subterraneans*, p. 9); and Kerouac in *Big Sur* felt surrounded by death's presence - his cat and some goldfish die, and a friend is dying in a sanitarium. Kerouac himself died in 1970 at the age of 47.

Kerouac reveals one cause for his suffering by suggesting within his novels his strong mother fixation. In an Oedipal context, a young man rejects his bodily desires for his mother because he fears castration from his father - hopefully he then
finds suitable substitutes which will lead eventually to his growth away from his mother as he forms a new relationship with another woman. As in the case of many Freudian neurotics, Kerouac failed to break the mother bond, continuing to return to the warmth and stability of her comfort; but this caused him to feel at a subconscious level a sense of guilt at his own body which had once experienced sexual desires for her. Since he could maintain this relationship only on an asexual level, he considered it in terms of love and need, emotions and concepts which develop through the mind rather than the body. In such circumstances the body becomes the area in which guilt is experienced, particularly sexual guilt, and Kerouac’s relationships with other women exhibited his sense of shame. He felt shame at these other relationships because they drew him away from home, but he also felt the shame of these other women who operated in the lesser terms of body rather than mind. Kerouac feared that he could be sucked into a guilty relationship from which he could attain no release; he felt repulsion towards these other women even as he was attracted to them—they became femme-fatale figures in his mind. To enjoy the life of his body fully, he would have to separate himself from his mother bond, in order not to feel guilt at the sexual desires he experienced. As long as the strength of his mother’s hold exceeded that of another woman, he could conceive of sex positively only in terms of an ideal; like Leo Percipied in The Subterraneans, he strove for the ideal of Reichian orgasm.

His body demands satisfaction, however; it rejects the solu-
tion of sublimation in the form of the ideal of mother love, and
draws Kerouac away into areas of experience opposed to the mother.
The mother comes to represent all those aspects of consciousness
associated with mind and ideal - stability, super-ego, repression,
sublimation. Opposed to this life is the life of passion, of
irrational impulse, the underworld life of the id, the experience
of the god Dionysus - the whole area of life with transcends
morality through liberation. To remain within the world of
mother love excludes large areas of experience through its denial
of the body, while a life of bodily existence alone separates him
from his ideals, causing him to feel estrangement and guilt at
his own being. The dominance of either one or the other created
extreme fear (paranoia) and tension within Kerouac, making it
necessary for him to move towards the opposite pole.

The frustrated artist expresses his tension through his ego
confession in art form, and art, as suggested above, becomes a
kind of penance for his guilt. Art becomes a mother substitute,
for Kerouac can create in art a world of mind above the level
of actual existence, an ideal world in which tensions can be
safely purged through their explication. Art becomes his form
of sublimation, for he escapes the tensions within his actual
life by relegating these tensions to the realm of artistic
reality - they become the central 'conflicts' within his novels.
He gains comfort and security by writing, while through his self-
debasement he satisfies the harsh judgment of his super ego.
Kerouac associates his work life with his home; he escapes Mardou
in The Subterraneans to return home to write. Work has the
advantage of being asexual; "the asexuality of the WORK - also the sudden gut joy of beer when the visions of great words in rhythmic order all in one archetypal book go roaring thro my brain. . ." (The Subterraneans, p. 57). In his writing Kerouac finds the most satisfactory sublimation of his pain and guilt at his bodily desires for he can use his desire and anguish as a force and impetus in the creation of his novels. But his novels show his torture at this conflict of body and mind, and while his torture leads him to art, he can never gain a full sense of reprieve in his own life experience.

(2)

Kerouac reveals his fears, anxieties, and conflicts most perceptively in The Subterraneans (1958), a novel which develops his own character in some depth. In this novel, Leo Percipied, the figure of Kerouac himself, confesses in a style and manner appropriate to the Romantic hero, the failure of his short love affair with the negro girl Mardou Fox. In his openness he hints at many of the conflicts within his own character, while some of his intentional justifications uncover aspects of character whose implications he himself fails to realize. Leo Percipied offers a good example for Freudian analysis, giving us a case study in Freudian style of a mother-fixated, depressed hero. Percipied's frustrated ego strives desperately to reconcile id with super-ego, never quite succeeding, and his confessional novel can be analysed in terms of this dilemma. On the one hand, he longs for a world of passion, impulse, and liberation; while on the other he
wishes for the ideal, a world of moral purity and stability which represses or sublimates the id drives - the experience of super-ego. This internalized conflict acts itself out in his relationship with Mardou, who represents to a great extent the world of id, but who has an important ambivalence. The implicit strength of another woman, his mother, lies in direct opposition to Mardou's hold, a mother who represents the strength of super-ego. It was his mother who gave him his morality and ideals, and who subconsciously, through the power of her hold, made necessary certain repressions and sublimations. As suggested earlier, Kerouac associated the world of work with mother and home, a work which was asexual and provided a suitable sublimation of the mother bond. The strength of Kerouac's mother fixation overpowers his love for Mardou, for his mother's will has affected indirectly a large part of his character; and the strength of his super-ego makes him feel guilt and shame at this relationship with this other woman.

Only his mother can comprehend his suffering fully, and comfort him in his pain, for she is the source of forgiveness - like the Mother Mary in the Catholic church, she draws the young sufferer to her for consolation. Leo's mother thus satisfies the whole range of his emotional being, offering both a realm of ideals and a consolation and forgiveness for sin. She fails only to satisfy his sexual drives, which, associated with the id, must turn to this realm of experience for satisfaction. When Mardou's light finally goes out in Heavenly Lane, showing that she no longer awaits Leo's arrival, Leo flees to the railyard, crying
because of the inevitability of their separation. At this moment he sees a vision suddenly appear in the sky:

Seeing suddenly not in the face of the moon but somewhere in the sky as I looked up and hoped to figure, the face of my mother - remembering it in fact from a haunted nap just after supper that same restless unable-to-stay-in-a-chair or on-earth day - just as I woke to some Arthur Godfrey programme on T.V., I saw bending over me the visage of my mother, with impenetrable eyes and moveless lips and round cheekbones and glasses that glinted and hid the major part of her expression which at first I thought was a vision of horror that I might shudder at, but it didn't make me shudder - wondering about it on the walk and suddenly now in the railyards weeping for my lost Mardou and so stupidly because I'd decided to throw her away myself, it had been a vision of my mother's love for me, - that expressionless and expressionless-because-so-profound face bending over me in the vision of my sleep, and with lips not so pressed together as enduring and as if to say - Poor Little Leo, poor Little Leo, you suffer, man suffer so, you're all alone in the world I'll take care of you, I would very much like to take care of you all your days my angel! - My mother an angel too . . . (The Subterraneans, p. 141-42)

You see a vision of the face of the woman who is your mother who loves you so much she has supported you and protected you for years, you a bum, a drunkard - never complained a jot - because she knows that in your present state you can't go out in the world and make a living and take care of yourself and even find and hold the love of another protecting woman - and all because you are poor stupid Ti Leo - deep in your dark pit of night under the stars of the world you are lost, poor, no one cares, and now you throw away a little woman's love because you wanted another drink with a rowdy fiend from the other side of your insanity (p. 143).

At this emotional crisis his ambivalent and complex feelings for his mother bombard his consciousness, and the conflicts in his mother's roles create a sense of confusion about her in Leo's mind - she gives him a system of values then judges his failure to achieve these values, but she forgives him in his weakness and offers him comfort and protection. Since he is destined in
her eyes to be a sinner and a loser, the only way he can gain her sympathy and love is through his excessive suffering, for by suffering he does penance for his sin and gains her forgiveness.
The self concept, then, which gives him his mother's fullest sympathy is that of Poor Ti Jean, perpetual bum and drunkard, who suffers out each day of life. His mother becomes the primary image for comfort in his weakness, for it is only she who can fully comprehend and pity his short-comings, no other woman, including Mardou, can understand or love him so completely.
Leo searches for a love equal to his mother's love in his relationships with other women, for there is a part of himself which longs to be free from her hold and to establish a complete union with another. Her being has so completely penetrated his, however, that he can see other women as ideal only if they appear to be similar to her. When Leo first meets Mardou Fox he thinks immediately of two other women - his sister, and a girlhood friend of his sister named Rita Savage. "My sister, I'd thought suddenly the first time I saw her" (p. 71). A sister represents in Freudian terms a kind of mother substitute, and Leo projects his hope that Mardou may be such a substitute in this statement. But Mardou reminds him simultaneously of his sister's girlfriend, Rita Savage, an Indian girl who had occupied his sexual fantasies as a young man. Rita Savage exists in his mind as the other part of woman, the 'savage' dark lady who offers her body for sex but who fails to satisfy his ideals of love.
Leo finds it difficult to relate his sexual desires with love, and to unite these responses in his relationship with one
woman. A part of him longs for an ideal love with Mardou, in which case, Mardou would take on for him a role equivalent to his mother - he would "find and hold the love of another protecting woman" (p. 143). She would protect him from his fears and comfort him in his suffering as his mother had always done. In this sense the light from Mardou's window in Heavenly Lane is a symbol to him, for the light shows that Mardou is there waiting, ready to comfort him in his pain. On first seeing her, he thinks of the solace she can give him: "But in eying her little charms I only had the foremost one idea that I had to immerse my lonely being (A big sad lonely man, is what she said to me one night later, seeing me suddenly in the chair) in the warm bath and salvation of her thighs. . . ." (p. 9).

He sees himself and Mardou as "lovers going to and fro beneath the boughs in The Forest Arden of the World," a forest where love and sexual innocence can unite once more, in terms of Reich's theory of orgasm (p. 64). Leo espouses Reich's sexual theory which affirms that love and sex join together "when microcosmed and pointed in and maled into: orgasm. . . .," for this theory affirms the sacredness of sex as it leads to the ultimate experience (p. 64). He makes sex a part of his ideal vision - he and Mardou will partake of this ritual and so unite in the most sacred act.

Leo 'seeks' to get involved with Mardou, searching within the essence of woman, for ideal love, and in this sense Mardou's race is a part of her immediate attractiveness. He tells her of the reasons he is attracted to her early in their relationship:
"...What I see in your eyes is a life-time of affection not only from the Indian in you but because as part Negro somehow, you are the first, the essential woman, and therefore the most, most originally most fully affectionate and maternal..." (italics mine) (p. 129). Mardou believes too that woman is the essence, the being who can give man what he most vitally needs, but man evades her, rushes off instead to erect big abstract constructions (italics mine). "You mean they should just stay at home with the essence, [questions Leo], that is lie under a tree all day with the woman but Mardou that's an old idea of mine, a lovely idea, I never heard it better expressed and never dreamed" (p. 23). "The highs contain the essence," those thighs in which he longs to immerse his lonely being (p. 23).

As their relationship begins, Leo believes that "Eden's in Africa," separate and apart from a corrupt America. He refers to the two of them as Adam and Eve, that couple who had once lived in perfect harmony in the Garden of Eden, and both he and Mardou dream of escape to Mexico where they can live the simple life of peasants in purity and innocence. As their dream of Mexico fades, Leo dreams of yet another possibility — he and Mardou will live together in a shack in the middle of the Mississippi woods. Surrounded by hatred and severe racial prejudice they will remain innocent and pure, living a life of solitude and peace.

You'll turn out to be the woman who can really live with me in profound solitude of woods finally and at the same time make the glittering Parises (there it is) and grow old with me in my cottage of peace (suddenly seeing myself as William Blake with the
meek wife in the middle of London early dewy morning, Crabbe Robinson is coming with some more etching work but Blake is lost in the vision of the Lamb at breakfast leavings table) (p. 83).

He and Mardou confess their feelings of guilt and shame to one another in the intimacy of their bed-time conversations: they begin their romance "on the deeper level of love and histories of respect and shame..." (p. 29). Through confession, Leo believes, they will attain innocence in one another's eyes, and this innocence will make possible a more perfect relationship. In her confession Mardou startles Leo with a visionary experience she had had sometime earlier. In this vision Mardou had walked naked and alone through the early morning San Francisco streets and had recognized for the first time the beauty and innocence of her body as part of God's creation.

Making a new start, starting from flesh in the rain, 'Why should anyone want to harm my little heart, my feet, my little hands, my skin that I'm wrapped in because God wants me warm and inside, my toes - why did God make all this all so decayable and dieable and harmful and wants to make me realize and scream - why the wild ground and bodies bare and breaks - I quaked when the giver creamed, when my father screamed, my mother dreamed - I started small and ballooned up and now I'm big and a naked child again only to cry and fear. - Ah - Protect yourself, angel of no harm, you who've never and could never crack another innocent its shell and thin veiled pain - wrap a robe around you, honey lamb, - protect yourself from rain and wait, till Daddy comes again, and Mama throws you warm inside her valley of the moon, loom at the loom of patient time, be happy in the mornings.' - Making a new start, shivering, out of the alley night naked in the skin... (p. 36).

As Mardou recites the tale of her rebirth into a new world whose purity she can now comprehend, Leo feel overwhelmed by her goodness and suffering.
I had never heard such a story from such a soul except from the great men I had known in my youth, great heroes of America I'd been buddies with, with whom I'd adventured and gone to jail and known in raggedy dawns, the boys beat on curbstones seeing symbols in the saturated gutter, the Rimbaud and Verlaines of America on Times square - kids - no girl had ever moved me with a story of spiritual suffering and so beautifully her soul showing out radiant as an angel wandering in hell and the hell the self-same streets I'd roamed in watching, dreaming the darkness and the mystery and eventuality of our meeting in eternity, the hugeness of her face now like the sudden vast Tiger head on a poster on a back of a wood fence in the smoky dumy yards Saturday no-school mornings, direct, beautiful, insane, in the rain. - We hugged, we held close - it was like love now, I was amazed - We made it in the livingroom, gladly on chairs, on the bed, slept entwined, satisfied - I would show her more sexuality (p. 50).

At this moment Leo discovers his mother in Mardou and his long search for the pure and innocent woman seems over. Mardou shares with his mother the role of angelic being, the innocent who wanders and suffers through the ugliness of hell, but who gains a greater purity through this journey.

Leo views Mardou positively in yet another way, for Mardou belongs to a subterranean sub-culture which he admires and reveres. This sub-culture originated the beat generation in San Francisco, a generation which he views as essentially innocent and beatific. He believes that the male subterraneans are Christ-like figures, who, having experienced the world of hell, can enter the world of heaven. Leo associates Julien Alexander, "the angel of the subterraneans," with Christ, and describes the majority of the members of this sub-culture as saint-like. The subterraneans suggest a world of "silence, bohemian mystery, drugs, beards, semi-holiness," "they are hip without being slick,
they are intelligent without being corny, they are intellectual as hell and know all about Pound without being pretentious of talking too much about it, they are very quiet, they are very Christ-like" (p. 2). They read Whitman and Thoreau, take drugs, and listen to bop jazz. Drugs enlarge their world through private visions, making them closer to God in Leo's mind. "We say junkie when once Dostoevsky would have said what? if not ascetic or saintly..." (p. 18). They exist in the dynamic world of music, self-forgetfulness, and intoxication, living their lives within the moment and leaving behind an established world of social conformity. Mardou's negro heritage has a special place in this world, for it was the negro race who created this generation with their jazz music. Jazz penetrates the lives of the subterraneans, who listen to their jazz heroes Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk in a state of reverent awe.

Norman Mailer suggest in his article "The White Negro" that it was jazz which first wedded black and white, making the white man long to enter the black world for the first time. "..The negro...could rarely afford the sophisticated inhibitions of civilizations, and so he kept for his survival the art of the primitive, he lived in the enormous present..." 13 The negro was the source, the essence of the whole hip world. He was also the most heroic of all sufferers, for he had been most thoroughly victimized. Having long fought to remain alive in a country which despised his being, he epitomized strength and vitality. Leo often dreamed of being a part of this hip world "wanting to be vital, alive like a Negro, or an Indian, or a
Denver Jap or a New York Puerto Rican come true, with her by my side, so young, sexy, slender, strange hip. . . " (p. 96).

Leo adores Mardou, the child of bop, who can enter and comprehend jazz music so fully.

She stood in the drowsy sun suddenly listening to bop as if for the first time as it poured out the intention of the musicians and of the horns and instruments suddenly a mystical unity expressing itself in waves like sinister and again electricity but screaming with palpable aliveness the direct world from the vibration, the interchanges of statement, the levels of waving intimation, the smile in sound. . . (p. 47-48).

Through his relationship with Mardou he comes to see bop in all of its vitality and his wish is to be the greatest of bop writers. In her innocence and 'kid-like' quality, Mardou keeps him young, a part of this new generation - a fact he considers important in his conflict with another writer, Balliol Mac-Jones. While Mac-Jones looks from the outside in, conversing in interview fashion with the members of this beat world, Leo feels a sense of belonging because of Mardou.

But Mardou proves incapable of carrying out Leo's ideal relationship, for having grown up in a much harsher setting, she views life more realistically. Mardou knows that the woman contains the essence, just as she also knows intuitively that Leo as a man fears this essence and will some day go off to erect abstract constructions. She scorns Leo's false sense of idealism, forcing him to admit that they will never reach Mexico, that they are not Adam and Eve. "Look man, she'd said one day a week before when I'd suddenly started talking about Adam and Eve, and referred to her as Eve, the woman who by her beauty
is able to make a man do anything, 'Don't call me Eve!'" (p. 149). She also criticized his sexual idealism, expressing her distaste for Wilhelm Reich and his book *The Function of Orgasm.* "Don't pull that Reich on me in bed," she tells Leo, "I read his damn book, I don't want our relationship all pointed out and f....d up with what HE said..." (p. 64-65). Mardou finds it difficult to achieve orgasm because of a long series of sexual relationships which ignored her response, and this increases the difficulty of attaining Reich's ultimate. She recognizes intuitively that Leo's desire to return home after making love to her is unhealthy and harmful for their relationship, and she tries to break him of this need. Mardou longs to form a relationship in which the man will not consider the woman as a prize but as a human being, a relationship based upon mutual respect and trust. But Leo finally cannot trust Mardou.

She lives in the world of her own problems, timing her days by the frequency of her visits to her psychoanalyst. Mardou's mother had died at her birth, and her father had disappeared, leaving her a homeless unwanted orphan. She seeks solace in her relationships with other men, a solace she cannot find in Leo, searching for the comfort of the father she had never had as a child. Leo, in his search for a mother, proves incapable of the role of male protector—he is an insufficient substitute father. Mardou is the first to recognize their inability to reach one another, as she is later the one who ends their affair. In a note to Leo she sums up their separateness: "We are like two animals escaping to dark warm holes and live our pain alone"
(p. 82). They fail finally to share one another's pain.

The failure of their love affair, due in part to Mardou's inadequacy, comes largely however, from Leo's strange and ambivalent attitude towards women. As seen above, Leo searches for his ideal within a woman, an ideal based upon his perception of his mother. Somewhere within himself he feels that the woman can save him:

...knowing as I do from past experience and interior sense, you've got to fall down on your knees and beg the woman's permission, beg the woman's forgiveness for all your sins, protect her, support her, doing everything for her, die for her but for God's sake love her, and love her all the way in and every way you can... (p. 104).

But this very woman is a threat to his existence, drawing him away from self-awareness into her womb - that area of darkness which suggests comfort through the death self. Leo struggles to remain alive, fighting this terrifying woman who threatens to smother him. His ambivalent attitude arises as he tries to divide and distinguish these two aspects of woman within his own mind. Even his mother, who represents that ideal side of woman which he reveres, suggests the potential halves within herself - for she is both "tyrannical" and "sweetly." Yet the strength of her influence upon Leo makes it impossible for him to fight his battle with woman against her, for it would lead inevitably to his loss. Instead he struggles with those women who have been chosen as mother substitutes, and this struggle is particularly apparent in his relationship with Mardou.

As suggested earlier, Mardou reminds Leo immediately of both his sister and Rita Savage, a girl who represents that dark
savage part of woman which he fears. She herself is a negro, a member of a black race which America had long considered dark and foreboding. In a religious sense, black and white suggest the oppositions of evil and good, and Leo associates the Satanic and fearful with darkness. Mardou lives amidst a world of underground subterraneans, an id world of chaos and passion. Having dropped the world of self-supporting work to fulfill the belief in her own womanhood, she has been a part of this incestuous group for some time. This group partakes of the rituals of the underground, living a life of Dionysian vitality and intoxication outside the moral terms of its society. It represents for Leo, the dark and subterranean forces of life, which he, like Baudelaire, must investigate in order to attain ecstasy and inspiration.

Leo wants to doubt Mardou, to see her as the femme fatale figure who draws him from his own concerns into her private grasp. He looks for ways in which to criticize her in order to increase his sense of repulsion and feels repulsed at a variety of things - her unwashed sheets, the beginnings of bad congestion in her teeth, the woolly particles in her hair, her sloppiness, her probable promiscuity, and her Negro race. "At first I had doubts, because she was Negro, because she was sloppy (always putting off everything till tomorrow, the dirty room, unwashed sheets - What do I really for Christ's sake care about sheets) - doubts because I knew she'd been seriously insane. . ." (p. 59). While Leo feels attracted by the Negro in Mardou as this draws him towards the essence of woman, he feels simultaneously
repelled - for the Negro woman is also linked in his mind with the hustler, the prostitute who sells her body to any taker: ". . . every time I see a Mexican gal or Negress I say to myself, 'hustlers,' they're all the same, always trying to cheat and rob you - harking back to all relations in the past with them - Mardou sensing the waves of hostility from me and silent" (p. 129). Leo uses Mardou's intimate confessions of shame against her, particularly her confession that she was once tempted to look in an unlocked suitcase. He grows to believe that she actually did steal from this suitcase, for he longs to consider her a thief. When his friend, Bernard, accuses Mardou of stealing some pornographic pictures, Leo joins in the accusation although Mardou protests her innocence. He wants to believe this deepest final doubt about Mardou: "that she was really a thief of some sort and therefore was out to steal my heart, my white man heart, a Negress sneaking in the world sneaking the holy white men for sacrificial rituals later when they'll be roasted and rolled. . ." (p. 67).

Leo feels happy when he discovers that his jealousy dream of Mardou's inconstancy seems actually to be true, for his sense of her guilt and promiscuity is then confirmed. When Mardou tells him that she and Yuri will not go with him to Los Altos, his heart sinks - "it sank so I gloated to hear it for the first time and the confirmation of it crowned me and blessed me" (p. 117). At this time Mardou reminds him of the first girlfriend in his youth, Maggie Cassidy, "an impossible flirt and cheater," with whom he had also experienced ambiguous feelings. In Maggie
Cassidy, the novel which describes this early relationship, he refers to his ambivalence: "I'd want to rip her mouth out and murder her, sudden interior welling up of tenderness profound, paining, dark, forming milky frowns on forehead, raising moons by the conjuration - fingers up from the bottom of the well which is the womb, nature, black sod, time, death, birth" (Maggie Cassidy, p. 91).

But Leo most fears Mardou's sexual hold, for he recognizes her great physical attractiveness. Their sexual relationship keeps him from his work, a work in which most of his ego consciousness is invested. After spending the night with her he wants to return home, to re-affirm his sense of well-being, and when Mardou persuades him to stay a few hours longer, he leaves guiltily: "because the well-being, the sense of doing what he should has been sacrificed, but though sacrificed to healthy love, something is sick in him, lost, fear" (p. 56).

Leo associates sex with suffering, and sex, rather than providing release from tension, increases the tension within him. He feels guilt and repulsion at his sexual desires, reducing them to the level of the animalistic, and he sometimes becomes overwhelmed at how far he will go for sexual satisfaction, "just for the sake of a little bit of sate for that worm and snake called sex" (p. 126). The sexual snake is linked in his mind with the "snake-like charm" of women, for it was the combination of Eve, the snake, and sex which threw Adam from the Garden of Eden.

He tells Mardou of his fears about her body: "I thought
I saw some kind of black thing I've never seen before, hanging, like it scared me;" and he and Mardou examine her body closely in order to reassure him (p. 65). But Leo can never be completely reassured, for the fear of her womb always remains in the back of his consciousness, the fear that she is intending to bust him in half. She becomes connected in his subconscious mind with his fear of being a fag, and when he dreams the Tennessee Williams story about the Turkish bath attendant and the little white fag: "Mardou /becomes/ the big buck nigger Turkish bath attendant, and /he/ the little fag who's broken to bits in the love affair and carried to the bay in a burlap bag, there to be distributed piece by piece and broken bone by bone to the fish..." (p. 68).

Leo fears the power of his masculinity, speaking of his 'crude male sexuality' and 'lecherous propensities' as something which must be forgiven him. He feels his difference from the subterranean men comes from his different form of masculinity, and he despises the fact that he is "male-like and vain." Leo contrasts the "pride, and beauty, and beatitude or sensitivity" of the subterraneans with "the stupid neurotic nervousness of the phallic type, forever conscious of his phallus, his tower, of women as wells" (p. 12). His nervous consciousness of phallic masculinity makes him forever aware of the femininity of women, keeping him imprisoned within a sexual sphere. He can never escape the woman's pull of attraction, for his masculinity strengthens the fearful hold of women upon him. Leo must guard himself to prevent Mardou Fox from 'outfoxing' him, from trick-
ing him with her feminine slyness and craftiness.

He also feels an immediate attraction towards other men which he fears greatly, yet at the same time he uses this companionship and closeness with other men to separate himself from Mardou's hold. He admires the feminine qualities of the subterranean men, as he also admires those girls who are so slender and figureless that they look masculine in appearance. As his relationship with Mardou becomes more intense, he begins to act "ludicrously like a fag," putting down Mardou by developing this reputation (p. 76). But at the same time Leo fears the whole world of homosexuality, and, having once been a "nannybeater," he hates the appearance of any 'queer' actions within himself. His need to escape Mardou's hold leads him towards other men, but this in turn makes him hate himself, and react even more harshly against Mardou.

He protects himself from Mardou too by participating within an intellectual life which makes her feel bored and inadequate. Most of their evenings are spent in clubs or bars, where Leo joins different groups of literary friends who absorb themselves in intellectual discussions while drinking. Mardou is left to sit by Leo's side, a passive observer who can contribute little. These discussions, which often continue long into the night, exhilarate Leo, but leave Mardou tired and drained. "...All matters so much had been dinning Mardou's ear (queer, cultured matters) in her love affir with me that by now she was quite tired of cultured tones and fancy explicitly, emphatic daintiness of expression..." p. 120). The intellectual world, then,
draws Leo away from Mardou, leaving her alone with thoughts of her own. These thoughts turn to the failure of their relationship and to the need for their separation.

The inevitability of their separation, and the pain of a broken love affair, is finally one of the major reasons for Leo's attraction to Mardou. He realizes even as their relationship begins, that "making it" is "the key to pain," but he hurl himself at Mardou for this very reason: "... hurling on at her as if and because in fact I wanted to be hurt and 'lacerate' myself - one more laceration yet and they'll pull the blue sod on, and make my box plop boy - for now death bends big wings over my window..." "The sea of self-murder - loss - hate - paranoia - it was her little face I wanted to enter and did" (p. 114). The pain of their relationship gives him the material to create a work of art in true Romantic fashion, and it is his pain which lies at the core of his writing - "the pain of telling these secrets which are so necessary to tell, or why write or live" (p. 214). Mardou becomes the area of his dark suffering, and in his affair with her, he experiences the pain, the spleen, so necessary before he can attain ecstasy and ideal. "... I am Baudelaire and love my brown mistress and I too leaned to her belly and listened to the rumbling underground..." (p. 114).

As their relationship ends, Leo rushes off to write "Baudelaire poems," to redeem himself within his writing. By erecting the abstract construction of his confessional novel, he frees himself from Hardou's hold, using the "OWN BAGTAIL ESSENCE," the "ESSENCE OF MIND RECOGNITION," to achieve his freedom (p. 66-67).
Yet ironically, the role of Romantic artist leads Leo back to the mother, for art becomes a kind of mother substitute. Here again there is an ideal to be attained and a suffering awareness of the failure to achieve this ideal. Art can never quite release Leo from the guilt of his own being.

2. This quotation comes from an excerpt of The Town and The City called "The Time of the Geek," found in The Beat Generation and The Angry Young Man, ed. Gene Feldman and Max Gartenberg (New York: Citadel Press, 1958), p. 88. When Sal Paradise fights with Dean Moriarty at one point in On The Road he insists that he is not guilty, not responsible for the evils of the world.

"It's not my fault I told him. Nothing in this world is my lousy fault, don't you see that? I didn't want it to be and it can't be and it won't be" (On The Road, p. 176). But it is, and Kerouac never quite recovers from the fact of his own sins. He cannot, like Burroughs, conceive of evil as external to himself.

3. In some ways their vision is similar to the narrator's final vision in Beautiful Losers for they too exist in a world where magic is afoot.


7. The Romantic tendencies suggested describe particularly those artists writing within the European Romantic tradition - particularly Rousseau, Goethe, (The Sorrows of Young Werther), Holderin (Hyperion), and Baudelaire. Breaman in his search for goodness within a world of death and shit has certain striking similarities with Baudelaire.


12. His sense of ambivalence about women comes out in other novels besides The Subterraneans. Sal Paradise escapes his Mexican lover in California, and Kerouac himself feels a
sense of horror at Billie in Big Sur even though he suggests that they marry. In Maggie Cassidy, the young Jackie Dulouz wants both a Mary and a Magdalene.

CHAPTER III - COHEN

A sense of suffering dominates the work of Leonard Cohen in a way quite different from Kerouac. Cohen, writing within a tradition of decadent Romanticism which links him with Baudelaire, Genet, Miller, and Burroughs, feels the need to investigate the evil side of man, to make man recognize personal responsibility for evil, and in this way to free him from a false set of values and assumptions.

In the twentieth century, the western world has attempted through its history and its religion to depersonalize suffering, creating on one hand a heroic sufferer unjustly tortured (the Jew), and on the other a spectator who can enjoy and feel titillated by this suffering because he is not personally responsible. Both of these roles are false, for both elevate suffering and pain as a heroic phenomenon and destroy its essential personal quality, thereby alienating and depersonalizing man from that part of himself which is his pain and sorrow. The individual man continues to suffer and to cause others to suffer, but his primary aim becomes not a comprehension of his pain, and the creating from this pain of a complete being, but instead an elevation of the suffering itself as ideal. The victim, the invalid, and the cripple become gods because of their unique relationships to the world of pain. Cohen recognizes the danger of this concept of suffering, for it increases man's alienation and gives him a false sense of innocence. By making this suffering heroic, society encourages the continuance of suffering in these terms. A vicious circle ensues where man in becoming a victim gains distinction through his suffering and
therefore desires to be victimized again. As long as he remains the victim he retains a sense of perpetual innocence. If he should turn aggressor and make another man a victim, he only increases that man's stature to the role of heroic sufferer. In neither sense, then, is he really responsible for evil.

This concept is dangerous, for it grossly misinterprets the very real suffering and pain which is a part of nature anyway. In fact, it is possible for suffering and pain to create a fuller man, but only if man comprehends these parts of himself and grows into a stronger and fuller being through his awareness. In this sense he can become heroic, a saint, since by perception of his personal pain and agony and his loneliness, he can become more compassionate to the loneliness and agony of others. By accepting his own pain and the guilt for the suffering which he causes others, he can attain a more vital sense of completeness following from the acknowledgement of his guilt. For Cohen this is the only authentic innocence which a man can have.

Cohen emphasizes in his poetry, particularly the group of poems entitled *Flowers for Hitler*, the normality of evil, using the images of Hitler's world to emphasize that what seems most gross is actually human. Adolf Eichmann is in every way medium (eyes: medium, hair: medium, weight: medium, height: medium, intelligence: medium), while Goebbels, a Doctor of Reason, is convinced that pain is only a matter of choice. These figures, along with Hitler, have "memories white from loss of guilt." Having set up an efficient system of machinery to kill, they
stand back as admiring spectators. The Eichmanns, Goebbels, and Hitlers of the world cannot be saved in Cohen's terms, for they feel no personal sense of agony associating them with mankind.

The Jewish people are in a superior position in this situation, for they attain a form of purity through their sacrifice. But they cannot attain the position of saint, for they have not personally willed that their suffering be endured to fulfill their being. As victims and culprits they form a part of the false elevation of suffering. We are left without knowledge of the individual Jewish person slaughtered at Dachau; we can see him only as one of many bodies killed in impersonal efficiency. He cannot lend us his suffering to make us more human through his experience. The horror in Cohen's poetry comes partially from the fact that both he, a poet who is Jewish, and we, the readers, are almost forced to take the impersonal role of spectator. We can only comment upon the horror, criticize the 'other side' - we can never fully take the position of either tormentor or sufferer, for neither position of personally given to us. Cohen's poetic images reflect a whole structure of tormentor and tormented which is impersonally experienced. We normally fall back on our imagination for our ability to empathize with others, but the cold phrases of his poems do not allow us to achieve sentiment so easily. We must acknowledge the tormentor as human, and the Jewish man, the unknown sufferer, as dead without our knowledge of his particular death. We must accept the guilt of humanity before we can be released by imagination and feeling into a world of agonized and anguished
suffering. We must be aware of how easy it is to be distracted:

I tend to get distracted
by hydrogen bombs,
by Uncle's disapproval
of my treachery
to the men's clothing industry

I find myself
believing public clocks
taking advice
from the Dachau generation

(Selected Poems, p. 108-9).

Only if we "will not be held like a drunkard/ under the cold tap of facts," refusing the universal alibi can we be saved (Selected Poems, p. 87). Rejecting the impersonal society man must fall back on his authentic self.

Cohen's first novel, The Favorite Game (1963), also considers the question of private and public suffering. The conflict of the society and the individual centres on society's degradation and utilization of man's emotion. Cohen describes the growing up of the artist, Breavman, in The Favorite Game. As children, Breavman and his friend Krantz feel fascinated with a world of torture and cruelty, investigating in innocence all areas of experience. Their Jewish heritage surrounds them with a wealth of examples of suffering. They are taught by their culture to believe that torture is the weapon of their enemies, who use it with a sense of perverted glee. "The Japs and Germans were beautiful enemies." "They started the war because of their nature." "But mostly they tortured for fun because of their nature."

"Nothing fascinates a child like a tale of torture. With the clearest of consciences, with a patriotic intensity, child-
ren, dreamed, talked, acted, orgies of physical abuse. Imagination were released to wander on a reconnaissance mission from Calvary to Dachau" (p. 16). While European children starved and watched their parents scheme and die, the friends in Breavman's Montreal childhood played with toy whips. As German soldiers, Krantz and Breavman whip the American, Lisa, a prisoner of the third Reich with red string. "Welts dance all over Lisa's imaginary body" (p. 17). Lisa and Breavman enjoy playing the soldier and the whore, for the soldier is Breavman's hero, and he sneaks a look at his father's gun whenever possible. "The sound of the machinery when Breavman pulled the hammer back was the marvellous sound of all murderous scientific achievement. Click. Like the smacking of cogwheel lips" (p. 18). Suffering and torture is something outside themselves which excites them. In the role of spectator they preoccupy their minds with the finer points of cruelty without any sense of personal awareness of pain or any implication in the torture itself. They play a game in the field of others' anguish, an anguish which they do not yet understand. Breavman longs to experience a world of cruelty and gore but "in each case he wants to be surrounded by the best-armed, squint-eyed, ruthless, loyal, tallest, leather-jacketed, technical brain-washed heavy police guard money can buy" (p. 46). As long as torture remains a force outside himself it retains its fascination.

At the same time the young Breavman and Krantz come across the prejudice and hatred of the young French Canadians. They invade a dance hall on the other side of town where the dancers
are "Catholics, French-Canadian, anti-Semitic, anti-Anglais, belligerent" (p. 41). As the "only two Jews in the place" they soon distinguish themselves, starting a fight over the right to dance with girls whom they don't really care for. They are the 'Dirty Jews,' the rich Jews despised in French-Canadian Montreal. On another level, Breavman's father encourages him to distinguish himself as a special being. "The Jews are the conscience of the world, and the Breavmans are the conscience of the Jews. 'And I am the conscience of the Breavmans,' adds Lawrence Breavman" (p. 11).

With his father's death, Breavman begins to question the ambivalent role of the Jew. His father "is one of the princes of Breavman's private religion, double-natured and arbitrary. He is the persecuted brother, the near-poet, the innocent of the machine toys, the sighing judge who listens but does not sentence." But he is also "heaving Authority, armoured with Divine Right, doing merciless violence to all that is weak, taboo, un-Breavmanlike" (p. 24). His father embodies both torturer and sufferer. His greatest love is machinery, his greatest suffering a limpness of the heart.

Breavman and Krantz decide that parents are traitors "who have sold their sense of destiny for an Israeli victory in the desert." They want a Jewish people of purity and heroic stature. "Weren't they supposed to be a holy people consecrated to purity, service, spiritual honesty. Weren't they a nation set apart? Why had the idea of a jealously guarded sanctity degenerated into a sly contempt for the goy, empty of self-
criticism?" (p. 38). They demand a Jewish hero, for if the Jewish race has set itself up in the role of heroic sufferer it must fulfill the role. Krantz and Breavman think in terms of heroes outside themselves - retaining a "jealously guarded sanctity," they are empty of self criticism for they are not yet responsible.

With the frog dissection ritual Breavman takes responsibility for evil upon himself. He acknowledges for the first time that evil, cruelty, and the ability to inspire pain is a part of his own being. "We're in charge of torture tonight. The regular torturers are relieved" (p. 53). As they remove the organs one by one from the dying frog, "both of them, the operator and the spectator, in a trance" (p. 54). It appears for a moment that they can evade responsibility, for the frog's heart will stay alive in salt water. "Everything had a second chance if they could save it" (p. 54). But it is too late, the frog's heart heaves eleven final times. Breavman, implicated as the instigator of the torture, can now recognize the evil within himself. Speaking to Krantz, he admits his guilt. "I suppose that's the way everything evil happens, like tonight" (p. 54).

With Book Two Breavman enters a different stage of investigation. His sense of alienation from society grows, and he turns to a search within his personal self and his relationships with others. His mother confronts him with the role of torturer. She conceives of herself as the victim of her son's cruelty: "Rotten, a rat wouldn't treat a mother, rotten as if you were a stranger, would anybody throw meat and my ankles are
swollen, beat you, your father would beat you, a rotten son. . .."
(p. 57). Her role as sufferer is pitiful because she has no belief in her own integrity. She blames her son sometimes unfairly for her own masochistic being, and Breavman while recognizing his partial responsibility, must reject her concept of himself in order to survive.

He rejects, too, a whole society which affirms that suffering is the highest ideal, for he sees that this society is based upon false assumptions. It depersonalizes suffering in the form of an ideal while continuing to ignore it in everyday life. The world of public society in Montreal evades all uncomfortable experience. "He hated the men floating in sleep in the big stone houses. Because their lives were ordered and their rooms tidy. Because they got up every morning and did their public work. Because they weren't going to dynamite their factories and have naked parties by the fire" (p. 59).

Yet pain, experienced most often as loneliness, is very real in the lives of most people - who must either ignore this part of themselves or find release in such things as pop art. His humourous comment on the pop hero of the time, Pat Boone, contains a sad truth. "My only criticism is be more desperate, try and sound more agonized or we'll have to get a negro to replace you" (p. 85). Pop art in turn downgrades an authentic expression in written form of the experience of pain. As soon as the artist's work becomes public it loses its personal integrity for it is used for the wrong reasons. "The world was being hoaxed by a disciplined melancholy. All the sketches made
a virtue of longing. All that was necessary to be loved widely
was to publish one's anxieties. The whole enterprise of art was
a calculated display of suffering" (p. 89). Continuing his
search for the Jewish hero within himself, Breavman turns to the
world of art, for "writing is an essential part of the Jewish
tradition." But with the publication of his book he feels
as if he has masturbated on television. "He was a kind of mild
Dylan Thomas, talent and behavior modified for Canadian tastes."
"He was bereft of privacy, restraint, discretion" (p. 91). He
still longs to be a hero:

Where was his comfort? Where was the war to make him
here and hero? Where was his legion? He had met peo-
ple with numbers branded on their wrists, some of them
wrecked, some shrewd and very quiet. Where was his
ordeal?
Eat junk, join the enemies of the police, volunteer
for crime? Correct America with violence? Suffer in
the Village? But the concentration camps were vast,
unthinkable. They seemed to descend on a man from a
great height. And America was so small, hand-made
(p. 120).

This hero must exist outside America, for "America was lost,
the scabs ruled everything, the skyscrapers of chrome would
never budge, but Canada was here, infant dream, the stars high
and sharp and cold, and the enemies were brittle, and easy, and
English!" (p. 64). The role of artist hero momentarily dis-
satisfies Breavman for in public his suffering is misused.

He turns to relationships with women, loving first Commu-
nist women "because they don't believe in the world;" they long
for a society in which all men as equals will share the burdens
of suffering (p. 68). Yet the Communist world of the future
depends upon the potential annihilation of the torturer figure,
and through this destruction the victim would take on the new role of torturer, thus furthering a torturer-victim dichotomy. His early relationship with Tamara, a young Communist woman, exists within the realm of torturer-sufferer warfare. "Breavman and Tamara were cruel to each other. They used infidelity as a weapon for pain and an incentive for passion." "They were living off each other, had tubes to each other's guts. The reasons were too deep and original for him to discover" (p. 77). This form of relationship dissatisfies him, and he wants to break out of this bondage which depends upon the cruelty of either one or the other for its excitement.

He is released from the torturer-sufferer bondage through his ability to love Shell. Breavman realizes on meeting her that he no longer wants to be a hero in the old Jewish terms of heroic-sufferer he had himself demanded from others as a child. He wants to have a reciprocal human relationship with another human being, sharing anguish, loneliness, and joy, on a person to person level. He will comfort Shell in her anguish and be comforted in his own needs.

He wanted no legions to command. He didn't want to stand on any marble balcony. He didn't want to ride with Alexander, be a boy-king. He didn't want to smash his fist across the city, lead the Jews, have visions, love multitudes, bear a mark on his forehead, look in every mirror, lake, hub-cap for reflection of the mark. Please no. He wanted comfort. He wanted to be comforted. (p. 127).

He offers his comfort as lover to Shell, who has suffered alienation from her body because of her husband Gordon. They open themselves to love as Breavman tries to return Shell's body to her, writing poems to express the beauty of her being. "Once
for a while he seemed to serve something other than himself. Those were the only poems he ever wrote. They were for Shell. He wanted to give her back her body" (p. 140). While Breavman can express the beauty and anguish of Shell in art, he ultimately rejects the responsibility of his love, for encompassed within Shell's world he cannot experience his own reality. He must separate himself from the world of comfort in order to remain alive to the personal pain and loneliness from which his art grows. As Breavman once before had failed his mother in her need, so he now fails Shell, for he cannot yet completely give himself to reach into the pain of another's suffering. He is still searching for an appeasement of his own pain through his confession in art form.

The life and death of the young boy, Martin, contain a special message for Breavman. Martin, a separate soul, living in a world of private wonder and awe, is rejected by both family and society. To Breavman he is a very valuable human being. A bulldozer kills Martin Stark, and, while society mourns his death formally with a funeral, only Breavman feels the full pathos of this young boy's death. He identifies with Martin's difference and recognizes that he, too, longs to live in a world of wonder outside. Martin was for Breavman a divine idiot. "Surely the community should consider itself honoured to have him in their midst. He shouldn't be tolerated - the institutions should be constructed around him, the traditionally incoherent oracle" (p. 163). It is the role of oracle which Breavman wishes to take on.
But even as the novel closes, Breavman has not fully come to terms with his own guilt and responsibility.

One day what he did to her, to the child, would enter his understanding with such a smash of guilt that he would sit motionless for days, until others carried him and medical machines brought him back to speech. But that was not today (p. 191).

Cohen's latest novel, _Beautiful Losers_ (1966), explores the themes of suffering and pain even more thoroughly. He investigates a social system based upon the torturer-sufferer polarity as it occurs in American history, and as it is justified and rationalized by both history and religion. A whole series of political relations: Indian-French, French-English, Canadian-American, find their basis within a structure of tormentor and victim. The narrator of the novel has spent most of his life as an historian, and in this position he has shared in the justification of social order. At the point when the novel is written however, the narrator speaks from a new self-consciousness. He tells the story of his change through the help of Edith, his wife; F, a friend; and his research into the life of a Catholic saint, Catherine Tekawitha. Through their insight and inspiration, he moves from the role of dusty, constipated historian, "Doctor of Shit," who has spent a life-time in the world of sweeping generalizations and names which fail to encompass reality, to a saint of insight and suffering who comprehends the meaning of existence. Catherine Tekawitha, Edith, and F instigate his change, while Edith and F actually sacrifice themselves to save the narrator. The narrator, becoming a dedicated revolutionary, tries to inspire change and insight in the reader.
through a recitation of his experience. In this new role the narrator uses his suffering and torment to increase his personal insight and growth, he no longer justifies and degrades its existence through an impersonal historical point of view.

History as seen through the narrator's eyes consists of a long series of power struggles in which one culture falls victim to another. As each new power gains control, it destroys the traditions, culture, and integrity, of the one preceding it, enforcing its own concept of reality in exchange. The most explicit example of historical brutality in Canada is French-Canadian domination over the Indian people. But in the contemporary world, the English attempt to dominate the French, destroying much of their culture in the process, and the French raise an infuriated outcry of rebellion. To add to the complexity, the Americans are taking over Canada, so that the whole Canadian culture is rapidly becoming victim to American whim. Or as F phrases it with the narrator's approval: "The English did to us what we did to the Indians, and the Americans did to the English what the English did to us. I demand revenge for everyone." By demanding revenge, F espouses the freedom of all, but the whole concept of revenge again demands the destruction of a torturer figure. If F's declaration inspired action, this action would take the form of anarchy, and as each victim searched out his torturer, few of the 'liberated' would survive.

The narrator most thoroughly describes French-Canadian domination over the Indian people, suggesting methods which can
be easily paralleled, as history repeats itself, continuing
the cycle of tormentor and victim. In caricaturized version
the narrator presents this struggle in the form of the innocent
Indian child Edith's rape by the husky French-Canadian men.
These men, in exhilaration and enthusiasm, brutally attack their
helpless victim. "...She infuriated a number of men who
thought they should be able to rub her small breasts and round
bum simply because she was an Indian..." (p. 33). These men,
far from being abnormal sexual deviants, are the mainstays of
the village business community, and gain full support even from
the police-men of this village.

Get Edith demanded the Collective Will.

The village was behind them filled with families and
business.

French-Canadian school-books do not encourage respect
for Indians (p. 73, 76).

The raping of young Edith parallels the Roman Catholic
church's pillaging of Indian land. As soon as the French put
down the cross they burn the villages. "...They devastated
the countryside, destroyed provisions of corn and bean, into
the fire went every harvest" (p. 100). The Indian village dis-
integrates with the conversion of the Indian men to Christianity.
They soon die of the plague brought to them by the white man, or
if they survive they are permanently disfigured like Catherine
Tekawitha, with pock marks and scars. "It was F's theory that
white America has been punished by lung cancer for having des-
troyed the Red Man and stolen his pleasures" (p. 115). The
priest, far from being the savior of the Indian race, confronts
this race like an ogre figure, displaying gory pictures of hell to convert them through fear. The church feels pleased that some of its own are sacrificed to the cause, for this in fact makes better history. "Lots of priests got killed and eaten and so forth." "The Church loves such details" (p. 18, 19).

The narrator, in a fit of irrationality seeks revenge on the church for its social injustice with a long series of rhetorical accusations similar in style to Ginsberg's *Howl*. He releases himself from his own feeling of guilt and repression which the Roman Catholic church has created, through this incantation and exorcism. By placing his own sense of evil and guilt in the arms of the church he comes out purified and refreshed. The narrator's rhetoric serves a double function: it suggests that the authentic church operates at the level of the irrational rather than the rational, and it frees him from the unconscious guilt which the church has instilled within him.

I accuse the Roman Catholic Church of Quebec of ruining my sex life and of shoving my member up a relic box meant for a finger, I accuse the R.C.C. of Q. of making me commit queer horrible acts with F, another victim of the system, I accuse the Church of killing Indians, I accuse the Church of refusing to let Edith go down on me properly, I accuse the Church of covering Edith with red grease and of depriving Catherine Tekawitha of red grease, I accuse the Church of haunting automobiles and of causing pimples, I accuse the Church of building green masturbation toilets, I accuse the Church of squashing Mohawk dances and of not collecting folk songs, I accuse the Church of stealing my suntain and of promoting dandruff, I accuse the Church of sending people with dirty toenails into streetcars where they work against science, I accuse the Church of female circumcision in French Canada (pp. 59-60).

The narrator reveals the complete victimization of the Iroquois people; he is their only spokesman. They themselves are power-
less, the victims of all other men. "The Iroquois almost won. Their three major enemies were the Hurons, the Algonquins, and the French" (p. 16). Their only friend is the narrator who publishes their death. "The Indians are dying."

The English attempt to control the French in a more sophisticated fashion, but their general aims remain the same. But the French are not so easily conquered, they prefer revolt to slow death. They identify with the Negro, who fights the same battle on another ground.

...it is a beautiful crowd.

- Why?
- Because they think they are Negroes, and that is the best feeling a man can have in this century (p. 150).

The French demonstrators making up the Quebec Libre come alive in their role as victims. With something to fight for they burst with vitality: "everyone of the demonstrators had a hard-on" (p. 150). This is the age when the victim gains his revenge; he attains a focus and a reason for existence in the cause of his freedom. But an irony dominates the whole Quebec Libre movement - they want freedom and equality only for the French. The speaker at the demonstration shouts the terms of History he will be satisfied with. "Give us back our History. The English have stolen our History," he screams (p. 150). But their History is the History of French domination over the Indian. This they feel is just. "History decreed that in the battle for a continent the Indian should lose to the Frenchman." Injustice occurs, however, with the next historical stage: "In 1760 History decreed that the Frenchman should lose to the Englishman." Something must be done about this injustice for he insists, the
Frenchman will not be the loser.

- History decrees that there are Losers and Winners. History cares nothing for cases, History cares only for those whose turn it is. I ask you, my friends, I ask you a simple question: 'Whose turn is it today?'

- 'Our turn,' rose in one deafening answer (p. 151).

They aim to turn the scales in the power struggle once more.

"Today it is the turn of the English to have dirty houses and French bombs in their mailboxes" (p. 152). They wish to perpetuate the same system of tormentor and victim, switching their own roles - they do not reject the basic cycle upon which History revolves and its philosophy of History.

F, the narrator's friend, is a firm supporter of the Quebec Libre movement. A member of Parliament, he tries to blow up the statue of Queen Victoria, representing in symbolic form his desire for immediate revolution, his longing to escape the English with their mother figure Queens. He longs to be President of the New Republic. By uniting with the French revolutionaries, F joins the false cycle of History, and in so doing he sacrifices his position as prophet of a new order. He is left to lead the narrator into a vision which he himself cannot achieve.

The narrator must experience death and rebirth to attain the insight necessary to his role as prophet. Death comes slowly with much agony and pain, for the narrator has long been a confirmed member of the social establishment. He has spent his life as historian investigating a group of Indians called the A-SS, whose brief history is "characterized by incessant defeat." He associates himself with the victim: "I'm far too
willing to shoulder the alleged humiliations of harmless people." and through his willingness he has furthered a philosophy of history based upon the tormentor-sufferer duality (p. 5, 7).  

He 'suffers' from an anal fixation, a very literal concentration upon his own shit and a difficulty with constipation, an excremental vision which influences all he sees. "Freud derives the 'desire for knowledge' from anal sources, saying that 'it is at bottom an offshoot, sublimated and raised to the intellectual sphere, of the possessive instinct'." His personality exhibits many anal characteristics, particularly intense ambition (he longs for something greater than F's physical world), stubborn vengefulness in righteous causes (he can never forgive F for his relationship with Edith), and a strong possessive instinct. The narrator, constantly preoccupied with his constipation, uses this concentration upon his faeces as a method of asserting his independence from others. His intellectual preoccupations stem directly from his excremental vision. Thinking represents a special expression of the tendency to economize, while historical analysis requires a meticulous attention to detail. The narrator himself relates his historical preoccupations to constipation: "I am so human as to suffer from constipation, the rewards of a sedentary life" (p. 4). His "sedentary life" takes place in libraries poring over historical documents, which consider the life of the A-S (Ass). Even his initial choice of Catherine Tekawitha as subject matter can be connected with an anal point of view, for anality often appears sublimated in the form of divinity.
"Thus it is that what belongs to the lowest depths in the minds of each one of us is changed, through this formation of the ideal, into what we value highest in the human soul." Everything spiritual is really material, says Freud, and this is one important message of his exponent F. Also, the narrator correlates the world of war and business with anality. "...I know about war and business. I am aware of shit" (p. 75).

This follows, too, from a Freudian interpretation of the anal fixation, for a money economy expresses possessiveness in social terms.

For several years the narrator continues content in his role as historian, except for the side effect of constipation. "I thought I was a citizen, user of public facilities, I forgot about Constipation. Constipation didn't let me forget" (p. 47).

His ability to wait out history decreases as his physical discomfort increases. At the same time F bombards his sensibility, making him aware that his position in society encourages constipation, and that only if he can reject this role can he be saved. F's protege, Edith, also aims to disrupt the narrator's tranquil life-in-death. As long as he remains a historian of society, he is "the sealed, dead impervious museum of his appetite" (p. 50).

The narrator, realizing that he is being trained for something, secretly desires to be this other self, even as he fears: "...If I'm not constipated, I'm scared" (p. 107). He has long contained many absurd revolutionary tendencies within himself and these tendencies show his desire to be a hero, in historical
terms stemming from the sufferer-torturer duality. If he cannot be the torturer destroying the rich and maiming the innocent, he wants to be a victim hero, wearing his sleeve pinned in half, while people smile as he salutes with the wrong hand. Just as Breavman in The Favorite Game discovers the falsity of the heroic sufferer in these terms, so the narrator must come to see revolution as a complete change of existential experience outside this whole order of being, before he can attain release from constipation.

I always wanted to be loved by the Communist Party and the Mother Church. I wanted to live in a folk song like Joe Hill. I wanted to weep for the innocent people my bomb would have to maim. I wanted to thank the peasant father who fed us on the run. I wanted to wear my sleeve pinned in half, people smiling while I salute with the wrong hand. I wanted to be against the rich, even though some of them knew Dante; just before his destruction one of them would learn that I knew Dante, too. I wanted my face carried in Peking, a poem written down my shoulder. I wanted to smile at dogma yet ruin my ego against it. I wanted to confront the machines of Broadway.

I wanted to fight against the secret police takeover, but from within the Party. I wanted an old lady who had lost her sons to mention me in her prayers in a mud church, taking her son's word for it. I wanted to cross myself at dirty words. I wanted to tolerate pagan remnants in village ritual, arguing against the Curia (pp. 24-25).

But change is not simple, particularly for those with anal fixations, for the more shit man acquires, the more difficult is his relief. Desire for relief is not enough:

Why doesn't the world work for me? The lonely sitting man in the porcelain machine. What did I do wrong yesterday? What unassailable bank in my psyche needs shit? How can I begin anything new with all of yesterday in me? The hater of history crouched over the immaculate bowl.
He desperately needs the help of others in his transformation. "Saints and friends help me out of History and Constipation." "I only have one more chance" (p. 142).

F provides the narrator with a whole new philosophy of existence, bettering his old attitudes in every way he can. Since the narrator is first and foremost an intellectual, his ideas offer a major area for warfare. He strikes out at the narrator's rational mind, trying to investigate the potentials of insanity for the creation of a new world view. Society, whose view the narrator espouses, encourages its members to believe that it runs on rational terms, yet many of its assumptions seem irrational when investigated closely. It implies that a power structure based upon the paradigm of oppressor and oppressed is logical and reasonable and persuades its citizens that this is true. With the disintegration of reason, man sees the world with more honest eyes in all of its irrationality. "It was I who feared the rational mind," says F, "therefore I tried to make you a little mad. I was desperate to learn from your bewilderment" (p. 190). F realizes the dangers of the power concepts which society encourages, for these contribute to a society half-filled with victims. "I knew you were bound up by old laws of suffering and obscurity. I am fearful of the cripple's wisdom" (pp. 192-193). He acknowledges the horrifying strength and falsity of history:

History is the Scabbie Point
For putting Cash to sleep
Shooting up the Peanut Shit
Of all we need to keep (p. 238).
He fears too the whole naming system with which man describes reality, haranguing the narrator constantly on his system of naming, classifying, and explaining, which never really cuts through to the reality. "You live in a world of names," he tells the narrator, "Of all the laws which bind us to the past, the names of things are the most severe." "Science begins in coarse naming, a willingness to disregard the particular shape and destiny of each red life, and call them all Rose" (p. 22, 51). He wants the narrator to break through this false system of naming into a consciousness of the magic in the particularity of life and in his own being. Early in the novel, F demands of the narrator: "Why have you allowed yourself to be robbed?" (p. 14).

He offers instead a philosophy deriving much of its impact from the physical existence of man. He asserts the importance of the body, the physical world, over the intellectual and becomes a firm believer in Charles Axis. Charles Axis compares with Charles Atlas, the famous body builder who advertises his ability to transform man into superman, making him the hero of the beach with just fifteen minutes of exercise a day. F "gave Charles Axis fifteen minutes a day in the privacy of his room" (p. 92). But Charles Axis, whose name suggests the Axis powers of World War II, leads F astray by his emphasis on the use of the physical as an aggressive force. Axis himself is a bully, the worst nuisance on the beach, kicking sand in others' faces. F, encouraged by the actions of his hero Axis, "has pursued into adulthood the implications of physical strength implicit in the
strong-man ad." "He has gone to Parliament as a French Separatist." He ends by using the physical as does Axis, as an aggressive force, undermining his larger awareness of the complete vitality of man's physical body. F allows himself to be robbed by Axis of his own personal feelings about human physical vitality.

F's revelation of the magical quality of every aspect of the universe (magic is alive) includes the belief that every part of the body is alive and erogenous. His belief in physical consciousness flourishes best within the particular; his trouble begins, however, as he attempts to convert this philosophy into some kind of social answer. He wants "to hammer a coloured bruise on the whole American monolith," for this monolith ignores or destroys the vitality of the individual man. But the social action he takes, the role of revolutionary, corresponds only superficially and temporarily with his philosophy of individual vitality. It seems that a part of F's failure occurs because he cannot find a social form through which to expand. Instead of creating a new social view to correspond with his concepts of individuality, he allows himself to be side-tracked into a revolutionary cause whose aims are not entirely his own. He ends in confusion and failure; by becoming a revolutionary within the old terms, he ignores what is really new in his beliefs. "I will confess that I never saw the Quebec Revolution clearly, even at the time of my parliamentary disgrace" (p. 205). F wills his papers to the narrator in the hope that the narrator can go beyond his own limitations. "I was the Moses of our
little exodus," he says, "I would never cross. My mountain might be very high but it rises from the desert" (p. 211). The narrator, deserted, must becomes man's prophet.

F, encouraging the narrator's change through a bombardment of ideas, also prepares Edith to destroy in equal fashion. Edith's kisses, falling on all parts of the narrator's body, fail to achieve an erogenous awakening of his complete being. By painting herself red, Edith attempts to change their sexual consciousness of one another, but this fails to win the narrator's approval. Only through her death, can she teach him a lesson. The lesson of her suicide criticizes his old life and demands a new one.

F also encourages the narrator's historical study of Catherine Tekawitha, whose saint-like life inspires him to a life outside the established order. The narrator's initial interest in Catherine Tekawitha takes the form of a sublimated ideal appropriate to an anal fixation. But this interest soon changes for, with his close investigation of her life, an investigation inspired by F, he discovers a model of suffering outside the social order which gives meaning to personal life. Catherine Tekawitha, "she who puts things in order; she who advancing arranges the shadows neatly," has created within her private life an order which gives her contact with the whole universe (p. 55). In this sense she is a saint in F's terms. "A saint is someone who has achieved a remote human possibility. It is impossible to say what that possibility is. I think it has something to do with the energy of love. Contact with this
energy results in the exercise of a kind of balance in the chaos of existence" (p. 121). The narrator comes close to Catherine Tekawitha's life in his intimate study of her, he perceives her suffering, her alienation from the Indian culture, and her attempts to gain contact with the whole universe. She rejects her social role (often humourously) for her private order of being. Ironically she attains her vision with the aid of the Roman Catholic church, and it uses her suffering as an ideal with which to encourage others. But her vision is larger than a doctrine; it compares with the momentary union with the universe which F and Edith achieve in the telephone dance at the system theatre. Catherine sacrifices her life to attain unity with all, while Edith and F fail in their final search for the ultimate: in their dependence on machinery they subject themselves to a mechanical force outside their own being and become in time controlled by this force. In the Danish Vibrator scene, they succumb to the power of the machine, depending on it for the ecstatic release of the magic of their bodies (a magic which unites them with a greater being). Because they fail to evoke within themselves a sensitivity which will unite them with all being, they ultimately lose. Catherine Tekawitha, in contrast, contains within herself the principle of vitality to attain this union - she is capable of altering her consciousness on her own. The narrator, through his insight into her being, and his knowledge of the failure of Edith and F, discovers that only within the individual man, by his personal struggling and suffering, can the real sense of magic, the force behind the whole
world, be recognized completely. Through the investigation of self, and the uniqueness of self, man comes to recognize the uniqueness and magic of all. He comes to see that he himself is the source of magic.

F directs the narrator to a new consciousness of Catherine Tekawitha by encouraging him to 'fuck a saint.' By emphasizing her physical quality, F reduces her life to one which can be compared to the life of the narrator, and thus prevents him from idealizing her any longer. Rather than being a negative process, this forces the narrator out of his sublimated vision of Catherine Tekawitha. She becomes a blood and flesh being whom he can conceive of in sexual terms, and in so doing, he can also learn from her personal experiences which compare with his own. He learns how to become a saint. The narrator begins his research in desperation, and it is desperation which leads him to his personal transformation. "What is original in man's nature is often that which is most desperate. New systems are forced on the world by men who cannot bear the pain of living with what is" (p. 69).

As his ideas and character change, the narrator attains release from his old way of life. He leaves his basement room in the apartment filled with shit, a symbolic statement of aggression against his old way of life - an apparent release from the life of constipation. He can now enter the stage of the tree-house, a stage of suffering and preparation in the wilderness to make him capable of his new role. The Epilogue provides only a suggestion of the narrator's new potential. He
escapes the Catholic posse beating the bushes, entering the world of spring and rebirth (Easter) a new man. He contains the potential of re-ordering the chaos into the personal reality most fully relevant to him, and, as social forces converge upon him, he reassembles himself into a movie of Ray Charles, the jazz blues singer. Within the motif of art, he attains the magic of his being and he conveys this magic to us with his written story.

(2)

Art provides for Cohen a momentary entry into a world of magic, drawing men from the suffering and guilt of their daily existence into a new and unique experience of reality. Before a man can experience this magic however, he must acknowledge the pain of his own being fully, and grow to comprehend the meaning of this pain. In the act of suffering he expiates his guilt, and, having accepted his suffering as a part of his being, he attains a form of innocence. He is then ready to enter the world of magic, since his pain and suffering have prepared him for participation in this new realm of consciousness. He is prepared for the transformation of his pain in art form.

The world of magic which the Cohen 'hero' enters involves the re-creation of reality through the power of imagination into a work of art. Art is a world of magic, a world in which the particulars of existence are re-ordered and transformed into something new - they are given a special
meaning. The artist who re-molds chaos through his new feeling of personal order is, in Cohen's terms, a saint. He no longer blots out those parts of his life which fail to conform to the lives of others; he perceives instead, each immediate existence as alive, vital, and meaningful. Through imagination he transforms the world, and both his own life and the life around him burst forth with new vitality. He re-affirms his sense of the source of all creation, perceiving once again that creation is far more than natural birth, it is supernatural revelation. He discovers, finally, the greatest miracle of life - the magic of creation which lies within every man. It is this magical sense which both Breavman and the narrator discover, a creation which follows their recognition of the meaning in their own suffering.

Breavman finds that only through writing can he appease the desperate anguish which comes with his awareness of the loneliness and isolation of all men. Failing to reach both his mother and Shell, he acknowledges the futility in trying to encompass another man's pain - for each man must experience his own separation privately. Breavman realizes, through his relationship with the young boy Martin, that a man must obtain some form of escape from his pain in order to survive. Such release Martin proves, can take place through imagination, for it is Martin's imaginative life which separates him from a painful reality with which he cannot deal. "When I'm back home," Martin said loudly, "rats eat me. Hundreds and hundreds of them" (p. 177).

Alone in camp before Martin's death, Breavman begins to feel the anguish in his isolated separation from the world of imagi-
nation. "Everybody had to believe in magic. Nobody believed in magic. Magic didn't believe in magic. Please don't die" (p. 166). With Martin's death, Breavman finds escape by playing Lisa's favorite game, "leaving images and patterns in the snow," recreating from the natural world of which pain is a part, a world of art and beauty. "Then he walked away, leaving a lovely white-field of blossom-like stems with footprint shapes" (p. 192).

The narrator of Beautiful Losers also finds himself consumed by a world of loneliness and pain. Unable to bear his loneliness in the world of historical study, he increases his scholastic efforts in an attempt to escape, but this simply furthers his separation from Edith and F. To force the narrator to deal with his loneliness in a different way, Edith and F leave him, and with Edith's suicide, the narrator, who had ignored her for large parts of their marriage, feels anguish, desperation, and fear:

Edith Edith Edith Edith please appear as mushrooming dream from this poor Alladdin cock Edith Edith Edith Edith in your sweet skin envelope Edith Edith thy lonely husband Edith thy lonely husband thy lonely husband Edith thy lonely husband thy lonely husband thy apples thy run thy creases thy dark lonely husband (p. 84).

He nostalgically remembers the moment when he and Edith experienced complete unity and longs for that moment once more.

"...It was just a shape of Edith: then it was just a humanoid shape; then it was just a shape - and for a blessed second only I was not alone, I was part of a family" (p. 122). But though he cries out night after night for Edith's return, she
can no longer calm his pain; and neither can F, his friend, who leaves him to discover the meaning in his own agony. The narrator suffers alone in F's tree-house, isolated for long periods of time, and learns to accept the terms of his suffering as an inevitable part of his own being. Having accepted his suffering, he is ready for the transformation of his pain into an art form. He reassembles himself into a movie of the jazz blues singer, Ray Charles, making of his agony an art experience which can be emotionally shared by many. He becomes magic, for the movie world is magical with its special power "to heighten reality, preserve the past, record the present, create imaginary worlds, and expand the consciousness."

The narrator surpasses F in his ability to use his suffering to enlarge his experience, for F in the throes of loneliness had returned to History. While a hero in social terms, F feels himself "a rotten hero," for he has extended a concept of suffering in terms of the oppressor and the oppressed. He tells the narrator to go beyond his style for his style contains no magic. "I wanted to be a magician," F writes. "That was my idea of glory. Here is a plea based on my whole experience: do not be a magician be magic" (p. 207). A magician operates at the level of appearances, seeming to change the reality before our eyes, but his magic is only a deceptive trick - he has no real magical powers. Only by being magic itself, as the narrator becomes in movie form, can one transform reality.

The narrator follows the road of Catherine Tekawitha in his discovery of magic - both he and Catherine Tekawitha, by going
through a period of intense suffering, are transformed. Cather-
ine had obtained her purity through self-chastisement and punish-
ment - the greater her suffering the closer she felt to Christ. She stumbled through her daytime duties in an iron harness, and at night slept in a blanket containing thousands of thorns. She tortured and mortified her flesh in every way she could think of: "...She spent several slow hours caressing her pathetic legs with hot coals, just as the Iroquois did to their slaves. She had seen it done and she always wanted to know what it felt like. Thus she branded herself a slave of Jesus" (p. 245). Her suffering led to her death, but in her death she attained salvation, becoming in her purity a Catholic saint. She is, in Cohen's terms, a beautiful loser, however, for being unable to reconcile the physical with the metaphysical, she destroyed one for the good of the other. Her solution to existence lay within death and spiritual life. The narrator, in contrast, succeeds in reconciling the physical and the metaphysical through the magic of the movie. It is in the movie, in art, that the physical detail gains a metaphysical reality.

As F recites "The Last Four Years of Tekawitha's Life," he compares the suffering village in which Catherine Tekawitha lives to Nazi Germany: "The whole wintry village looks like a Nazi medical experiment" (p. 248). The comparison between Catherine Tekawitha's agony and self-torture, and the torturing and suffering of the Jewish people is in F's mind a significant one. The Jewish race, who suffered the torture of Hitler and the Nazis, achieved within their death a form of innocence and
purity within the eyes of others, a purity suggested rather cryptically by the bar of human soap.

Their murderer Hitler, longed for a state of innocence and sinlessness, a state of being beyond suffering, where an entire race could attain purity and the stature of supermen in his terms. He saw the possibility of recreating the mythically pure Aryan race and wished to purge the German nation of all races he felt to be of inferior quality, especially the Jewish people. He created a myth to rationalize and justify the death of the Jewish people, who, if they continued to survive, would actually threaten his position as powerful superman. Hitler conceived of the superman in physical rather than metaphysical terms, in terms almost equivalent to the Charles 'Axis' ad, a name associated with Hitler, who originated the Axis powers. The physical suggested power in much the same way as the bully on the beach, and this form of power was associated in Hitler's mind with his vision of the superman. He misinterpreted Nietzsche's Zarathustra to suit his own purposes, but in doing so he evaded several important conditions, for Zarathustra grew through his own suffering, attaining a final position where he could transcend suffering through his complete personal experience and comprehension of it. Zarathustra's role as superman depended upon a metaphysical rather than a physical understanding - he, as Nietzsche's creator of new values gained power through his vision - he saw reality in the form of eternal recurrence which gave every moment and every person infinite significance. Hitler, in contrast, depended upon power in physical
terms, while he himself tried to obliterate his own suffering through the sacrifice of others. He tried through his impersonal torture and annihilation of the Jewish race to understand suffering and the ways in which it purifies. By performing the ritual act of bathing in human soap he tried to attain innocence and purity. But the only people 'purified' in the 'Nazi medical experiments' were the Jewish people themselves, who achieved in their suffering a kind of innocence comparable to that of Catherine Tekawitha at her death. By murdering millions, Hitler decreased his human capacity to suffer the pain of mankind and became a selfish monster among men. He failed partly because man must learn from his own suffering, for man can attain innocence, in Cohen's terms, only by the purity of his own being.

Hitler, setting himself up as a god-like Superman in his attempt to control man's pain and agony, became like F, only a magician in the world of appearance. He could transform appearance in the area of events, but he could not change the essential reality, for he could not become magic nor create a magical pure race. Ironically, the Jewish people, through his torture of them, came closer to attaining the magic he strove for than he did.

F fails in a way somewhat similar to Hitler—he too, longs to become the superman in physical terms; while he instigates the pain and suffering of his friend the narrator in his attempt to discover the source of innocence. He wants to create the ideal man, a man who can use his pain to develop a stronger being, but his motives stem from a much more altruistic point of view than do Hitler's, for F cannot bear the general agony of
mankind and longs for a new world without pain:

I seemed to wake up in the middle of a car accident, limbs strewn everywhere, detached voices screaming for comfort, severed fingers pointed homeward, all the debris withering like sliced cheese out of cellulophane - all I had in the wrecked world was a needle and thread, so I got down on my knees, I pulled pieces out of the mess, and I started to stitch them together. I had an idea of what a man should look like, but it kept changing, I couldn't devote a lifetime to discovering the ideal physique. All I heard was pain, all I saw was mutilation (p. 221).

F confesses his confusion - with needle and thread he tries to sew a new man, but his needle rips through flesh and stitches man into his pain more thoroughly than ever. He succumbs to historical reasoning which has long attempted to recreate man through the use of physical force. Like "Dr. Frankenstein with a dead-line," he tries desperately to create this ideal without considering that a man incapable of suffering becomes a kind of monster (p. 221). F fails in his own life experience to achieve his ideal, while his fear of pain makes it impossible for him to become a Zarathrustra-like superman who can create a new value system to liberate mankind. He loses by alienating himself from the experience of torture and suffering - an alienation which allows him to read a 'titillating' torture story in the Danish Vibrator scene, and to bathe with Edith and Hitler in human soap suds. While at one time he was a magician in the world of appearance, curing Edith's acne with human soap, he cannot experience himself the magic which he proclaims to the narrator is the meaning of existence.

F, unlike Hitler, finally recognizes his failure and determines to use his last most dangerous trick, "Events as I will
show would force me into it, and it would end with Edith's suicide, my hospitalization, your cruel Ordeal in the tree-house" (p. 222). His last desperate trick lies in making the narrator aware of suffering in all of its implications, so that he, as prophet, can reveal the meaning of suffering and magic to mankind.

It is F who offers the key to existence in Cohen's novel, even though he himself is incapable of achieving it - and it is this key which Cohen gives to the reader as his affirmation of life:

1. In the poem "The New Step" in Flowers for Hitler, Cohen suggests that the ugly and deformed have taken over the powerful appeal of the beautiful, as Harry deserts the beautiful Diane to marry an invalid.

2. Jack Kerouac strives to attain innocence in these terms—he suffers his sins and thereby gains innocence.


4. A nickname for French-Canadians is Frogs. Breavman and Krantz refer to the poor young French-Canadians at the dance as Pepsies, Frogs, Fransoyzen (p. 42); and Krantz on leaving Montreal for England again refers to the French-Canadians as Frogs. "The Frogs are vicious," he said, "the Jews are vicious, the English are absurd" (p. 93). In the 'frog dissection ritual' there is a vague suggestion of the Jewish control over French-Canadian victims. "Let's go back and liberate them all. Let the streets swarm with free frogs" (p. 53).

5. His mother conceives of herself as the victim of an even greater conspiracy, a conspiracy in which she was given a body which degenerated with time. "His mother regarded her whole body as a scar grown over some earlier perfection which she sought in mirrors, and windows, and hubcaps" (p. 9).

6. One of the final causes for Breavman's inability to maintain his relationship with Shell comes from his feeling that she insists on his being a kind of hero. He must always be on guard to be the noble person which she feels he is. "And Shell with her open gift, it struck him, forced him into a kind of nobility" (p. 170). "She had also been bred in the school of hero-martyrs, and saw herself, perhaps, as an Heloise" (p. 144).

7. The role of oracle or prophet becomes the role of the narrator in Beautiful Losers, and to some extent, Cohen, Burroughs, and Kerouac all conceive of themselves as oracles within their society. Cohen reveals the possibilities of a life of magic; Kerouac offers a vision of the golden eternity; and Burroughs suggests the possibilities of a more authentic existence below the shit of reality as it now exists.

9. The narrator had long lived in a world of "fictional victims," a world which aggravated Edith immensely: "All the victims we ourselves do not murder or imprison are fictional victims" (p. 7).


12. Elliot Gose in his book review on Beautiful Losers, "Of Beauty and Unmeaning," suggests that "F with his reality sense is a little like Freud," while "the narrator with his indulgence in fantasy is a little like Jung." E. E. Gose, "Of Beauty and Unmeaning," Canadian Literature, No. 23 (Summer, 1966), p. 63.

13. F performs the role of Oscotarach the Head-Piercer in his relationship with the narrator. "It was his function to remove the brains from the skulls of all who went by, 'as a necessary preparation for immortality!' " (p. 232). F suggests that he is the narrator's Oscotarach and that the tree-house where he suffers is the hut of Oscotarach.


   On Hearing A Name Long Unspoken.
   History is a needle
   for putting men asleep
   anointed with the poison
   of all they want to keep. (Selected Poems, p. 93)

15. By following Axis, F makes the physical, with an emphasis on physical power, the end of all existence, preparing himself for his final subordination to the Argentine butler, Hitler, in the Danish Vibrator scene. By subordinating himself to a philosophy similar to Hitler's, F relegates himself in his actions to the world of torturer-sufferer.


17. Edith reveals her identity as Isis in the Danish Vibrator scene. In the original Greek she suggests that she is "Isis born, of all things, both what is and what shall be, and no Mortal has ever lifted her robe" (p. 231). All of the female figures in Beautiful Losers blend into the figure of Isis; and one of the narrator's central concerns lies in the uncovering of Isis. This event will be apocalyptic: "Therefore apocalyptic describes that which is revealed when the woman's veil is lifted" (p. 126). By lifting the woman's veil, the narrator gains insights which make possible his rebirth. The Figure of Isis is associated with rebirth for she could effect immortality
of the soul and renew life. She offered her devotees forgiveness, purgation, communion, and regeneration. Edith therefore also has an indirect mythical influence on the narrator's rebirth. Cf. Apulieous, The Golden Ass.

18. The authentic creation of artistic magic must be guarded carefully, however, for there is always the threat of misuse and misinterpretations. The movie theatre may be only "the nightmare marriage of a man's prison and a woman's prison," with everybody sitting on their genitals because "silver genitals on the screen" (p. 27). In this form it represents the death of an emotion. Or again, the movie can grossly misinterpret reality, and, if accepted as truth, can perpetuate a society of lies. "What will happen when the newsreel escapes into the Feature," questions F. — the newsreel might then recreate the world of Hitler within the magical terms of the movie (p. 282). Just as man can degrade suffering, so he can destroy the value of art if he makes of art a false prophet.
CHAPTER IV - BURROUGHS

William Burroughs projects a vision of death and decay as the basic force and structure of the universe, and his anguish stems from his desperate sense of this death-oriented society, a society in which individual beings strive for power and control, sucking strength from one another; on in which the social system culturally defends a set of conditions for collective destruction. The figure Lee, pseudonym or at least partial representative of Burroughs in Naked Lunch, conceives of emotion in terms of extreme fear; he feels no positive love impetus towards others but instead a desire to flee a social system determined to destroy his being.¹

In psychological terms, Burroughs exhibits many of the more general characteristics of the paranoid schizophrenic, and the symptoms of paranoia define the ways in which he expresses his suffering. I am using the term paranoia here in a very general sense, figuratively rather than realistically, and not in a rigid psychiatric way at all. The general area of feeling and emotion which the term paranoia suggests, seems to me valuable however, in analysing some of Burrough's responses. Burroughs fears persecution - he has a very real sense of social fear; just as he is also primarily concerned with self - preservation, a concern very important to the 'psychiatric paranoid' type. But in no way do I want to suggest that Burroughs himself is a psychiatric case, nor that his central character Lee is incurably sick. It seems to me, instead, that Burrough's paranoid feelings are feelings which most men share; and that Burroughs, by bringing out and emphasizing this area of emotion, has described and characterized a very important part of the
experience of most men. Lee's sense of social fear shows that he is still alive, responsive, and fighting, and he fights very real forces which are endangering him. He does not imagine that society is trying to degrade and destroy him—it actually is. The images with which he expresses his thoughts relay energetically and clearly his response to the society which surrounds him. His fearfulness gives his vision a clarity and intensity, while his mind gropes through a hazy maze searching for the sharpness of truth.

Burroughs humorously refers to the fact that he was once classified as a paranoid schizophrenic in his early novel *Junkie* and it therefore does not seem implausible to suggest that his emotions move in this general direction. In reading this analysis, however, the reader must be conscious of my figurative use of the term. Rather than harming Burroughs, his paranoid sensibility makes him an aware and perceptive writer who investigates an emotional response shared by all, but investigated by few before him. The 'paranoid' form of schizophrenia is characterized by delusions—usually delusions of persecution, and the dominant emotion in *Naked Lunch* is the emotion of fear, for Burroughs fears persecution by society with its many forms of social control. Society controls man by exploiting need, and the metaphor of addiction serves as the metaphor within the book, for addiction, based upon the "Algebra of Need," weakens man through his own desperate hunger, creating of him a perfect social animal, completely dependent upon the social structure for his immediate satisfaction. Burroughs "maps out the ter-
minal sewage of this world," a sewage composed of a wrecked majority of men who decay or die as they are reduced to the level of animals through their need. Once a man has attained a position of social power and control, like Dr. Benway and the County Clerk, he can persecute the majority in any number of ways, destroying their individuality through his position of power.

The 'paranoid schizophrenic' concerns himself primarily with self-preservation, attempting through his isolation to escape those things he most fears. His greatest anxiety comes from the possibility of implosion and depersonalization - by implosion R. D. Laing suggests that the paranoid means the full terror of the experience of a world liable at any moment to crash in and obliterate all of his identity, as a gas will rush in and obliterate a vacuum; by depersonalization he means his sense of dread at being turned from subject into object. The major metaphors in *Naked Lunch*, the metaphors of addiction, cancer, and virus, suggest that implosion is the basic way in which Burroughs fears the social take-over of man, while depersonalization is the inevitable result of such a take-over. The invasion by another being which subjugates man and destroys his individuality is in Burrough's terms the core of all evil, for a society which depends for its function upon death cannot be good.

It is thought that the virus is a degeneration from more complex life forms. It may at one time have been capable of independent life. Now has fallen to the borderline between living and dead matter. It can exhibit living qualities only in a host, by using the life of another, the renunciation of life itself, a
falling towards inorganic, inflexible machine, towards dead matter.

When man becomes a host being he signs away his life, taking the depersonalized form of dead matter as his new self. Once man has become an organism, he loses him emotional reality, for the definition of man as a thing excludes all consideration of his desire, fear, hope, and despair.

Ironically the schizophrenic often becomes what he most fears for "it seems to be a general law that at some point those dangers most dreaded can themselves be encompassed to forestall their actual occurrence." At the time when *Naked Lunch* was written, Burroughs lived alone and isolated in Tangiers, his whole existence dependent upon drugs. His "nightmare fear of stasis," his fear of being invaded by another substance had led him into exactly these conditions, and he could sit for hours staring at his shoe as the effects of junk took over his body. At the height of his fear and anxiety, the prospect of being a passive thing, penetrated and controlled by another, seemed a welcome relief - a succumbing to death in the face of a life which created insurmountable anguish and tension.

Faced with a society he believes to be implosive and depersonalizing, the paranoid schizophrenic desperately holds on to his sense of inner reality as his last stronghold of individuality and freedom. His inner self retains certain ideals, particularly the ideals of complete awareness and honesty. Against the integrity of this inner self he places all social forces, and considers even his body to be false, to be a part of those forces outside which are determined to destroy him.
In Burrough's vision, the needs of the body reduce man to the level of social control, and in this sense it is the body which is false and degrades the individual, for once addicted the body needs sex and drugs, the two major means of social and individual power.

Burrough's condemnation of the flesh permeates his novel, and his sense of repulsion and horror extends to every function of the body. He mocks the dependent body with its need for drink, food, and junk, by degrading it in its need. He shows bodily needs to be absurd and laughable, making the reader snort with him at that ridiculous and humiliating physical form known as man. Burroughs' images emphasize those parts of physical existence which man himself finds most degrading - his sexual need and his excretion. Images of sexual humiliation and excretion take over the novel, and we are left to feel that man, the physical animal, is a nauseating being. Burroughs' condemnation of the flesh takes much the same Puritan form as did Martin Luther's, for he blames the flesh because it draws man away from his 'real' and pure self, just as Luther cursed the flesh for degrading the spirit.

Burroughs affirms the integrity of the individual, the 'real' and pure self, against all forms and methods of social annihilation and he believes that only through his own complete honesty, his revelation of society in all of its nakedness, can he and other men be saved. In a carnival voice he entices us into "Bill's Naked Lunch Room," to see reality as it exists without deception: "A word to the wise guy." (Naked Lunch, p. xlvi). We partake of a naked lunch - "a frozen moment when
everyone sees what is on the end of every fork," and in eating this lunch we gain a nakedness of sight, we are "able to see clearly without any confusing disguises, to see through the disguise:" (Naked Lunch, p. xxxvii). Through his self-consciousness Burroughs affirms the fact that he exists - for his insight and lucidity, though they cause his suffering, assure him in his pain that he is still alive.

By writing Naked Lunch Burroughs revealed his inner fears and anguish, and through this revelation he attained a sense of self-release, purging himself of his greatest anxieties. But the act of writing has for Burroughs a significance which is social as well as personal, for the causes of his paranoia actually do exist within society. Burroughs merely exaggerates, in the form of surrealistic dream, the fears of most men living in the twentieth century. His novel is, in a social sense, it seems to me, an act of exorcism, a driving out of evil spirits through the ritual of art. By shouting the unspeakable, he becomes a priest in a cultural purification rite.

Pornography is important in Burroughs' art in this sense, for the obscene spell evoked by the four letter word contains the special vitality of its symbolic aggression. As the illicit language, it becomes in its use the language of anti-value. By the violation of the taboo, Burroughs stirs the powers behind the forbidden in an act of aggression against the social order. The four letter word is therefore important in his struggle for freedom from oppression.

Comedy and dream also give Burroughs a form of relief from
his sense of 'paranoia.' "Freud interprets the dream and jest as a discharge of powerful psychic energies, a glimpse into the abyss of self," but through this discharge a man can release himself from the tensions of his hidden anxiety. Comedy un­masks those impulses normally repressed, showing the inevitable absurdity of man's reality held up against his ideal. The comic hero accepts the irreconcilables of man's existence, and eases his pain in laughter. Burroughs begins Naked Lunch in feverish laughter, a laughter which ultimately reduces his sense of intolerable anguish to absurdity.

Before writing the surrealistic and comic novel, Naked Lunch, however, Burroughs wrote two earlier books, Junkie and The Yage Letters, which show in a more realistic way his early fears and tensions, and his unsatisfactory attempts to deal with them by using junk.

Junkie discusses junk as a way of life, a sacrifice of all other ways of existence, all individual freedom to drug need. The insurmountable tensions of the outside world lead a man to junk, which seems at first to simplify life, creating a private time and space world of its own, where a man can sit without moving for hours in conflict-free existence. "As a habit takes hold, other interests lose importance to the user." Junk makes it possible for a man to regress to a simpler state, a state in which tension arises on only one level. Such at least is the addict's dream.

But the junk world creates new tensions through its addictive power, for it reduces man to an absolute state of biological
need which demands satisfaction. If the addict's body receives no junk it experiences the pains of junk withdrawal, "a suffering of the cells alone, caused by junk need" (*Junkie*, p. 21). Burroughs compares the horror of this physical agony with the symptoms of a hanged man, for taking the addict away from his form of stability reduces him to the state of death: "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" (*Junkie*, p. 88).

The junk world encourages a sense of 'paranoia' by placing the addict in opposition to the social establishment. By joining a criminal sub-culture, the addict comes to feel a specific fear about the police, a fear which becomes a vague dread of any number of men who might be secret agents and informers. Fear overtakes the addict's life in a second way, for the fear of being without drugs exceeds even the fear of the police. The addict feels surrounded by hostility even within his own sub-culture, for he is controlled by the whims and wishes of others. The junkie's world is a cruel world where a man laughs at the agony of another, and where no man trusts his best friend. The addict, who cannot escape his sense of fear, feels persecuted on every side. In his attempt to escape the suffering and agony of existence, the addict within the junk world has reduced himself to the level of his biological self, basing his whole existence on physical satisfaction. Ironically he intensifies his anguish through addiction - he suffers in body from his need, and from the horrifying symptoms of withdrawal; he suffers
mentally a sense of over-riding fear and a feeling of self-disgust caused by his own sense of self-degradation.

While Burroughs experienced a drug cure at Lexington, he concluded the novel *Junkie* with a desire to continue on the junk road—he longs to try yage which might be the answer to existence. "Maybe I will find in yage what I was looking for in junk and weed and coke. Yage may be the final fix" (*Junkie*, p. 126). Burroughs depicts his frustrated search for yage in *The Yage Letters* written to Allen Ginsberg in 1953, relating his anger and disgust at the continent of South America. This book suggests Burroughs' fear of persecution and the possibilities of self-annihilation. He focuses his criticism in *The Yage Letters* on a bureaucracy which seems to exist to further his frustration and confusion. "You cannot 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. There must be a special low frequency civil service brain wave." The Policia Nacional look to Burroughs "like the end result of atomic radiation," and he fears the control which the political parties have over the people (*The Yage Letters*, p. 9). The yage he discovers makes him ill and offers small compensation for the ugliness and incompetence by which he feels surrounded.

As his trip continued, Burroughs experienced an increased feeling of bureaucratic persecution, and a vague fear of social control. He describes a psychic condition of dependence called Latah which he discovers in South America, a condition which both fascinates and appalls him. "Otherwise normal, the Latah
cannot help doing whatever anyone tells him to do once his attention has been attracted by touching him or calling his name" (The Yage Letters, p. 33). This condition becomes a recurring image for social control in Naked Lunch.

Burroughs concludes The Yage Letters with a manifesto of rebellion — the Last Words of Hassan Sabbah The Old Man Of The Mountain. His growing sense of 'paranoia' and persecution finally demands some form of self-affirmation, some struggle of the true self against the subtle social forces which threaten to engulf him. He raises his cry of social rebellion:

LISTEN TO MY LAST WORDS ANY WORLD. LISTEN ALL OF YOU BOARDS SYNDICATES AND GOVERNMENTS OF THE EARTH. AND YOU POWER POWERS BEHIND WHAT FILTH DEALS CONSUMATED IN WHAT LAVATORY TO TAKE WHAT IS NOT YOUR. TO SELL THE GROUND FROM UNBORN FEET. LISTEN WHAT I HAVE TO SAY IS FOR ALL MEN EVERYWHERE. I REPEAT FOR ALL. NO ONE IS EXCLUDED. FREE TO ALL WHO PAY. FREE TO ALL WHO PAIN PAY. WHAT SCARED YOU ALL INTO TIME? INTO BODY? INTO SHIT? FOREVER? DO YOU WANT TO STAY THERE FOREVER? THEN LISTEN TO THE LAST WORDS OF HASSAN SABBAH. LISTEN LOOK OR SHIT FOREVER. WHAT SCARED YOU INTO TIME? INTO BODY? INTO SHIT? I WILL TELL YOU. THE WORD. SCARED YOU ALL INTO SHIT FOREVER. COME OUT FOREVER. COME OUT OF THE TIME WORD THE FOREVER. COME OUT OF THE BODY WORD THE FOREVER. COME OUT OF THE SHIT WORD THEE FOREVER. ALL OUT OF TIME AND INTO SPACE. FOREVER. THERE IS NO THING TO FEAR. THERE IS NO THING IN SPACE. THERE IS ALL ALL ALL HASSAN SABBAH. IF YOU I CANCEL ALL YOUR WORDS FOREVER. AND THE WORDS OF HASSAN SABBAH I AS ALSO CANCEL. ACROSS ALL YOUR SKIES SEE ALL THE WRITING OF BRION GYPSIN HASSAN SABBAH. THE WRITING OF SPACE. THE WRITING OF SILENCE.
(The Yage Letters, p. 61)

Burroughs speaks to the persecuting powers within society, the boards, the syndicates, and the governments, in the form of powerful incantation, increasing the effect of his words by chanting a series of repeated phrases. He hopes through chant to exorcise those evil spirits and powers which he fears, des-
troying the possibility of their control by making mankind more aware. Hassan Sabbah becomes the momentary prophet of a new order of being.

The world of social control which he fears depends upon a particular experience of time and body which entrenches man in a false existence of shit. Man imprisons himself within a false sense of structured time, and he allows his bodily needs to take over and control him. The world of predetermined time and space which man has shuttled into through fear comes from the word, which dominates him by controlling his thought processes.

Burroughs assaults the power of the word, disrupting the normal pattern of thought processes - and through this assault he gains a personal freedom in which the word can no longer control him. He encourages others to conquer the word, to enter the realm of space and silence where a man no longer needs to fear. "THERE IS NO THING TO FEAR. THERE IS NO THING IN SPACE." Even the words of Hassan Sabbah will finally disappear in space once they have inspired man to attain his freedom. In the ritual of ar, Hassan Sabbah, (Burroughs), destroys the power of the social word.

In Naked Lunch Burroughs turns from the realistic and straight-forward approach of his earlier novels to surrealism and satire, switching to a presentation of his 'paranoia' in fantasy form. He gives us a series of visual and auditory hallucinations, and bombards us with unusual image associations, to emphasize the horror of his vision. Lee's apparent emotional flatness is another sign of high anxiety, as is his
desire to obliterate himself through junk. Here is a man surrounded by a hellish world, who offers us this world as it impinges on his consciousness, and whose defense comes through his ability to exaggerate this world, to show it in all of its grotesqueness and horror, and thereby to gain release through his ability to see this reality in its nakedness. He uses his paranoid sense as the basis for his satiric vision. Burroughs, defending himself also through his sense of beauty, his energy, and his clarity of mind, gains control over reality through his ability to perceive it and to comment upon it. His comment takes the form of satire - the images he releases contain in their exaggeration and horror the fear and criticism he feels.

Some critics see the world of Naked Lunch as a world of total sickness without a glimmering of hope, offering no possibility of cure or amendment, while to others Burroughs is a didactic writer who affirms his moral passion in the language of denial and derision. He pushes satire to the threshold of pathology, claiming from self-hate the hate humanity harbours. Tony Tanner argues that for Burroughs healing is a matter of real concern; while to E. S. Seldon Naked Lunch is a novel of revolt in the best modern sense. "Burroughs is quite aware of what he is revolting against as of the individual human predicament he sympathizes with sufficiently not to understate its gravity. On the one hand, he gives a stunning going over to the objective scientifically reinforced madness of institutional culture, while on the other, he shows the doomed individual desperately trying to preserve his own identity, at
whatever cost, if necessary, all else failing, within the private world of his skin." Hope lies within the possibility of change, and, with the sharpening of man's awareness of reality in this naked lunch, Burroughs encourages this change in man. Faced with a world in which the forces of evil penetrate every level, he challenges this world critically through humour. "Comedy is much more reasonably associated with pessimism. It appeals to the laughter, which is in part at least, the malice in us, for comedy is concerned with human imperfection, with people's failure to measure up either to the world's or to their own conception of excellence. Comedy, in short, is criticism."

The last refuge for struggle against annihilation lies within the individual man, but the image of man breaks easily amidst a world determined to reduce him to a helpless 'host' through various psychological, physical, and social methods. Most of *Naked Lunch* describes the forms of social and individual control which threaten man with self-destruction.

As suggested earlier, drug addiction serves as the central metaphor to explain the original cause of one man's control over another, a cause finding its ultimate source in the physical body. The addict's physical need reduces him to the level of desperate dependence, a response upon which the whole junk pyramid depends. Need forces the addict to beg, to narrow his life ambition to need satisfaction, to cede his consciousness to something more powerful which enters him and drains life from him. In the junk pyramid each level eats the level below
according to basic principles of Monopoly. The addict needs increasing amounts of junk in order to survive, and he will do almost anything to attain it. "Junk is the ideal product...the ultimate merchandise. No sales talk necessary. The client will crawl through a sewer and beg to buy.... The junk merchant does not sell his product to the consumer, he sells the consumer to his product. He does not improve and simplify his merchandise. He degrades and simplifies his client. He pays his staff in junk" (p. xxxix). The junk world displays in full nakedness the gross persecution and degradation of one man against another. It destroys in exactly those ways which the paranoid Burroughs most fears - by implosion and depersonalization.

Burroughs dramatizes the horrible forms which control takes in his exaggerated view of the characters in the drug world. There are many victims in this world - the old junkies, who, like old people eating, lose all shame in their need; the young woman whose "hideous galvanized need" is like the "hunger of insects in dry places." (p. 9). The Rube lives through his mark, Little Boy Blue, and when Little Boy Blue starts to slip, Rube 'flips' and goes racing after him. On the other side stand figures like the shoe store kid who shakes down fetishists in shoe stores. There are those whose persona is ambivalent, blending the roles of victimizer and victim, for selling is more of a habit than using, Laputa says. "Non-using pushers have a habit and that's one you can't kick. Agents get it too." (p. 15). Bradley the Buyer, a narcotics
agent, assumes such a position, for though he is in a role of power, he depends upon his contact with the junkie for survival. "I just want to rub up against you and get fixed," he says (p. 16). His demanded resignation puts him into a state of extreme anxiety, an anxiety so great that he swallows the District Commissioner in order to remain in the police force. "The Department is [his] very life-line," for he depends upon his role to satisfy his need (p. 17). His need, causing him to destroy others so that he might survive, makes him grotesque. "Like a vampire, he gives off a narcotic effluvium, a dank green mist that anesthetizes his victims and renders them helpless in his enveloping presence. And once he has scored he holes up for several days like a gorged boa constrictor" (p. 18).

Willy the Disk, a notorious informer, needs the victim in a way equal to Bradley the Buyer but feels no need to justify his desire to suck life from others by giving this need a worthy role within which to operate. "When the police move in for the bust, Willy goes all out of control, and his mouth eats a hole right through the door. If the cops weren't there to restrain him with a stock probe, he would suck the juice right out of every junkie he ran down" (p. 7).

Burroughs' theory of junk addiction becomes the model for all forms of addiction in Naked Lunch.16 These other addictions, sexual and social, degrade and reduce man in an equivalent manner, obliterating his sense of self-identity through the invasion of a foreign being. Lower forms of life devour the higher, reducing the higher to an animal level, and in this way man
becomes depersonalized. Burroughs conceives of evil in terms of this external force which constantly threatens individuality - evil takes form most often as a social force impinging on the individual's freedom. He caricaturizes those members of the social establishment who have established much social power within their roles and who use this power to persecute other men for their own perverted enjoyment. Dr. Benway and The County Clerk represent perfect examples of such figures - and the fact that Burroughs chooses the medical and legal professions shows the degree of his desperation.

The control addict, an addict equivalent in many ways to the junk or sexual addict, usually operates on a social level rather than an individual one, for being obsessed by power, he longs for more than individual control. The victims of the control addict make up the majority of men, and he attains his power through an original role of authority which allows him to exert his strength over larger and larger areas. He uses this authority to reduce others to passive animality, but ironically, he destroys his own individuality through his obsession, becoming a being no larger than his role. The figure of the doctor represents in Burroughs' eyes the perfect example of such an authority figure, for in a sick society the doctor is associated in the minds of the people with cure, and therefore he occupies a position of great power. The doctor's unique education also affirms that he is a scientific authority; he is backed up by the chief myth of his society. The doctor figures in Naked Lunch all use their positions to destroy large numbers of people,
justifying themselves through their roles as scientists and doctors. Burroughs satirizes Dr. Benway in most detail, but Dr. Schafer and an unknown German doctor come under the inductive of his pen. The unknown German doctor is mentioned only once as he haphazardly removes parts from the body of his patient during an operation. "Flushed with success he then began snipping and cutting out everything in sight. 'The human body is filled up vit unnecessitated parts. You can get by vit one kidney. Vy have two? Yes dot is a kidney. . ." (p. 182). Benway also experiences great glee within the operating room — to him the operation is a work of pop art and he concerns himself primarily with the creative aspect rather than with the patient's life. If one patient dies, he loses no sleep, for there is always another to operate upon. His favorite operation is a pure work of art, having "absolutely no medical value." He describes to the student doctors the excited sense of creativity which this operation inspires:

Just as a bull-fighter with his skill and knowledge extricates himself from danger he has himself invoked, so in this operation the surgeon deliberately endangers his patient, and then, with incredible speed and celebrity, rescues him from death at the last possible second. . . (p. 61).

Benway feels no qualms about his moral position as a doctor, for as both an artist and a scientist he feels above the inhibiting moral code of the average man. He creates his own medical ethics, and these vague ethics seem defined by his particular momentary whim. "I am a reputable scientist," he tells Lee, "not a charlatan, a lunatic, or a pretended worker of miracles . . . I have been tempted to experiment, being of course re-
strained by my medical ethics. . ." (p. 33). In the section entitled "Benway and Schafer," the two doctors discuss some experiment they have done, and while Schafer suffers a vague feeling of evil, Benway feels no remorse, justifying their position once again as scientific: "We're scientists. . .Pure scientists . . . Disinterested research and damned be him who cries hold too much. Such people are no better than party poops" (p. 131).

Their disinterested research emphasizes the destruction of other men, attempting to create a whole society of degenerate beings whom they can dominate. Dr. Schafer, also known as Fingers Schafer or the Lobotomy Kid, supports the theory that the nervous system can be reduced to a compact and abbreviated spinal column; he works towards the creation of a new man, but this man turns out to be instead a monster black centipede. Killing this black centipede, he faces a fake trial to determine whether man is responsible for killing a degenerated life form. The Prosecutor tries to destroy Schafer whom he sees as a dangerous man. Schafer, the brain rapist, believes in forcible lobotomy, and having reduced the whole land "to a state bordering on the far side of Idiocy," he sits back "with a cynical leer of pure educated evil" and refers to his products as Drones (p. 105). The words of the Prosecutor fade away without force.

Schafer and Benway both desire to create one all-purpose blob called man, someone comparable to the man taken over by his ass in the story Benway tells. Benway exerts a force far greater than Schafer, however, for his influence controls the
minds of whole societies, and he does not depend upon lobotomy to destroy, for he uses the subtle nuances of psychology to recreate man. Burroughs criticizes Benway's use of psychology to degrade and destroy man most severely, for the last hope of the paranoid schizophrenic often lies with his psychiatrist, a psychiatrist who has a frightening power to destroy him completely through his objective knowledge of man's mind. Benway studies thinking machines to learn about men's minds because "Western man is externalizing himself in the form of gadgets" (p. 24). The section entitled "Benway" describes the extremes of his political control, a control maintained through his knowledge of man's psychology. A very few men of moral intelligence have managed to prevent Benway's complete destruction of man, but their position seems precarious. Burroughs comes forward as one of these men determined to show the mass manipulator in all of his ugly nakedness, and to force men to arise from sleep by the horror of his vision. In a style similar to Heller's Catch 22, popular at about the same time, Burroughs parodies Benway in every way he can, and the savagery of his satire increases with his fear.

Dr. Benway had been called in as advisor to the Free-land Republic, a place given over to free love and continual bathing. The citizens are well-adjusted, cooperative, honest, tolerant, and above all clean. But the invoking of Benway indicates that all is not well behind that hygienic facade; Benway is a manipulator and coordinator of symbol systems, an expert on all phases of interrogation, brainwashing and control. I have not seen Benway since his precipitate departure from Annexias, where his assignment had been T.D. - Total Demoralization. Benway's first act was to abolish concentration camps, mass arrest and except under certain limited and special circumstances, the
use of torture. 'I deplore brutality,' he said. It's not efficient. On the other hand prolonged mistreatment, short of physical violence, gives rise, when skillfully applied, to anxiety and a feeling of special guilt. A few rules or rather guiding principles are to be born in mind. The subject must not realize that the mistreatment is the deliberate attack of an anti-human enemy on his personal identity. He must be made to feel that he deserves any treatment he receives because there is something (never specified) horribly wrong with him. The naked need of the control addicts must be covered by an arbitrary and intricate bureaucracy so that the subject cannot contact the enemy direct (p. 21).

Benway harasses the citizens in every way possible, invading both their public and their private lives to take them over. His prolonged harassment confuses and frustrates them, for he prevents all outlets for the release of their anxiety. The citizens are in the power of an intellectual force far greater than their own, a force which takes control of their intellectual, emotional, and physical selves. They accept one frustration only to be faced with another, and "after a few months of this the citizens [Tower] in corners like neurotic cats" (p. 23).

Every citizen of Annexia was required to apply for and carry on his person at all times a whole portfolio of documents. Citizens were subject to be stopped in the street at any time; and the Examiner, who might be in plain clothes, in various uniforms, often in a bathing suit or pyjamas, sometimes stark naked except for a badge pinned to his left nipple, after checking each paper would stamp it. On subsequent inspection the citizen was required to show the properly entered stamps of the last inspection. The Examiner, when he stopped a large group, would only examine and stamp the cards of a few. The others were then subject to arrest because their cards were not properly stamped. Arrest meant provisional detention, that is the prisoner would be released if and when his affidavit of Explanation
properly signed and stamped, was approved by the assistant Arbitor of Explanations. Since this official hardly ever came to his office, and the Affadavit of Explanation had to be presented in person, the explainers spend weeks and months waiting around in unheated offices with no chairs and no toilet facilities.

Documents issued in vanishing ink faded into old pawn tickets. New documents were constantly required. The citizens rushed from one bureau to another in a frenzied attempt to meet impossible deadlines.

All benches were removed from the city, all fountains turned off, all flowers and trees destroyed. Huge electric buzzers on the top of every apartment house (everyone lived in apartments) rang the quarter hour. Often the vibrations would throw people out of bed. Searchlights played over the town all night (no one was permitted to use shades, curtains, shudders, or blinds).

No one ever looked at anyone else because of the strict law against importuning, with or without verbal approach, anyone for any purpose, sexual or otherwise. All cafes and bars were closed. Liquor could only be obtained with a special permit, and the liquor so obtained could not be sold or given or in any way transferred to anyone else, and the presence of anyone else in the room was considered prima facie evidence of conspiracy to transfer liquor.

No one was permitted to bolt his door, and the police had pass keys to every room in the city. Accompanied by a mentalist they rush into someone’s quarters and start looking for ‘it’ (p. 21-2).

More terrifying even than this apparent mass manipulation of men is Benway’s use of his technical knowledge to destroy in more subtle ways, for these are ways which cannot be seen and comprehended and therefore cannot be dealt with. Benway uses drugs as "an essential tool of the interrogator in his assault on the subject’s personal identity," discovering in his experiments that "alternate doses of LSD 6 and bulbocapnine... give the highest yield of automatic obedience" (p. 26). He uses psychoanalysis to encourage the emergence of the real identity with the particular role. Sexual humiliation proves highly profitable
in the production of cowering victims for "many subjects are vulnerable to sexual humiliation - Nakedness, stimulation with aphrodisiacs, constant supervision to embarrass subject and prevent relief of masturbation. . ." (p. 27).

Purged from Annexia by "party poops," Benway becomes the Director of the Reconditioning Centre of Freeland, playing the game from the opposite angle as he investigates whether those persons whom he has destroyed can ever rediscover their humanity. But Burroughs, using the Technician momentarily as his spokesman, suggests that "no man can be healthy without brains" (p. 139). Burroughs criticizes the degenerate human forms of the Freeland Republic who have let a force outside themselves take them over. The vision of chaos presented when the members of the Reconditioning Centre get loose lies far from the liberation of the individual which remains his ideal. Burroughs queries the value of a man once he has been destroyed. If he has become a black centipede, are we responsible if we then kill him? He offers Panorama of The City of Interzene and the revolt of the degenerates as an example of chaos at this level; it represents not liberation, but a break in the sewer. Burroughs mentions the word cure in Naked Lunch not in a medical context, but in its association with the slunk business. "To get cured means to get rich. Expression used by Texas oil-men" (p. 156).

Burroughs also caricaturizes the County Clerk to the point of extreme absurdity, for he is a second figure of strong social power who uses his control to persecute others and to maintain his position of stagnant stability. The forces of both medicine
and law attain their power by ignoring the reality of other men.

The County Clerk has his office in a huge red brick building known as the Old Court House. Civil cases, are in fact, tried here, the proceeding inexorably dragging out until the contestants die or abandon litigation. This is due to the vast number of records pertaining to absolutely everything, all filed in the wrong place so that no one but the County Clerk and his staff of assistants can find them, and he often spends years in the search.

When a suit is brought against anyone in the zone, his lawyers connive to have the case transferred to the Old Court House. Once this is done, the plaintiff has lost the case, so that the only cases that actually go to trial in the Old Court House are those instigated by eccentrics and paranoids, who want a "public hearing," which they rarely get since only the most desperate famine of news will bring a reporter to the Old Court House (p. 169).

Burroughs considers even the institution of democratic government to be implosive and depersonalizing, and he uses the cancer metaphor to describe its killing effects. In a democracy in which the President himself is a junkie, the paradigm of victimizer and victim invades every level of life. Rather than affirming the importance of the individual in a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, a democracy extinguishes the reality of the individual man.

The end result of complete cellular representation is cancer. Democracy is cancerous, and bureaus are its cancer. A bureau takes root anywhere in the state, turns malignant like the Narcotics Bureau, and grows and grows, always reproducing more of its own kind, until it chokes the host if not controlled or excised. Bureaus cannot live without a host, being true parasitic organisms.

Bureaucracy is wrong as a cancer, a turning away from human evolutionary direction, of infinite potentials and differentiation and independent spontaneous action, to the complete parasitism of a virus (p. 134).
He offers the cooperative as a more authentic form of political participation, a cooperative which considers each of its members valuable.

(A cooperative on the other hand can live without a state. That is the road to follow. The building up of independent units to meet needs of the people who participate in the functioning of the unit. A bureau operates on opposite principles of inventing needs to justify its existence) (p. 134).

A final form of addiction of crucial importance to Naked Lunch is sexual addiction, for sex, unlike junk, is a physical need which every man feels. Sex is also the focus for many hidden obsessions and fears, for the American exhibits a very pronounced feeling of shame about his physical body. Women and men can gain both physical and psychological control over one another in the sexual realm; for the specific sexual fears of man can be used to degrade and destroy him. Sex in America becomes a power struggle between man and woman, and the American male fears the sexual power of the woman above all else, for in this matriarchal society in which women dominate most areas, sex is the one remaining area where a man can express his freedom. Burroughs sees sex as it exists in America today as disgusting and repulsive, for it leads a man into many kinds of personal humiliations in his attempt to satisfy his frustrated physical need. In Burroughs' sexual hallucinations, the homosexual acts leading to orgasm become inextricably involved with hanging, and this suggests that in Burroughs' mind both sexual intercourse and 'buggering' are part of a ritual death rite. Sex will continue to be associated with death as long as man remains under its control. In a letter to De Grazia, the Naked Lunch defense
lawyer, Burroughs suggests that "unless and until a free examination of sexual manifestations is allowed, man will continue to be controlled by sex rather than controlling." Sex is a "phenomenon totally unknown because deliberately ignored as a subject for writing and research" (p. xxxv). By revealing the ugly association of sex and death, Burroughs encourages men to take a second look at their most powerful obsession.

He expresses a sense of ambivalence about homosexuality, similar to his larger ambivalence about man. Burroughs criticizes men who allow their own destruction, yet he feels a sympathy and anguish over these same victims of a vast conspiracy which they have small hope of counter-acting. Homosexuality, he believes, causes the individual to lose himself within his sexual role, destroying all personal integrity in his submission to a role which makes him a passive victim. "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" (Junkie, p. 73).

But homosexuals in this novel want to be controlled, to be the victim figure within the relationship, for by representing this figure, they reach the lowest depths of possible humiliation, and attain there a form of peace - the only kind of peaceful release from fear a man can have as long as he exists within a society where sex is a continual power struggle. "Citizen... wants to be utterly humiliated and degraded, so many people do nowadays hoping to jump the gun - offer themselves up for
passive homosexual intercourse to an encampment of Sollubis" (p. 118).

The man of greatest fear is the heterosexual man, for in a matriarchal society in which homosexuality is a political crime, every man supposedly hides in latent form his homosexual tendencies. Fear and repression make these tendencies more powerful, providing Benway with the method of sexual humiliation — a quick and easy method for "making a heterosex citizen queer." In "The Examination" Benway attempts to coerce the young man Carl Peterson into admitting latent homosexuality, and he achieves his strength through his assumption that every man has latent homosexual desires, undermining Carl's security with lewd jokes, a polite insinuating front, and the humiliating forms which his sexual examinations take.

Women create fear in the minds of most of the male characters; they are "lust-mad hordes" who try to pulverise men and reduce them to non-entities. Having long had sexual power, they resent their men turning from them towards homosexual partners. Men fear relationships with women even more than they fear homosexuality, as is suggested by the Technician in Dr. Berger's Mental Health Hour: "Besides its more hygienic that way and avoids all kinds awful awful contacts leave a man paralysed from the waist down. Women have poison juices" (p. 139). The homosexuals Brad and Jim epitomize domestic bliss, they find happiness by rejecting their heterosexual connections and profess their rebellion by dining on "Lucy Bradshinkel's cunt."
A woman can retain her power, however, by taking on the man's role, and not always with another woman. The sexual orgy in Hassan's Rumpus Room gives one picture of such a possibility. "Two Arab women with bestial faces have pulled the shorts off a little blond French boy. They are screwing him with red rubber cocks. The boy snarls, bites, kicks, collapses in tears as his cock rises and ejaculates" (p. 78). Mary, the woman in the blue movies at A. J.'s annual party attains her power through the same form of sexual relationship. She impersonally "rims" Johnny, her boy, with a steel rod, Steely Dan III, causing his ecstatic orgasm. She tells her lover about Steely Dan I, which, long torn in two by a bull-dike, had once served the same purpose of sexual power and castration. "Later I catch this one kid, overpower him with supersonic judo, I learned from an old Lesbian Zen monk. I tie him up, strip off his clothes with a razor, and fuck him with Steely Dan I. He is so relieved I don't castrate him literal he come all over my bedbug spray" (p. 91). As the movie proceeds Johnny is hung by Mary and Mark, the latter having entered in the meantime and buggered Johnny. Mary fucks Johnny as he comes while hanging, then she proceeds to eat his face and genitals. But male sexual power is not so easily lost, for Mark grabs Mary, fucks her, then hangs her too.

In the first section of the novel, a male dominates in another way, through intellectual aggression. "The pimp is one of these vibration and dietary artists - which is a means he degrades the female sex by forcing his chicks to swallow all
this shit. He was continually enlarging his theories. . . .he would quiz a chick and threaten to walk out if she hadn't memo-
ized every nuance of his latest assault on logic and the human
image" (p. 20). The sexual battle fought by both men and women
centres upon an attempt to reduce the other human involved to
the level of obedient beast. Sex is an area where you cannot
hide the control other people have over you.

Surrounded by a world which threatens him on every level
of his existence, Lee turns to politics for its vision of the
future. But his political vision is also forbidding, for three
of the four political parties of Interzone are evolving in the
direction of implosion and depersonalization. The political
goals of the Liquefactionists, Divisionists, and Senders centre
in their desire to reduce man to one all purpose blob. They
differ only in their methods. "The word liquefy comes from
Fascists or Communists, the liquidation policies spoken of by
Stalin. They want to liquefate or liquefy all opposition and
everybody is to be liquefied or eliminated except one controll-
ing personality to run the whole world" (p. xxvi). Salvador
Hassan, a figure of many aliases, is a notorious and dedicated
liquefactionist.

"The Divisionists occupy a midway position, could in fact
be termed moderate. . . ." (p. 164). They are called Division-
ists because they literally divide. "They cut off tiny bits
of their flesh and grow exact replicas of themselves in embryo
jelly. It seems probable, unless the process of division is
halted, that eventually there will be only replica of one sex
on the planet: that is one person in the world with millions of separate bodies. ..." (p. 164). The Divisionists live in fear of replica revolution, for if they can reproduce their own form then so can others. "Every replica but your own is eventually an undesirable" (p. 164). "To avoid extermination of their replicas citizens dye, distort, and alter them with face and body molds" (p. 164). This creates a sense of intense paranoia within society, since it is impossible to discover a replica at sight, leaving everyone afraid that society will be taken over by secret replicas. "In fact, the fear of Negro replicas, which may be blond and blue-eyed - has depopulated whole regions" (p. 166).

But the Senders represent the most dangerous form of future politics, for their danger, like Benway's is much less apparent and more subtle. The Senders aim, through a process of telepathic control, to reduce every man's thought processes to the messages of one Sender. They ignore the "nature and the terminal state of sending" and a very few Senders know what they are doing (p. 162). The Senders believe in bi-control, "that is control of physical movement, mental processes, emotional reactions, and apparent sensory impressions by means of bioelectric signals injected into the nervous system of the subject" (p. 162). Even the individual Sender becomes the victim of the whole process. "The Sender has to send all the time, but he can't ever recharge himself by contact. Sooner or later he's got no feelings to send." "...Finally the screen goes dead. The Sender has turned into a huge centipede..." (p. 163).
But the future is not completely without hope, for there remains one political party, the Factualists, which continues to affirm the integrity of the individual against all assault. The tentative bulletins of the Factualist party condemn all others for their degradation and annihilation of the individual.

Bulletin of the coordinate Factualist on the subject of replicas: 'We must reject the facile solution of flooding the planet with desirable replicas. It is highly doubtful if there are any desirable replicas, such creatures constituting an attempt to circumvent process and change. Even the most intelligent and genetically perfect replicas would in all probability constitute an unspeakable menace to life on this planet. . . .' T. B. Tentative Bulletin Liquefaction: 'We must not reject or deny our protoplasmic core, striving at all times to maintain a maximum of flexibility without falling into the morass of liquefaction. . . .'

Tentative and Incomplete Bulletin: 'Emphatically we do not oppose telepathic research. In fact telepathy properly used and understood could be the ultimate defense against any form of organized coercion or tyranny on the part of pressure groups or individual control addicts. We oppose, as we oppose atomic war, the use of such knowledge to coerce, debase, exploit, or annihilate the individuality of any living creature. Telepathy, is not, by its nature, a one way process. To attempt to set up a one-way telepathic broadcast must be regarded as an unqualified evil. . . .'

Some maudlin citizens will think they can send something edifying, not realizing that sending is evil. Scientists will say: 'Sending is like atomic power . . .If properly harnessed. . . .'

Artist will confuse sending with creation. . . .

Philosophers will bat around the ends and means hassle not knowing that sending can never be a means to anything but more sending, like Junk.

The Sender is not a human individual. . . It is the Human Virus (pp. 167-8).

Lee (Burroughs) is an active member of the Factualist party, and his Factualist leanings lead him to his continual quest for truth, while his search for the 'true facts' necessitates his cutting through to the centre of reality's nakedness. The
reality which he sees is essentially grotesque and exaggerated; it is not the reality of a rationally ordered everyday existence, but that of hallucination and dream. The fact that Lee's vision takes the form of paranoic nightmare does not reduce its realism, however; it simply suggests a range of reality apart from the 'normal.' Burroughs' fear of persecution creates his vision of ugliness and horror, and this fearful vision can only be recorded honestly, as he sees it, by using distortion. "There is only one thing a writer can write about: what is in front of his senses at the moment of writing," and if the senses are bombarded with images and hallucinations of a man who sees with fearful eyes, this is reality in all of its nakedness" (p. 221).

But Burroughs offers us the magical means for release from this gruesome paranoia in the very same devices of exaggeration and distortion. By making his world one of surrealistic nightmare he separates it from daytime reality, making it a part of a dream existence from which man can awake. Exaggeration forms the basis of satire, and it is through comedy and laughter that man comes to see his own fears as absurd. His images of darkness and evil, of shit and death, serve also to free both Burroughs and his readers from fear; by shouting the unspeakable he gains freedom from a society which depends for its control upon the subtle power of fear which these very images evoke. Society controls man through his fear and need, but man can be free by recognizing this control in all of its grotesqueness and horror— in his recognition he gains power. Burroughs
exorcises the powers of evil through comedy and dream, and through his ability to shout down evil in its own terms.

Burroughs feels fear because he sees the world in terms of good and evil - ideals and reality. If a man believes in certain ideals he fears those forces which he feels are impinging upon these ideals, attempting to degrade and destroy them. Burroughs' ideal rests in the freedom of the individual to lead a separate life, and his concept of evil derives largely from his fear of social persecution. The individual, in Burroughs' eyes, contains the possibility of all good, a good which is continually thwarted by the evils of society. Such a theory elevates man to the realm of the angels, at least that part of man called spirit which struggles to attain personal freedom. But it reduces the body of man to the realm of evil, and the whole realm of visible reality, the world and the flesh, is in Burroughs' view, the possession of the Devil. By demonizing external 'realizing,' he preserves the sacredness of the 'innermost' part of man.

The terms of his morality become also the terms of his comic vision, for laughter often comes from "the sudden perception of the incongruity between our ideals and the actualities before us."21 "Man laughed only after the Exile, when he knew sin and suffering, the comical is a mark of man's revolt, boredom, and aspiration."22 In laughter man expresses his infinite nobility and infinite pain. Laughter is both the sign of infinite greatness and infinite wretchedness, infinite wretchedness in relation to the absolute Being of whom he possesses
the conception, infinite greatness in relation to animals." Man laughs at his own basic absurdity, an absurdity stemming from the incongruous union of spirit and flesh. He laughs only because he can suffer so excruciatingly this same absurdity. Burroughs' searing laughter burns the trail of his paranoia, leaving only dead matter which cannot affect life. But within this death lies the possibility of a vague rebirth, a rebirth into fresh life with none of the faults of the old.
1. The name Lee is one which Burroughs uses in all of his novels to designate the character whose values most closely approximate his own. He used the pen-name William Lee in his first novel *Junkie*, and even his later novels such as *Nova Express* continue to use Lee as the major character. He begins this novel with a letter of warning signed by Inspector J. Lee, Nova Police.

2. An interesting fact mentioned by Burroughs in "The Preface" to *Junkie* is his "nut house record." "I decided I was not going to like the Army and copped out on my nut house 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. The nut house doctors had never heard of Van Gogh. They put me down for *schizophrenia*, adding paranoid type to explain this upsetting fact that I knew where I was and who was President of the U. S." (Preface, p. 9).

3. Two books were used as general source of information about paranoia: *Dynamics of Mental Health*, ed. James M. Sawry and Charles W. Telford (Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc., 1963), pp. 85-88.


4. These suggestions are offered in R. D. Laing's *The Divided Self*, p. 45, 46.

5. The same kind of metaphors (implosive and depersonalizing) also dominate his later work in *Nova Express*. In *Nova Express* the police attempt to counter the virus which is reducing all spontaneous human life to the level of the mineral and animal - metal junkies, scorpion men, fish people, and prisoners broken down into insect forms. The Nova mob are extra-terrestrial gangsters who invade earth, infiltrating human institutions and encouraging all forms of evil.


8. R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self*, all pages in Chapter five.

9. In an "Introduction to Naked Lunch The Soft Machine Nova Express," Burroughs suggests that he is mapping out an imaginary universe. "A dark universe of wounded galaxies, and nova conspiracies where obscenity is coldly used as a total weapon." (italics mine).


12. Burroughs re-mentions the words of Hassan Sabbah in the opening of Nova Express, giving us even more information on the power of the bureaucrats. Note especially pages twelve and thirteen.

13. Burroughs derives his stylistic methods from the same desire to destroy the social word.


16. Ginsberg suggests, in his defense of Naked Lunch at its obscenity trial, that Burrough's theory of junk addiction could be applied as a model of addiction in all of its various form. "...The other addictions which are mentioned in the book are treated dramatically - addiction to homosexuality which is considered by Burroughs also a sort of addiction, and on a larger scale what he conceives of as the U. S. addiction to materialistic goods and properties. Addiction to money is mentioned in the book a number of times; and most of all an addiction to power or addiction to controlling other people by having power over them." The control addict desires power in political, sexual, and social spheres.

17. The inhabitants of the Naked Lunch world use sex for a variety of miscellaneous purposes - for casual entertainment, for money, for getting rid of friends. Lee with his friend Marv "pay two Arab kids sixty cents to watch them screw one another." Andrew Kief, a character living in Interzone, suggests when he wants to get rid of his friends that they have been having illicit relations with his ugly chauffeur. A. J. was at one time a "Merchant of Sex," while even the County Sheriff encourages the local residents with sexual interest to put down their money to see a spicy hanging. "I'll lower his pants for a pound folks. Step right up. A serious and scientific exhibit concerning the locality of The Life Centre." Sex influences even religious appeal, for the speaker of the Prophet's Hour advertises Christ by his ability to cure clap with one hand.

18. But even the homosexual victim - who conquers humiliation by reaching into its extremes is far from happy. The
Mugwumps secrete an addicting fluid from their erect penises which prolongs life by slowing metabolism, while the Reptiles survive by licking this fluid. When the Mugwumps disappear for short periods of time the Reptiles face stark insanity for they cannot survive without this fluid. At parties, for entertainment value, the Mugwump buggers and hangs young boys watching with delight as their whole body squeezes out through their cock. The Reptile loses, since his passive role makes him always the victim of the Mugwump's perversions, while he has been reduced to the level of an animal by his loss of individuality.

19. The average American woman, Burroughs insinuates, is as frustrated as the American Housewife who projects her frustration onto her own machines protesting that they are becoming sexual to her.

20. Wylie Sypher, in his essay on comedy suggest that the "joke and the dream incongruously distort the logic of our rational life" (p. 200); and "The confused statement of the dream and the joke are intolerable to the daylight, sane, Apollonian self."


22. Ibid.

CONCLUSION

Cohen, Kerouac, and Burroughs express their suffering within their novels, and each searches for a way to resolve his pain with his art. Kerouac fails most fully in this search for relief, because he can never quite accept the fact of his own imperfection. Cohen and Burroughs, in contrast, gain some sense of relief from their pain through their humorous laughter, a laughter which the more sentimental Kerouac cannot experience.

The suffering which they share, however, leads them to conclusions which correspond in significant ways. Each discovers both the absurdity of life and its magic, and this sense of the absurd and belief in magic make them more capable of dealing with their own personal pain.

All write of the basic contradiction between man and his ideals, a contradiction inherently absurd, which can be resolved only within an art which can accept the irreconcilable. "In our modern experience, the 'ethical golden mean' seems to have broken down and man is left face to face with the preposterous, the trivial, the monstrous, the inconceivable. The modern hero lives amidst irreconcilables which, as Dostoevsky suggests, can be encompassed only by religious faith or comedy." Kerouac's vision takes the form of religious faith, for his abundant sentimentality makes it impossible for him to view existence as humourous and laughable. For Cohen and Burroughs, however, it is humour which provides the way of dealing with the irrational, of resolving the tensions of incongruity. Cohen and Burroughs expiate their pain through laughter - laughing away the claims of super-ego, returning to momentary
union with the id. All three authors take the role of Holy Fool as their own, they are the possessed, free, and licental self partaking in the destruction of the old, the prophet-seer who shows the way to a new order.

Kerouac's sense of absurdity stems from his Catholic religion, for the premises of his Christianity can be seen as an attempt to deal with the irreconcilables of existence in an absurd way. Christianity gives a significance to man's suffering by placing it within a meaningful context - it explains and enacts the incongruities of man's existence through its doctrine and ritual. Its premises that pain and suffering are good is in itself absurd, but a person can gain ideological release from pain in this absurdity. Christianity relieves man's tensions by providing a code to explain the ambiguities of his existence.

For Cohen absurdity arises from the incongruous relationship of the individual with his society - a society which imposes a rationale upon men which is actually destructive and irrational and which then manages to convince men to operate in terms of this rationale. Society itself believes that it is rational and sane, and this belief further increases its fundamental absurdity. Man in face of the social system is forced to participate in an absurd role no matter which way he acts - if he functions as a participating member of society he is faced with a system irrational at its core, if he fails to participate in this system, society defines him as absurd, and this definition contains an element of truth, for his relationship with society
becomes ridiculous and incongruous.

Burroughs' sense of absurdity border on the grotesque - he reveals man in his nakedness to be an ugly animal, easily controlled and manipulated by any aggressor. His gargoyle laughter shows how extremely ridiculous man's espousal of ideals really is, and he mocks every claim of man to be man. The mocking laughter bursts forth from his despair - his anguished wish for man to be an individual, to maintain some form of human heroism, becomes a derisive laugh of outrage with his recognition of man's impoverishment.

While it is their private sense of absurdity which releases all three from the pain of the past, more or less successfully, it is finally their sense of magic which gives a sense of meaning to the future. As I suggested in the Introduction, Kerouac, Cohen, and Burroughs re-define magic as their own ability to transform experience, to re-create the world through imagination. They turn to the particular detail, the particular event, for inspiration and each transforms the immediate into something vital and alive. They dramatize the reality of the moment, weaving the myths of their own personal experience into their novels. Language is for them an act of the instant, not an act of thought about the instant. They are themselves, finally, both the instruments of discovery and the instruments of definition, discovering the magic of modern life and revealing this magic to us in their art.

2. Charles Olson suggests in The Human Universe that "we are ourselves both the instrument of discovery and the instrument of definition." This statement seems fully appropriate to these three authors.

   In some cases it is difficult to see where Burroughs sees magic at all, but I would argue that his own peculiar black magic contains within itself the same vitality of the moment.
DEDICATION:

I would like to thank Mr. Elliott Gose for his helpful comments and aid in writing this thesis.
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(articles and books have been separated).


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