Chapter Four
Tangier/Interzone, 1954-1957

The respective narratives formed by Lee's travels, fictionalised in *Junky*, *Queer* and *The Yage Letters*, and Burroughs' travels, as charted in his correspondence, had formed a geographical journey: from New York to Mexico City to South America. On his return from his second South American expedition, and having spent three months with Allen Ginsberg in New York, Burroughs relocated once more, this time to Tangier. Burroughs arrived in Tangier at the beginning of 1954, and would stay there for four and a half years. During this period he wrote the material for his most famous novel, *Naked Lunch*, published in 1959 as *The Naked Lunch*. He also produced other materials published later in *The Soft Machine* and *Interzone*. Burroughs, once in Tangier, did not travel as extensively as he had previously done, as if he felt, relatively speaking at least, at home. The restless search for contact, however, continued, carried on in his writing.

The writing that emerged from this period of Burroughs' work was, in its published form, distinct from his earlier writings. The relatively continuous geographical and chronological movement of *Junky*, *Queer* and *The Yage Letters* did not continue into *Naked Lunch*. However, while Burroughs' Tangier work is not based on a linear narrative involving the crossing of geographical borders, images of border-crossings are nonetheless recurrent. As Oliver Harris notes, Burroughs came to interpret the "traversing of geographical frontiers as an analogue to the crossing of ontological borders; attempting chemical, and later linguistic, mutations in order to attain the momentary freedom necessary to perceive other modes of existence."[1] Subtly distinct from the recurrent border-crossings in Burroughs' life and writing was the continuing search for an

actual frontier environment in which to live. As Oliver Harris notes, *Naked Lunch* reprised "Burroughs' years as an exile as a rediscovery of America's former Frontier condition, the heritage he lamented had been usurped by state bureaucracy."[2] As will be seen, the search for that "former Frontier condition" was, temporarily at least, fulfilled in Tangier.[3] However the true frontier environment of this period of Burroughs' writing was the fictional city-scape Tangier helped to inspire: Interzone.

The frontier to be examined initially, however, is, in Gloria Anzaldúa's phrase, the "psychological borderlands": the frontier as the meeting point for different states of consciousness.[4] As Fiedler notes in *Love and Death in the American Novel*, in American life the frontier has "visibly represented" the "breach between consciousness and unconsciousness, reason and impulse, society and nature."[5] This frontier, it will be argued, is a battleground between opposing forces, and it was, in considerable part, out of these conflicts that *Naked Lunch* was formed. Many of these internal conflicts can be expressed in Freudian terms, as they are in *Love and Death in the American Novel*. To heal the divisions "visibly represented" by the frontier, Fiedler argues, the American writer seeks to "symbolize the union of the ego with the id, the thinking self with its rejected impulses".[6] Through writing, Burroughs was regressing further and further back into his own childhood, in his own, unorthodox, attempt to heal these inner divisions. The psychological dynamics and conflicts, both implicit and explicit, in Burroughs' early writings from his Tangier stay will be presented in the opening section of this chapter. The following two sections of Chapter Four, and Chapter Five, will examine the paradoxical process by which Burroughs increasingly incorporated material derived from these psychological conflicts into his writing, while simultaneously increasing his own detachment from the conflicts.

I The Frontier as Psychological Battleground, 1954-1955

The following section examines Burroughs' correspondence and writing from his arrival in Tangier in January 1954 up to September 1955. During this initial period, Burroughs gradually settled into his new environment, but his correspondence details his initial disappointments and frustrations at his continuing isolation, and his pharmaceutical, emotional and creative dependencies. "I like Tangier less all the time", he told Allen Ginsberg.[7] The indigenous inhabitants of Tangier did not, at this early stage, look promising candidates for "contact on the nonverbal level" (*Junky*/152). "What's all this old Moslem culture shit?" Burroughs asked, exasperated, as if he had been lured to Tangier under false pretenses by "that shameless faker" Paul Bowles, who had conned him with "this inscrutable oriental shit".[8] The Arabs were, Burroughs insisted, a "gabby, gossipy, simple-minded, lazy crew of citizens."[9] Tangier' reputation as a "writers colony" was also a myth, or otherwise the writers must "keep themselves hid some place."[10] Despite his initial disdain, however, the writing done during this early period of Burroughs' stay in Tangier represented important groundwork for *Naked Lunch*.

Two key elements in Burroughs' creative development through this period will be examined here. Firstly, Burroughs began, in 1954 and 1955, to formulate his sense of a profound conflict being enacted on a world-wide scale. While Burroughs' observations of this conflict relate it to various contemporary political and historical events, such as aboveground atom-bomb testing, the conflict also reflected Burroughs' personal struggles with his pharmaceutical and creative dependencies. Secondly, the regressions noted in terms of historical back-tracking in *The Yage Letters* will also be related to the regressions to childhood in Burroughs' short stories "The Finger" and "Driving Lesson".

It will be noted that the psychological dynamics expressed both in Burroughs' depiction of a world-wide conflict, and in the childhood scenarios presented in his two short stories of this period, were also reflected in Burroughs' creative struggles with the development of his new literary form: the routine.

Psychological Battlegrounds

At an early stage in its writing, *Naked Lunch* was conceived of as a battleground, as Burroughs explained in a letter to Allen Ginsberg. One of its several original titles was "Ignorant Armies", a phrase taken from Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach":

> "Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight
> Where ignorant armies clash by night."[11]

The precise nature of this battleground is continually shifting, reflecting cultural, political, psychological conflicts. At one level, the battleground reflected back on Burroughs' experiences in South America. In a letter to Ginsberg, Burroughs had characterised the "Colombian Civil War" as a "fundamental split" between the "South American Potential" and the "Repressive, Spanish, life-fearing armadillos."[12] Burroughs claimed that he had "never" felt himself "so definitely on one side and unable to see any redeeming features in the other."[13] These observations were incorporated into *The Yage Letters* (34), although when editing the "Yage" article in January 1955, Burroughs expressed the opinion that he hadn't been "successful in conveying" his:

> intuitions in regard to this basic world wide conflict, between the forces that seek to control, repress, systematize life, and spontaneous life itself that cannot be controlled or repressed or systematized. The attempt to do so must either fail or end by destroying life. I fear that the controllers, faced by the inevitable failure of their evil attempt, may pull the switch and destroy the world. That is the situation we are faced at this moment in world history.[14]

Burroughs noted that he would "rewrite" this "inadequate paragraph" if he felt "inspired."[15] The context for this outburst was the aboveground nuclear tests being conducted by the superpowers. In a letter to Allen Ginsberg, written on the same day as

his corrections to the "Yage" article, Burroughs again employed the Reichian terminology he had used to describe the Colombian Civil War to complain about the "life-hating character armadillos" who were jeopardizing the "very ground under our feet and the air we breathe" by continuing aboveground testing: "Thirty more experiments and we've had it, and nobody shows any indication of curtailing their precious experiments."[16] Three days later, the atom bomb tests were integrated into the "theme" for a novel which presented the "desperate struggle of a handful of men - 'Strangers' with no status, no place, no power under the present system - with the forces and emissaries of Destruction".[17] These dark forces, a "few scientists who were bent on destroying the world", had the "power to start an atomic war".[18]

The depiction of a similar conflict, though not explicitly related to either the Colombian Civil War or aboveground nuclear testing, can be found in a routine Burroughs wrote in 1954, initially titled "Dream of the City by William Lee", and published in *Interzone* as "Iron Wrack Dream".[19] In "Iron Wrack Dream", which depicts a futuristic city-scape that prefigures Interzone, it is claimed that the "forces of evil and repression" have "run their course", and are "suffocating in their armor or exploding from inner pressure", while new "forms of life" are "germinating in the vast, rusty metal racks of the ruined City." (*Interzone*/114) Burroughs explained in a letter to Jack Kerouac that the story expressed a "conversion" he had experienced in the "last few months", which had given him "faith" that the "forces of spontaneous, emergent Life are stronger than the forces of evil, repression and death, and that the forces of death will destroy themselves."[20] By February 1955, the "theme" of Burroughs' new work concerned a threat "even more evil than atomic destruction".[21] At one level, this new scenario continued the theme of political intrigue. Burroughs described this new work-in-progress as enacting a "basic" cultural and geographic "conflict" between "the East", which represented "spontaneous, emergent life," and "the West", which represented "control from without, character armor,

death".[22] As Oliver Harris notes, however, alongside the cultural, psychological and geographical definitions of this "basic conflict" Burroughs returned to the "familiar terms of pharmaceutical properties".[23] The "confused alarms of struggle and flight" are set in motion by the creation of an "anti-dream drug", which "destroys the symbolizing, myth-making, intuitive, empathizing, telepathic faculty in man".[24] Having eliminated the "factor of spontaneous, unpredictable life" from the "human equation", the mysterious "Controllers", who have overseen the introduction of the "anti-dream drug", are able to predict and alter the "behaviour" of the individual.[25] This conflict reflected the distinction, signalled at the end of *Junky*, between yagé, which promised "telepathic contact", and an "uncut kick", rather than the "narrowing down" of "junk". (*Junky*/152)

This theme of a "basic conflict" was developed into a "Chandler-style, straight, action story", which Burroughs described to Ginsberg as if there were no distinction between the fictional protagonist of the "story" and himself:

> it starts out 2 detectives come to arrest me. I know I am to be used in experiments with this drug. (They don't know this.) To save myself I kill them both. That is where I am now. On the lam. Waiting to score for ½ ounce of junk to hide out with, the alarm is going out right now; to every precinct, every prowl car [...] Don't ask me what is going to happen I just don't know. May turn allegorical or even sur-realist.[26]

In a later letter to Kerouac, Burroughs reiterated the theme of the story and promised "a lot of shooting, violence etc."[27] The act of violence, when it comes, is decisive, expressed in a terse Chandlerseque narrative style. Burroughs quoted from his work in progress in his letter to Ginsberg: "I snapped two quick shots into Hauser's belly [...] O'Brien was clawing at his shoulder holster, his hands stiff with panic ... I shot him in his high red forehead about an inch below the white hair line."[28] This sequence was later included in *Naked Lunch* as the "Hauser and O'Brien" section, and an alternative version, "The Conspiracy", is included in *Interzone*. In the "Hauser and O'Brien" sequence in *Naked Lunch*, Lee, having shot the detectives, finds his pusher, "Nick", who scores some heroin for him. "The Conspiracy" starts at the point at which Lee, in *Naked Lunch*, leaves Nick.[29]

"The Conspiracy" was clearly the first version of the escape-narrative, since it contains direct references to the "Chandler-style, straight, action story" Burroughs had been writing in February 1955: the battle between the "scientists" and their "anti-dream drug" and the "few counter-conspirators" who aim to "obtain and destroy the formula."[30] In "The Conspiracy", Lee works through in his mind a variety of people to whom he could turn to following the shooting. Having rejected a variety of male names, he comes to a rest with the name "Mary." He decides he could "count on" Mary "100 percent." (*Interzone*/107)[31] Lee's plan is to hide out in Mary's flat on the "Columbia campus", and to be pretend to be "someone" who has "rented the extra room to write his thesis." (*Interzone*/108) Lee's explanation to Mary of why he had "just killed two detectives" (*Interzone*/108) provides the "allegorical" meaning which Burroughs had mentioned might develop for the shooting.[32] Lee begins his explanation with his contention that "junk sickness" gives "a sharp feeling of nostalgia": the ubiquitous "train whistles, piano music down a city street, burning leaves ...". (*Interzone*/108) Since these nostalgic motifs occur "in response to a definite metabolic setup", in this case, withdrawal from heroin, Lee argues that it would be possible to "eliminate nostalgia, to occlude the whole dreaming, symbolizing faculty." (*Interzone*/108) In other words, Lee explains to Mary the plot to Burroughs' "action story"[33]: Lee's explanation, however, extends Burroughs' plot-line in several interesting ways. Lee claims, for example, that there is already an antidote to the "anti-dream drug", and that antidote is "Yagé", which "increases the symbolizing faculty." (*Interzone*/109) Lee also claims that "almost everyone" has this "symbolizing faculty" as "a child." (*Interzone*/109)

The differences between "Hauser and O'Brien" and "The Conspiracy" will be returned to later in this chapter. What is important to establish at this stage is the psychological dynamic that the "basic conflict" described here enacts. "The Conspiracy", with its evocation of the "nostalgia" brought on by "junk sickness", uses the recurrent

motifs, "train whistles, piano music down a city street, burning leaves", first found in the brief scene in *Junky* in which Lee recalls lying "in bed beside" his "mother". (*Junky*/125) Therefore, as Oliver Harris notes, the "origin" for the "psychological conflict" dramatized by the "shooting of Hauser and O'Brien" is "traced back to infancy by the release of nostalgic maternal memories during withdrawal."[34] The two cops "symbolize", in Harris' description, the "conditioning forces that perpetuate submission to the reality function", since it is the "superego" that "insists on reality and the separation of child and mother".[35] Alan Ansen's description of the "Hauser and O'Brien" sequence as a "primal scene" is therefore a fitting one.

In October 1954, Burroughs had a dream, recounted in a letter to Ginsberg, that he considered using as the "frame-work" for a "novel."[36] The dream was eventually published in the "Lee's Journals" section of *Interzone*. Again, this "framework" for a novel is the depiction of a conflict between the forces of life and death, and again the dream features the disturbing presence of a figure who represents the super-ego. The super-ego figure is described as a "Holy Man", who "operates from a tower-like structure covered with cloth." (*Interzone*/65) This "Holy Man" is causing a "dry, brown, vibrating" sound, "like insect wings rubbing together".[37] Despite the protestations of a friend, who tries to convince the protagonist of the dream that there is "no use to oppose the Holy Man" since the "Holy Man is reality", the protagonist "won't give up" his planned "assassination of the Holy Man." (*Interzone*/65) The protagonist of the dream insists that the "Holy Man" can't "know" his "real plan" since the protagonist himself doesn't "know it yet": "*It's life*. He can't predict Life, only death."[38] He ends up hiding from his "friend" in a "florist's shop", "under a case of flowers", with his friend standing "by the case as though at my coffin". (*Interzone/65*) While the dream was never included in *Naked Lunch*, it did nonetheless provide a psychological "framework" for the novel, and will be returned to later in the thesis as a means to understand the connections

between several of the book's most important sections. The key to this "framework" is the recurrent presence of a super-ego figure, and the violent attempts to escape from the influence of this figure.[39]

The dynamic of these "basic" conflicts between life and death that Burroughs planned to depict fictionally was also reflected in Burroughs' descriptions of his twin addictions in this period: writing and junk. Lacking intelligent company in his immediate vicinity, Burroughs made contact instead with junk, in the form of "Eukodel", the "best junk kick I ever had."[40] Burroughs' need for personal contact was, however, directed with ever more intensity to the recipient of his letters, Allen Ginsberg.[41] The events of *Queer* were about to repeat themselves, albeit at long distance and in a somewhat different form. As Harris notes, Burroughs' letters to Marker had "acted as emissaries seeking the return of a Whitmanesque affection", and when Marker had failed to respond, Burroughs "contemplated giving up writing altogether."[42] Similarly, when Ginsberg, on an expedition to Mexico, failed to respond to Burroughs' letters, the letters became, in Harris' description, "like the dead letters of Melville's *Bartleby*: 'On errands of life, these letters speed to death'"[43], and their author, with his terrifying sense of isolation, resembled Bartleby himself: "absolutely alone in the universe."[44]

Burroughs, who was dependent on Eukodel, was also dependent on his routines, which were "like" a "habit".[45] "Burroughs' addiction to his routines represented an odd reversal of his addiction to junk. The first injection of junk, recorded in *Junky*, brings with it the "feeling that some horrible image was just beyond the field of vision", a feeling associated with images of death: "a waitress carrying a skull on a tray." (*Junky*/7). As has already been noted, these images echo the "supernatural horror", described in the Prologue to *Junky*, that Lee experienced as a child. Withdrawal from junk, on the other hand, brought the "magic of childhood": the "sharp nostalgia of train whistles, piano music down a city street, burning leaves." (*Junky*/125-6) Withdrawal, then, causes vivid

images of life, and addiction, images of death.[46] Burroughs' relationship with his routines reverses this polarity. "Without routines", Burroughs explained to Ginsberg, his life became a "chronic nightmare"[47], a condition notably reminiscent of the "static horror" of life with junk. (*Junky*/139) Burroughs' evocation of the "chronic nightmare" which he inhabited also took him back, as the first injection of junk does, to his "St. Louis" childhood, and the "gray horror" of a "midwest suburb".[48] Burroughs vividly recalls driving home, "past the bare clay of subdivided lots", where children would play, seemingly "happy and healthy", but with "empty horror and panic" in their "clear gray-blue eyes".[49] Driving by "the subdivisions", Burroughs "always felt" the "impact" in his "stomach" of "final loneliness and despair."[50] With routines and without anyone to "receive" them, Burroughs found that his routines turned "back on" him like a "homeless curse".[51] Once set in motion, the routine would "grow more and more insane", exhibiting a "literal growth like cancer".[52] The routines, then, were associated with a dangerous abundance of life, an abundance that becomes "impossible, and fragmentary" like a "berserk pin-ball machine", threatening to "tear" the writer "apart".[53] Burroughs faced a stark choice: to accept "final loneliness and despair", or to accept his routines, which he clearly feared would completely take him over, leaving him "staggering around the room acting out routines like" a "Roman emperor" in a "bloody sheet."[54]

Initially, Burroughs was clearly distressed by the nature of the material he was writing. In a letter to Allen Ginsberg, Burroughs described his fated attempts at writing "saleable product" as being "almost like automatic writing produced by a hostile, independent entity who is saying, in effect, 'I will write what I please.'"[55] Burroughs claimed that if he tried to "impose some form" on his material, or even to "follow a line", this "effort" catapulted him into a "sort of madness" where he found that only "the most extreme material" was available to him.[56] Burroughs explained to Jack Kerouac that he was "having serious difficulties" with his attempt to write a novel, and "was very gloomy

as to prospects of publication."[57] Burroughs' gloom seems quite justified bearing in mind the material he was producing. Witness this attempt, for example, at the height of Burroughs' junk-induced financial troubles, to write a "best-seller Book of the Month Club job on Tangier":

> The only native in Interzone who is neither queer nor available is Andrew Kief's chauffeur [...] Aracknid is the worst driver in the Zone. On one occasion he ran down a pregnant woman in the mountains with a load of charcoal on her back, and she miscarried a bloody dead baby on the street.[58]

As Burroughs acknowledged by letter to Jack Kerouac, such material would not be "serialized in *Cosmopolitan* or *Good Housekeeping*."[59] Burroughs began to feel that publication was "hopeless", and that he was unable to "write in a popular vein."[60]

As Oliver Harris notes, the identification of an "hostile independent entity" who is producing this unacceptable material suggests "an awareness of the sinister underside to his extreme material, and of the inhibiting operations of repression."[61] The author, reading over his "first chapter", felt that "something very sinister" lay "just under the surface".[62] Whether he liked it or not the routine was to be Burroughs' principal form, as central to his later writing as it was to Lee in *Queer*. What distinguished the routine as a form was that it was not "*completely symbolic*": it was "subject to schlup over into 'real' action at any time". (*Interzone*/127) "In a sense", Burroughs wrote, placing the ambiguity of his form into a disturbing historical context, "the whole Nazi movement was a great, humorless, evil *routine* on Hitler's part."[63] Burroughs explained that he wrote with "horror and foreboding" since he felt his "writing was meant to be acted out somewhere, somehow, sometime", and it could therefore "put him in actual danger." (*Interzone*/126) The examples he gives of this blurring of routine and reality are telling: the cutting off of a "finger joint", and the "wrecking" of a "car." (*Interzone*/127) These examples refer back to two 'real' incidents from Burroughs' own life. In 1939, while living in New York, Burroughs had "deliberately cut off the last joint of his little finger", to impress a "young man with whom he was preoccupied", Jack Anderson. (*Interzone*/xv) The "wrecking" of

a "car" refers to an incident in St. Louis in 1940, again involving Jack Anderson, in which Burroughs was involved in a car crash. (*Interzone*/xvi) In 1954, while Burroughs was struggling with his addictions, he wrote two short stories, "The Finger" and "Driving Lesson", based on these 'real' incidents. The two stories were eventually published in *Interzone*.

"Driving Lesson" and "The Finger"

"Driving Lesson" and "The Finger" continue where *Queer* had left off, delineating the character of Lee with increasing clarity and detachment. They also continue the regressive movement that has been traced in Burroughs' early writing. In *The Yage Letters*, various types of journey are being enacted simultaneously. At one level, the narrative moves geographically away from the United States. At another level, the narrative takes us further and further back in time, through hallucinatory glimpses of Polynesian history, beyond the lost Inca City and back towards Atlantis. *The Yage Letters* does not lead back only into collective history, however, since the narrative also travels back into Lee's own history, or, more precisely, into Burroughs' own childhood fictionalised as Lee's. Therefore, despite the movement geographically away from America, Lee's letters also obsessively return there, back to an imagined childhood with Billy Bradshinkel. "I remember the last time I saw Billy", writes Lee, "was in the October of that year. One of those sparkling blue days you get in the Ozarks in Autumn. We had driven out into the country to hunt squirrels with my .22 single shot [...]" (*Yage Letters*/15) In a letter Burroughs sent to Allen Ginsberg from Lima in June, 1953, which was not included in *The Yage Letters*, there is an even more explicit return home. The doctor Burroughs visited in Lima told him that he did not have "active T.B.", just "old scars from childhood."[64] "Billy Bradshinkel's ghost", Burroughs concluded, was "still unlaid."[65] He then wrote that he felt "nostalgia for U.S., a flood of memories: Like when I

was the cheapest thief in New York and Phil and I made a teenage sailor for his locker key [...]".[66] Nostalgia, the "flood of memories", takes him back there, but once there he is faced with "old scars from childhood", ghosts "still unlaid".[67] "Driving Lesson" and "The Finger" address themselves to these "old scars from childhood", and therefore continue this regressive movement.[68]

At another level, however, "The Finger" and "Driving Lesson" are oddly unique items within Burroughs' work. What distinguishes them is their relatively traditional structure, and their careful, polished style, as if the words had been compressed down to a bare, expressive minimum, so as to suggest, but finally not explicate, a psychological intensity. A haunting piece, "The Finger" describes, in an unadorned narrative style reminiscent of *Junky*, an act of self-mutilation, in which an adult situation is juxtaposed by recurrent echoes of a childhood world. In the "cutlery store", for example, where Lee goes to buy a pair of shears he will use to remove the finger, he sees a tool kit for sale that reminds him of "getting one of these kits for Christmas when he was a child." (*Interzone*/14) The poultry shears themselves bring back the memory of "the ones his father had used to cut through joints when he carried the turkey at Grandmother's Thanksgiving dinners." (*Interzone*/14) Lee pays for a hotel room, and "composing his face into the supercilious mask of an eighteenth century dandy", cuts off a finger joint. His initial reaction is disappointment, expressed in the voice of a "broken child": "'It didn't do anything', he said". (*Interzone*/15) Having "adjusted his face" back again, however, and bandaged the finger, the mood of broken disappointment fades, to be replaced, on leaving the hotel, by a macabre sense of breakthrough. Lee feels "waves of euphoria" sweep through him: "Good will flowed out of him for everyone he saw, for the whole world. A lifetime of defensive hostility had fallen from him." (*Interzone*/15) Again, however, this reaction is only temporary, and is followed half an hour later by a conversation between Lee and his analyst, who, speaking in a "whiny, shrill and

hysterical" voice, demands that Lee go to "Bellevue" for psychiatric care. (*Interzone*/15) Despite his "hysterical" voice, Lee feels "a deep trust in the doctor", sensing that the "doctor would take care of him." (*Interzone*/15) He turns "to the doctor with a little-boy smile", saying "'Why don't you fix it yourself.'" (*Interzone*/15) Once more, the adult world and the world of the child are juxtaposed, Lee's child-like faith in the analyst echoing the faith of a child in his father.

In the main text of "The Finger", we are never explicitly told why Lee mutilates himself, although he does mention to the analyst that he must have his finger "sewed up" since he has a "date" that night. (*Interzone*/15) In fact, as James Grauerholz writes in his introduction to *Interzone*, Burroughs cut off his finger "partly in an attempt to impress Jack Anderson, a young man with whom has was preoccupied." (*Interzone*/xv) In Ted Morgan's account of the story in *Literary Outlaw*, Anderson is central, described as a "piss-poor Gaugin" to Burroughs' "Van Gogh".[69] However, in an explanation that is appended to the main text of the story, Lee tells the story again, this time as a performance delivered to an unknown audience. Just as Lee, at the moment of cutting off the finger, wears the "supercilious mask" of the "eighteenth century dandy", so too he puts on another mask in his retelling of the story in its second version. (*Interzone*/15) Lee here offers a full explanation of events: he cuts off the finger in order to make an "impression" on a girl he loves, imagining that he will "present it to her" as a "trifling momento of my undying affection." (*Interzone*/17). The second story, then, is about a heterosexual relationship, a mask for the actual homosexual attachment to Anderson.[70] Ted Morgan, in his account of the actual events in *Literary Outlaw*, describes Burroughs' act of self-mutilation as a "symbolic castration".[71] In this version of the story, which has its basis in the Freudian concept of the primal scene, the homosexual attachment to Anderson is, in itself, another mask, another layer to be peeled away. Underneath the adult scenario, Morgan is implicitly suggesting, lies the actual story, rooted in childhood.

The eerie juxtaposition of childhood in an apparently adult situation is also at the centre of "Driving Lesson", which is again based on an incident involving Jack Anderson.[72] As with "The Finger", "Driving Lesson" is distinguished by its careful precision of language. Burroughs sent the manuscript of the story to Allen Ginsberg with "four alternative phrasings", relying on Ginsberg's "judgment" to choose one, since he had "worked over it so much" he could no longer judge himself.[73] Burroughs described "Driving Lesson" as "one of the most nearly perfect things I have done."[74] This time Bill and Jack are together, in a car driving through East St. Louis at "three o'clock in the morning". (*Interzone*/20) Jack has only driven a car twice before, and Bill is giving instructions. They have both been "drinking since early afternoon". (*Interzone*/18). Bill encourages Jack to speed up a little, supposedly to give him confidence: "We have the city all to ourselves, Jackie ... Not a car on the street. Push it all the way down ... all the way in ... all the way, Jackie." (*Interzone*/20)[75] Burroughs explained to Ginsberg that the "symbol of the car interior, conveying illusion of security while hurtling towards inevitable disaster," was "central" to the story.[76] The car is described as having "moved into a dream beyond contact with the lives, forces and objects of the city", and its passengers, "alone" and "safe", are "floating in the summer night, a moon spinning around the world." (*Interzone*/20)

While the "symbol of the car interior" is indeed "central", equally important is Bill's nightmarish role in starting this dream movement towards "inevitable disaster".[77] A clear distinction is made early on in the story between the "intellectual", disembodied Bill and the earthy, "*bone stupid*" Jack. (*Interzone*/19-21) The dashboard lights up their two contrasted faces: "one weak and beautiful, with a beauty that would show every day that much older; the other thin, intense, reflecting unmistakably the qualities loosely covered by the word 'intellectual,' at the same time with the look of a tormented, trapped animal." (*Interzone*/19)[78] These distinctions are succinctly introduced in the first section of the

story, set in an East St. Louis red-light district bar. Bill talks obsessively, boring the bartender with his observations about an "Anheuser-Busch" advertisement: "Yeah [...] you already told me that ten times. Anything else?" (*Interzone*/19) Jack leaves Bill in the bar, and goes off to investigate one of the local brothels. The passive Bill "watches" as Jack walks out "through the swinging door". (*Interzone*/19) When Bill tries to entertain Jack with a routine, about his attempts as a newspaper reporter to get a photograph of a recent suicide, Jack fails to get the joke and looks at Bill "blankly". (*Interzone*/19) In terms of the search for contact outlined in *Junky*, the "relationship [...] on the nonverbal level of intuition and feeling" has clearly not been established. (*Junky*/152) Jack's face in the car is "blank" as he drives, again suggesting the distinction between Jack, who acts but doesn't think, and Bill who watches and talks without acting.[79] (*Interzone*/20) The two characters seem linked symbolically, as if Jack is the body, beautiful but weak, subject to decay, with "a beauty that would show every day that much older", and Bill is the mind, "tormented", desperate to escape.[80] This echoes the concluding paragraph of *Junky*, with its exhortation of the need to escape "the claims of the aging, cautious, nagging, frightened flesh." (*Junky*/152)

"Driving Lesson" and "The Finger" are important representations of the primary areas of conflict in Burroughs' writing, for three closely related reasons. Firstly, both stories enact a refusal of, and/or a betrayal by, the father. In "The Finger", Lee agrees to go, on his doctor's advice, to Bellevue, but for "medical treatment only". (*Interzone*/16) Still feeling that he must "put himself entirely in the care of the doctor", he passes out, awaking to find himself "in a dressing gown in a bare ward." (*Interzone*/16) He looks around at the "bare corridors" of the hospital, realising with a child's slow but sure comprehension that he has been betrayed: "*Why, this is the psychopathic ward*, he thought. *He put me in here and went away!* " (*Interzone*/16) On the adult level on which the story operates, Lee has been let down by his analyst. On the childhood level, the

young Lee is reenacting an earlier betrayal by the father. The very title of the story, "The Finger", suggests this ambiguous act of defiance.

The sense of betrayal in "Driving Lesson" is more complicated, since the father in that story is, at one level, a saviour-figure. Following his accident, Lee is taken to a police station, where he calls his father, who appears, as if "conjured by an alcoholic time trick": "Suddenly he was there, cool and distant as ever, talking to the cops." (*Interzone*/21) Like a magician, "Mr. Morton" is able to unwrite the incident, by employing all the props of his suburban wealth and influence: he placates the owner of the parked car that Jack has crashed into by offering to buy him another car, and even gives the police sergeant a cigar.[81] At the adult level, then, a rescue mission has been performed with considerable elegance. From here, however, the story returns to the house "in the suburbs" that Lee seems so set on leaving behind in the Prologue to *Junky*. (*Junky*/xii) Being taken home by his father means to leave "Jack", and therefore Lee's other half, behind: "Where do you want to be dropped off?" his father asks Jack. (*Interzone*/22) In other words, the father is rescuing the son, only to take him back into the childhood world of frustration and resentment.

The journey back to the house is marked by the uneasy silence between father and son. While "Mr. Morton" has rescued his son, there is no point of contact between them, only a vague, half-stated sense of disapproval:

> 'I'm sorry, Dad ... I-'
> 'So am I,' his father cut in. (*Interzone*/22)

It is this concluding section of the story that seems most precise, as if each word carries a considerable weight of unspoken meaning. The story ends, for example, with Bill's refusal of his father's offer of milk:

> 'No thanks, Dad.'
> Bill went upstairs to bed. (*Interzone*/22)

This refusal recalls the rejection of the father, and his world of commerce and responsibility, that is outlined in Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel*. The offer of "milk" is suggestive, since milk is associated with the mother, and with the suckling infant. The father is therefore offering himself as substitute for the absent

mother, who is "upstairs". (*Interzone*/22) The word "upstairs" seems particularly weighted here. All that is know about "Mother" is that she is "upstairs". (*Interzone*/22) Nothing is heard or seen of her. Yet, her silence at the end of the story only serves to make her presence more strongly felt, as if she is completely connected with home.[82] The story appears to conclude, therefore, with Bill's refusal of his father, and with him going instead "upstairs to bed", back to mother. (*Interzone*/22) While the psychological intensity suggested here is diffuse, finally indefinable, it is not therefore without substance. Indeed it suggests, to quote Pamela A. Boker, a "disavowed [...] maternal identification".[83]

In keeping with this observation, the second connection between the two stories is that they both enact failed attempts to recreate the pre-oedipal relationship with the mother. In "Driving Lesson", Lee, by encouraging Jack to drive dangerously fast, only succeeds in recreating the invulnerable isolation of his childhood. The image of the car, gathering speed and moving "into a dream beyond contact with the lives, forces, and objects of the city" (*Interzone*/20), echoes the description of Lee's childhood home in the Prologue to *Junky*: the "comfortable capsule" that is "cut off from contact with the life of the city." (*Junky*/xii) The "dashboard" of the car resembles a "fireplace", "lighting" Bill and Jack's "young faces", like children in a sitting room. (*Interzone*/20-1) If the car has "moved into a dream", however, it has also, again echoing the Prologue's depiction of a haunted childhood world, moved into a nightmare. (*Interzone*/20) Appropriately, then, when Bill speaks, it is with the "eerie disembodied voice of a young child." (*Interzone*/20) The ghostly acceleration of the car inevitably leads to a "squealing crash of metal", as if the mind, as represented by Lee, in its attempts to free itself from the unwanted body, Jack, seeks its resolution in death. (*Interzone*/21) As with Lee's routines in *Queer*, the routine with which Lee initially attempts to entertain Jack, concerning his search as a young journalist for the photograph of a suicide, has echoes beyond itself, given Lee's role in the car crash to come. Echoing the portentous car accident described in the Prologue to *Junky*, (*Junky*/xiii), however, Bill emerges from the "inevitable disaster" unscathed: "nothing broken" (*Interzone*/21).

In "The Finger", the route back to the mother is via the act of self-castration, which causes a "lifetime of defensive hostility" to fall away. (*Interzone*/15) It should be noted

that the "poultry shears" which Lee uses to cut his finger are associated with the shears his father used to "cut through the joints" of the turkey at Thanksgiving, suggesting that Lee, by cutting his finger, was taking upon himself the role of the father, in order to enact his own castration. (*Interzone*/14)[84]

In writing "Driving Lesson" and "The Finger", Burroughs was examining, in a detached fictionalised form, the impulses that formed his routines. The approach which Burroughs adopted, or was pressed into, in dealing with these impulses was not a Freudian one. As Susan Stanford Friedman notes, in *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1916) Freud "consistently assumes that unconscious desires are 'abhorrent' or 'evil'."[85] Freud, therefore, argued that the purpose of analysis was to strengthen the ego against "the 'evil wishes' of the id".[86] In "The Finger", the analyst responds to Lee's act of self-mutilation with Freudian horror: "When you realise what you've done", he tells Lee, "you'll need psychiatric care. Your ego will be overwhelmed." (*Interzone*/15) Here, the "evil wish" of the id has manifested itself in the symbolic act of castration,[87] and the "psychiatric care" that Lee's analyst offers is supposed to strengthen the ego against this violent upsurge. (*Interzone*/15) In his essay "The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis", Freud famously distinguished between neurosis, in which "the ego, in its dependence on reality, suppresses a piece of the id", or "instinctual life", while in psychosis, the ego, "in the service of the id, withdraws from a part of reality."[88] In "Driving Lesson", the movement of the car into "a dream beyond contact with the lives, forces and objects of the city" would be interpreted in terms of Freudian analysis as a psychotic withdrawal from reality. (*Interzone*/20) Burroughs' routines, like the impulses fictionalised in "The Finger" and "Driving Lesson", certainly did not have the effect of strengthening of the ego against the id. By accepting his routines, those scatological, lacerating eruptions from the id, Burroughs risked being overwhelmed.

II Tangier, 1955-1956

Echoing *Junky*, Burroughs' letters from late 1954 to 1957 constitute repetitive cycles of withdrawal and addiction. There are glimmers of potential, in terms of creative and psychological breakthrough, and then the lapse back into lonely stasis. Early in his stay in Tangier, Burroughs told Ginsberg that he felt "dissatisfied" with his writing, and realised he would have to "find a completely new approach."[89] The first indications of *Naked Lunch* can be detected in a letter to Ginsberg dated December 13, 1954. Burroughs announced that he had written the "1st chapter" of a novel in which he would "incorporate all my routines and scattered notes."[90] The scene of the novel was to be Tangier, which was to be fictionalised as "Interzone".[91] This was the first reference Burroughs makes to the sprawling metropolis that would form the backdrop for his most famous novel. In the same letter, Burroughs informed Ginsberg that he was "going to attempt a complete work."[92] This statement of intent marked an important shift in Burroughs' attitude towards his writing. The routine had been, thus far, a one-off form, a sudden rush of inspiration. The challenge that Burroughs faced was to make a "complete work" from his routines.[93]

Burroughs' first letter to Ginsberg of 1955 detailed an important breakthrough. Burroughs told Ginsberg that he had "just conceived, at this second" a solution to one of his central problems: the "dissipation" of his creative "energy" in "fragmentary, unconnected projects."[94] The solution was to "simply transcribe Lee's impressions", to accept the "fragmentary quality" of his routines as being "*inherent*" to his method.[95] In doing this, Burroughs planned to abandon the "novelistic pretext of dealing directly with his characters and situations." He would "*include the author in the novel*."[96] However, in a letter dated January 21, 1955, Burroughs told Ginsberg he was suffering from a "profound depression, the worst of my life."[97] He was, at this stage, heavily addicted to

Eukodel. In June 1955, Burroughs wrote that he had been "in a clinic taking the cure"[98], but he relapsed when he "came down with an excruciatingly painful neuralgia in the back."[99] In September 1955, Burroughs wrote to Ginsberg about his plans to "evict the Chinaman once and for all."[100] "Once I get off junk", he declared, "anything is possible."[101] This time he intended to stay in the clinic "until I am completely cured."[102] Three extraordinary letters from October 1955, which were titled by their author Letters "A", "B" and "C", elucidate the first false start of release from junk, and the beginning of Burroughs' more positive relationship with Tangier.

The Importance of Tangier

It is clear that Tangier was an important influence on the breakthroughs Burroughs was to make, both in his writing and his life. As Oliver Harris suggests, Burroughs' relationship with Tangier "represented a continuation of his time in Mexico."[103] While, as Harris also notes, the writing which Burroughs produced in Tangier represented Burroughs' "rediscovery of America's former Frontier condition", the application of the term "frontier" to Tangier itself is problematic.[104] Certainly, Tangier was a "contact zone", in Mary Louise Pratt's re-definition of the "colonial frontier": a "space of colonial encounters" in which "peoples geographically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict."[105] Tangier, in Iain Finlayson's account "one of the oldest settlements in North Africa", was at various points a colonial out-post for the English, French and Spanish.[106] In 1925, it was declared an "International Zone", although it was "still ruled to all intents and purposes by foreign powers ostensibly as protectors but in effect as colonialists."[107] The city, a "free foreign exchange" under its "international administration", was briefly stimulated by the movements of the post-war economy.[108] At this particular point, it also resembled the trans-national capitalist frontier suggested by

Michael Malone. In 1956, however, Tangier broke "the bonds of colonialism", and was re-integrated into Morocco.[109] In Tangier, nationalism won out against trans-national capitalism. When the charter "guaranteeing a free money market" and "unrestricted imports and exports" was abrogated in 1959, foreign capitalists quickly withdrew their money.[110]

As an "International Zone", Tangier was a collision-point between the Old and the New Worlds. Burroughs' correspondence from Tangier records his meetings with the representatives of the European powers. "Believe me", Burroughs wrote to Jack Kerouac, "I have learnt a lot about the Old World in the last few months and none of it is good."[111] Burroughs expressed this contempt in his meeting with a "Portuguese mooch" who hounded him for favours.[112] The "mooch", whose "family is seven hundred years old", and who thinks that "Americans are barbarians"[113], is simultaneously dependent and contemptful for the wealthy Americans who have "come to Europe" to "buy us like cattle." (*Interzone*/99)[114] As Lawdom Vaidon notes in *Tangier: A Different Way* (1977), United States involvement in "Moroccan affairs" had increased in the late 1940s, partially reflecting cold war anxieties, never to be justified, about Russian intentions in the area.[115] The United States based its "Voice of America broadcasting station" to the "south of Tangier", and the thousands of air-men at American bases in French Morocco bought "multi-millions of dollars" into Morocco, some of which found its way into Tangier.[116]

Above all, post-war Tangier was a marketplace, although by the time Burroughs arrived the International Zone was stuck in the depressed aftermath that followed a boom. A few years previously, it had been "full of operators and spenders." (*Interzone*/53) Tangier, as "clearinghouse" to the world's capital, had seen a flow of "currency and merchandise" as the post-war economies began to move. (*Interzone*/54) However, as the "shortages" created by the war had been "supplied", Tangier was left "running down like the dying universe". (*Interzone*/54)[117] "There is", Burroughs wrote to Ginsberg, "an end-

of-the-world feeling in Tangier, with its glut of nylon shirts, Swiss watches, Scotch and sex and opiates sold across the counter. Something sinister in complete *laissez faire*."[118] In the "International Zone", the free play of economic laws was leading inevitably to "ultimate stasis". There was "everything for sale" but "no buyers." It was a "classic, archetypal depression." (*Interzone*/54)[119] Burroughs noted that many of those who entered the International Zone in search of employment, or intending to smuggle goods, were to be disappointed, since there were "no jobs", and "smuggling" was as "overcrowded as any other line." (*Interzone*/52) All Tangier had to offer the visitor, Burroughs concluded, was "low prices and a buyer's market." (*Interzone*/55)

Oliver Harris describes Tangier as a "hybrid neither African nor Western", a "city with many identities and therefore none."[120] In his essay on Tangier, "International Zone", Burroughs emphasised the city's cultural diversity. Burroughs' literary tour of Tangier, for example, begins in the "European Quarter", which contained a mixture of "bogus fugitives" and "genuine political exiles from Europe": "Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany, Republican Spaniards, a selection of Vichy French and other collaborators, fugitive Nazis." (*Interzone*/58-9) Tangier was, as Oliver Harris notes, a "kind of no-man's land", which "attracted" the "displaced personnel" of the world.[121] According to Michelle Green, "almost no one" was "refused entry" to Tangier, and its "free port was dominated by smugglers, gun runners and latter-day pirates".[122] As Green notes, the presence of "such blackguards" only helped to intensify the appeal of Tangier to Burroughs, given his "enduring fascination with the underworld."[123] "Most of them", Burroughs told Ginsberg darkly, "came from some place else for obvious reasons."[124] Burroughs himself was, for equally "obvious reasons", another displaced fugitive "from some place else."[125] To Burroughs, the appeal of Tangier was connected to the city's adherence to the "glorious frontier heritage" of "minding ones own business."[126] At the conclusion of "International Zone", Burroughs noted that Tangier was "one of the few

places left in the world where", short of robbery or violence, "you can do exactly what you want. It is a sanctuary of noninterference." (*Interzone*/59)[127] Burroughs expressed his relief, in his letters to Ginsberg, at being free from "cops and the interfering society they represent": "Living here you feel no weight of disapproving 'others,' no 'they', no *Society*, consequently no resentment."[128]

Closely related to the absence of "disapproving 'others'" was Burroughs' attempt to circumvent his own self-disapproval.[129] Under the influence of yagé, Burroughs had signalled his decision to "give up the attempt to explain, to seek any answer in terms of cause and effect and prediction, to leave behind the entire structure of pragmatic, result seeking [...] Western thought."[130] In a letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated July 1954, Burroughs returned to this theme:

> "'Never worry or think like 'I have to organize this novel, save money, go here or there.' These things will arrange themselves if you do not interfere and let your deepest desires shape circumstances. All that you can do is see that your deepest desires are freed from constraint.[131]

This attempt to let "your deepest desires shape circumstances" was inseparable from the writing Burroughs was producing, since, as Oliver Harris points out, "the autonomy" of Burroughs' writing "depended on the suspension of his inhibiting conscious self and the constructive identity he felt it imposed."[132] In "Letter C", dated 23rd October 1955, Burroughs felt able to declare that he was "progressing towards" a "complete lack of caution and restraint."[133] Initially this breakthrough seemed to concern his writing: "Nothing", Burroughs stated firmly, "must be allowed to dilute my routines.[134] Burroughs, who had initially viewed his new literary form with such anxiety, had begun to enjoy himself. Given Burroughs' observation that routines "were subject to slide over into action at any time", however, it is clear that the "routines" Burroughs was referring to could be as connected to real life as to fiction. (*Interzone*/127) "I know", Burroughs told Ginsberg and Kerouac, "I used to be shy about approaching boys, for example, but I can not remember exactly why."[135]

Burroughs' letters from this period are distinguished by an excited gathering together of unlikely materials, and this particular letter to Ginsberg and Kerouac moves seamlessly from a discussion of uninhibited behavior to a description of the life-cycle of an eel. The key to this sudden switch is Burroughs observation that his "centres of inhibition" had become "atrophied", and here Burroughs links the atrophy of his inhibition to the occlusion of an "eel's ass on The Way to Sargasso".[136] Burroughs

explains his metaphor thus:

> You know about eels? When they reach full maturity, they leave the streams and ponds of Europe traveling downstream to the sea, then cross the Atlantic Ocean to the Sargasso Sea -near Bermuda- where they mate and die. During this perilous journey they stop eating and their assholes seal over. The young eels start back for the fresh water ponds and streams of Europe.[137]

Burroughs was so taken by this piece of biological detail that he considered using it as a title for his "Interzone novel". His excitement is evident as he tries out possible titles: "*Meet Me in Sargasso*, *I'll See You in Sargasso*, *The Sargasso Trail*."[138] What Burroughs wanted to "convey", in his title, was "the *inner* pull towards Sargasso: *Sargasso Yen*, *Sargasso Time*, *Sargasso Kicks*, *The Sargasso Blues*."[139] It seems appropriate that Burroughs should be so affected by the image of the eels' "perilous journey", since it seems to parallel his own, equally perilous journey in significant ways.[140] The journey to Sargasso is a regressive one, "traveling downstream to the sea", back to a place of origin, therefore echoes Burroughs' own regressive search for his own lost point of origin.[141] It is the ambivalence, however, of the journey to Sargasso that is most striking: is it a journey back towards birth, or a journey forwards towards death? The latter possibility is suggested by one sentence in the Sargasso sequence: "Death opens the door of his old green pickup and says to the Hitchhiker: 'You look occluded friend. Going straight through to Sargasso?'"[142] The pull towards death is further suggested by Burroughs' reference to "lampreys", who during mating "tear each other with their suction cups so that they always die afterwards."[143] It cannot simply be concluded, however, that the pull towards Sargasso is a pull towards death, because Sargasso is a site of birth as well as death. Since they "mate and die", the movement of the eels is circular, for the "young eels" head back to "the fresh water ponds" from which their parents had returned. It also seems appropriate that Burroughs, in linking his increasing lack of inhibitions to the journey of the eels, would use the metaphor of the "eel's ass", noting that on their way back to Sargasso the eels "stop eating and their assholes seal over".[144] Freud, in his *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*, identifies the "oral" stage of development as being the "first of the 'pregenital' phases", occurring before the "*sadistic* and *anal*" stage.[145] Read in these terms, the Sargasso sequence, which suggests the occlusion of anality, can be seen as a regression even further back into early infancy, before the anal stage. Burroughs' enthusiasm over the eel's back-tracking journey, juxtaposed as it is with the stated occlusion of his inhibitions, suggests that he experienced Tangier as he had experienced Mexico City: as a zone, free from "disapproving 'others'", in which he could regress to a state of infantile gratification.[146]

Arab Kicks

During Burroughs' stay in Tangier, the city underwent substantial changes. There was increasing unrest in Tangier, centred on the conflict between the colonial powers and nationalist groups. As Michelle Green notes, the 1940s had seen increasing nationalism in "the Spanish and French Protectorates", and to the 105,000 Moroccan inhabitants of Tangier, the "seaport symbolized a foreign domination that was increasingly

oppressive."[147] In October 1956, Tangier lost its international status.[148] Since, as Green observes, "Europeans held the reins" in Tangier prior to the loss of international status, a "disgruntled foreigner could slap a native policeman and simply walk away."[149] Burroughs also noted this license for the moneyed foreigner, and liked it. Despite his assertion that "you are not a foreigner" in Tangier, which meant "you have the same rights as anybody", he also noted that, in practice, the "cops usually side with an American."[150] Indeed, the cops "had orders not to bother us except, of course, if caught in commission of some major crime."[151] Burroughs' correspondence also described the "unrest" in Morocco: "Last riot in Tanger was in '52; twelve Arabs were killed by the police, and an unfortunate Swiss tourist was torn to pieces by the Arab mob under the misapprehension he was French."[152]

Burroughs' view of the Arabian population of Tangier was not dissimilar to his view of the Auca: they were a screen on which Burroughs could project his own violent and self-annihilatory fantasies.[153] Watching some "Arabs at a table", for example, Burroughs imagined, in a letter to Ginsberg, that they "suddenly [...] have seized me" and "are preparing to castrate me? It can't happen ... must be a dream .."[154] Earlier, Burroughs had imagined himself "on the red tile floor" of a "café, with a knife in my kidney", having provoked another "table of Arabs" by staring at them.[155] "Not", Burroughs added," that I ever look for or want any kind of fight".[156] These encounters were conducted in Burroughs' imagination: the "knife-fight potential" was just that, an imaginative possibility, "one facet of the moment".[157] This imaginary proximity to danger and death, however, brought with it a heightened sense of life: Burroughs claimed he felt "completely alive in the moment".[158] Read as the phantom projections of Burroughs' unconscious, Arabs also featured as dark, savage forces, which had to be violently repudiated. Burroughs recorded a "vivid nightmare" in a letter to Ginsberg in May 1956, which he attributed to the effects of the "early" stages of "withdrawal":

> North Africa, ten (?) years from now. A vast rubbish heap. Blue sky and hot sun. Smell of hunger and death. Smoke of petrol fires in the distance. Dave Lamont walking beside me carrying a can of gasoline [...] We meet five Arabs. I see the eyes of the Arab in front and say to Dave: 'Throw the petrol on them and light it! Its our only chance.' Two Arabs down, covered with burning petrol [...] Other Arabs coming up. We won't make it. My leg is covered with petrol. My leg is part of the dump heap. When I try to move it, broken bottles and tin cans and rusty wire cut into the flesh. Someone screaming in my ear.[159]

This dream signals a violent fear of collapsing distinctions between self and racial other: the protagonist is being integrated against his will into the "dump heap" associated with the "Arabs", and with his own leg "covered with petrol" he can no longer defend himself.[160] The close proximity of the "screaming" with which the dream concludes coincides with the fear of being surrounded by the Arabs, and suggests an unspecified, but malevolent, force.[161] This dream was later incorporated into the "Atrophied Preface" of *Naked Lunch*, with the "Arabs" replaced by "a group of natives", with "flat two-dimensional faces of scavenger fish." (*Naked Lunch*/183)[162]

As part of a discussion, in a letter to Ginsberg dated September 1956, of the Arabian population of Tripoli, Burroughs claimed that living "in Arab territory" was "like living in the cyclone belt":

> You see Arabs - pronounced A-rabs - is bad to riot. You don't have to mind one A-rab or like a small group, but let a thousand of them connive together and wig collective, they can really come on evil.[163]

Burroughs was quite taken, however, with the concept of the "jihad", the "wholesale slaughter by every Moslem of every unbeliever."[164] He found the "chaos in Morocco" to be "beautiful"[165], and the "possibility of an all-out riot" to be "like a tonic, like ozone in the air."[166] Burroughs made no effort to disguise his excitement at the oncoming Jihad. "Really, rioting must be the greatest", he told Ginsberg, "like snap, *wow*."[167] Noting that the Arabs laughed as they rioted, Burroughs formulated his own Freudian interpretation of the "jihad":

> We laugh when anxiety is aroused and then abruptly relieved. Now a riot is, for the participants a classical anxiety situation: that is the complete surrender of control to the id. But the surrender is condoned: laughter.[168]

Laughter, with this facility of condoning the "surrender of control to the id" was also central to Burroughs' routines.[169] In his eagerness to join the festivities, Burroughs began his own fictionalised Jihad: "I hereby declares the all-out massacre of everybody by

everybody else ... Let it Be ... [...] All police protection suspended from the world. All frontiers open ... "[170] Indeed, in a letter to Ginsberg, Burroughs wrote a series of routines, the "Jihad jitters", based on these eruptions of violence.[171] Burroughs' use of Freudian theory in describing the Jihad also clarifies his distinctly non-Freudian intentions: the appeal of the "Jihad", and of laughter and of his routines, was this brief, but "complete", "surrender of control to the id."[172]

The October 1955 cycle of letters, "A", "B" and "C", were marked by Burroughs' increased receptivity to the indigenous population of Tangier. Previously, Burroughs had dismissed the Arabs as "a gabby, gossipy simple-minded, lazy crew of citizens."[173] In the exuberance of "Letter C", however, Burroughs announced to Ginsberg that he was beginning to "dig Arab kicks. It takes time. You must let them seep into you [...]"[174] Symptomatic of Burroughs' improving relationship with Arabian culture was his reaction to Arabian music. As he noted in "International Zone", on first hearing a Westerner finds the music "meaningless", since he is "listening for a time structure that isn't there." (*Interzone*/58) In fact, Arabian music has "no beginning or end": it is "timeless." (*Interzone*/58) Burroughs noted a similar timelessness in the everyday life of a "typical Arabian café". (*Interzone*/57) Again, it is useful to compare Burroughs' initial reactions and his later revisions. In an early letter sent from Tangier, Burroughs wrote: "I know what Arabs do all day and all night. They sit around smoking cut weed and playing some silly card game."[175] In "International Zone", however, Burroughs had a somewhat more positive interpretation of Arabian café life: "Fights start, stop, people walk around, play cards, smoke *kief*, all in a vast timeless dream." (*Interzone*/58) Burroughs related this sense of timelessness to a conversation he had with an "American psychoanalyst", who claimed that the "superego structure" of an Arab was "basically different" from that of a Westerner. (*Interzone*/58) "Perhaps", Burroughs speculated, "you can't complete analysis with an Arab because he has no sense of time." (*Interzone*/58) Timelessness is also

linked to the Arab's drug of choice, hashish, which alters the Westerner's perception of time as an inexorable linear movement, so that events "take on a simultaneous quality, the past and the future contained in the present moment." (*Interzone*/58)

The extent to which Burroughs' Western perspectives had been shifted is suggested by his stated ambition to represent that simultaneity in writing. In "Lee's Journal", Lee writes of constructing a "novel" without "a beginning or an end", that "just runs along for a while and then stops, like Arab music." (*Interzone*/73) Indeed, Arabian music provided the soundtrack to the writing of *Naked Lunch*. Douglas Kahn notes that Burroughs worked in his room in Tangier in the company of "three off-tuned radios blaring static", though a glance at the opening to "Word" suggests his "1920s crystal set" was often tuned into "Radio Cairo", which is described as "screaming like a berserk tobacco auction". (*Interzone*/136).[176] Echoing the lack of "beginning" or "end" in Arabian music, Burroughs wrote a note to Ginsberg at the top of the first letter he wrote in 1955 telling Ginsberg that, in reading the letter, he could start "anyplace" he wanted: "Start in the middle and read your way out. In short, start anywhere."[177] This non-linear approach to letter-writing would also be applied, in time, to a novel: "You can cut into *Naked Lunch*", Burroughs would tell his reader, "at any intersection point ...." (*Naked Lunch*/176)

The first letter in Burroughs' 1955 three letter sequence, known as "Letter A", was published in *Interzone* as part of the "Ginsberg Notes" section.[178]" Letter A voices Burroughs' dissatisfaction with the novel form, which is described as being "dead [...] rigid and arbitrary." (*Interzone*/126) The form which Burroughs was gradually adopting was the "mosaic form", which, as Oliver Harris notes, "posed inevitable aesthetic questions about his medium".[179] The problem, as Burroughs recognised, was that the mosaic method was, traditionally, a primarily visual form. In describing his new work, Burroughs, therefore, was forced to resort to visual images: the disparate chapters would be juxtaposed, like "objects in a hotel drawer", and they would resemble a "form of still

life." (*Interzone*/126) A painting, however, could be seen "as a whole." (*Interzone*/126) A novel, in its conventional form, forced its reader to concentrate on one thing at a time. This distinction was vital, since Burroughs was attempting to express, through writing, the "simultaneity of past, present and emergent future." (*Interzone*/128) His only available method was to write with "endless parenthesis", which could suggest, through their juxtaposition, something of this simultaneity. (*Interzone*/128)

The terms which Burroughs employs here, simultaneity and wholeness as opposed to partial and temporal perspectives, relate back to the "Composite City" sequence Burroughs had produced in a "delayed reaction" to yagé.[180] In *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*, Michael Taussig suggests a link between the effects of yagé intoxication and the effects of the montage technique. The yagé night, in Taussig's account, parallels the "ability of montage to provoke sudden and infinite connections between dissimilars in an endless or almost endless process of connection-making and connection-breaking."[181] The "sudden scene changing" caused by yagé "breaks up any attempt at narrative ordering".[182] The "Composite City" had re-presented the temporal narrative of Burroughs' correspondence in spatial form, events recorded in Burroughs' previous letters being montaged with other events from other temporal perspectives. In a letter to Ginsberg in July 1953, Burroughs had observed a "lunatic" who had "harangued the owner" of a "Chinese restaurant" in Tingo María.[183] The "owner sat there picking his teeth", showing "neither contempt nor amusement nor sympathy."[184] In a letter dated March, 1953, Burroughs noted his meeting with the "Chief of Police" in Mocoa, who had resolved Burroughs' problems with a wrongly-dated tourist card.[185] In the "Composite City", the Chinese restaurant owner is transformed, in a juxtaposition of these two temporally separate observations, into a "Chief of Police" who "picks his teeth and listens to denunciations presented by a lunatic."[186] This spatialisation of a temporal narrative prefigures the cut-up "I am Dying Meester?", with which *The Yage Letters* concludes.

In "Letter B", Burroughs described the "writing" he was producing as "painful", explaining that the parentheses, which were intended to represent simultaneity, "pounce on me and tear me apart."[187] It is a curious image, the author assaulted by his own text, but an appropriate one, since easy distinctions between the 'fictional' work and the 'real' author were becoming increasingly confused. In "Letter A", for example, Burroughs claimed to be writing from a bed in the "Hassan Hospital of Interzone", where he was undergoing his "tenth or eleventh" cure. (*Interzone*/124) The confusion generated here between 'reality', a hospital in Tangier, and 'fiction', the "Hassan Hospital in Interzone", is important. (*Interzone*/124) Burroughs had previously made the connection between Tangier and Interzone, but from this point on in Burroughs' letters, Tangier is Interzone. The "*author*" was being included "*in the novel*", and the novel was being included in the author's life.[188] Burroughs also signalled, in "Letter B", his intention to use his own correspondence in "Chapter II" of his new work, which was to be titled "*Selections from Lee's Letters and Journals*."[189] This decision did not mark Burroughs' first fictional employment of his correspondence. While Ginsberg claims that both "*Junky* and *Yage*" had been "composed" from Burroughs' "epistles", it was with Burroughs' yagé letters that the boundaries between the private sphere of the letter, and the public sphere of the published work, were first broached in earnest.[190] As Oliver Harris points out, "much of the material published as 'fiction'" in *The Yage Letters*, the "cumulative, cutting comedy" of the book's "anthropological, political and erotic anecdotes", were "original to the actual letters."[191] They were already signed with the penname of Burroughs' fictional protagonist, rather than with the author's own name: "Willy Lee".[192] Such signs of fictionalisation suggests, as Harris notes, that "these are more than a writer's letters; they are a major part of the writing itself."[193]

That Burroughs signed his own personal letters with his fictional pen-name suggest a profound confusion between author and protagonist. However, Burroughs' writings

from the early period of his Tangier stay clarify that the use of his protagonist, Lee, involved considerable detachment as well as identification. In a letter that was itself later expropriated into "Extract's from Lee's Journals and Letters" and published in *Early Routines* (1981), Burroughs noted the "separation of 'the author, Lee'" from himself, so that Lee "becomes another character, central to be sure, occupying a special position but not myself at all".[194] Burroughs added: "This could go on in a endless serial arrangement, but I would always be the observer and not the participant by the very act of writing about a figure who represents myself."[195] Therefore, 'Lee' was to be included within the text as "author", but 'Burroughs', the "observer", remained separate, watching his "author" writing.[196] As Oliver Harris notes, alongside the adoption of the "oblique aesthetic" of the mosaic form, this detached perspective "sanctioned moral and emotional detachment from his material."[197] Harris also observes that by conceiving this "infinite regress of elusive substitutes as a part of the structural solution to his work",[198] Burroughs prefigured his later identification, in his essay "Kerouac", of the writer as a "spy in somebody else's body".[199] The writer himself, the "observer", therefore becomes "anonymous", without a name and without a past.[200]

Burroughs had described Adrian Scudder, the protagonist of the "great, gloomy, soul-searching homosexual novel" he had planned in April 1954, as being "without context, of no class and no place."[201] This denial of context would lead to the later identification, in the "Atrophied Preface" of *Naked Lunch*, of the narrator as a "recording instrument", who can only record "*what is in front of his senses at the moment of writing*." (*Naked Lunch*/174) However, this detachment was paradoxical. At one level, by presenting an "infinite" series of "elusive substitutes" for himself, Burroughs was refusing, or was being refused, a single locus of identity: the 'real' William Burroughs.[202] In the same letter in which Burroughs introduced Adrian Scudder and his "gloomy" novel, Burroughs had bemoaned his inability to "achieve complete sincerity".[203]

Burroughs compared that inability to his short-lived fictional protagonist Scudder, who was described as a "fractured spirit".[204] This fracture suggests the absence, related here to both author and protagonist, of an identity that could cohere into a single, and sincere self. Burroughs also voiced an important exception to this failure, however: "in parody and moments of profound discouragement" he could achieve sincerity. The second exception suggests the extraordinary power of grief to unify, however briefly, the self, but the first exception is markedly different. Parody, which presupposes an inauthentic and de-centred voice quite distant from the voice expressing deep and sincere sadness, provided Burroughs with means to regain his "fractured" sincerity. The lack of a singular presence inherent to the use of parody also characterised the montage techniques Burroughs was beginning to apply: in "The Market" section of *Naked Lunch* the narrator, notes that the "word cannot be expressed direct", an observation which suggests that language prevents direct experience of the world. (*Naked Lunch*/98) However, the narrator also adds that the "word" can "perhaps be indicated by mosaic of juxtaposition like articles abandoned in a hotel drawer", the same image used to signal his adoption of montage techniques. These various objects are "defined" not by the their presence" but "by negatives and absence". (*Naked Lunch*/98)

Paradoxically, therefore, while Burroughs was incorporating material from his own "letters", even his "love letters", into "*Selections from Lee's Journal and Letters*", his aim, aided by the montage technique he was developing, was not to directly present autobiographical material, but to achieve his own absence, as a singular identity, from that material.[205] However, the author's absence, and the presence instead of a "series of elusive substitutes", while they represented the unrealisable "desire to possess the entirety of himself", also provided the author with what Arnold Weinstein describes as a "second best" alternative to that desire: he "can make himself visible by making himself absent; he can see his life by seeing the *trace* it leaves."[206] Therefore, the "series of elusive

substitutes", the hall of mirrors reflecting many different Lees, are all, and are all not, William Burroughs, since only the "*trace*" of his presence remains.[207]

III Interzone, 1956-1957

Although *Naked Lunch* does not continue the picaresque structure of Burroughs' earlier writings, it does sporadically register the traces of its author's picaresque adventures. While Burroughs was in Tangier from 1954 to 1957, he did leave Tangier on two key occasions. In 1956, Burroughs went to London to take the apomorphine cure for his addiction, and then went on to Venice to stay with Alan Ansen. At this point, Burroughs briefly considered another writing project: a "nightmare tour of Europe entitled THE GRAND TOUR-(HELL IS WHERE YOUR ASS IS).[208] However, the primary importance of this first trip to the Old World was the rejuvenation it brought to the author. In answer to Victor Bockris' question "When did you write *Naked Lunch*?", Burroughs replied with an anecdote concerning his attempts to re-cross the border from Libya into Morocco following his trip to Venice, an account which stresses the importance of this geographical border-crossing. Burroughs recalls that he went to the Libyan American Express, and was told he needed an "exit visa", but after failing to find the "official" who dispensed these visas, he went to the border without one, and was able to cross back into Tangier without further unnecessary delay.[209] In Burroughs' remembrance, it was on his return to Tangier that the writing of *Naked Lunch* began in earnest, using the notes he had made in "Scandinavia, Venice, and Tangier previously."[210]

The Dream City

Linked to this geographic journey from Tangier to London to Tangier was the physiological journey from addiction to withdrawal to pre-junk stabilization. Burroughs underwent withdrawal in London, and returned to Tangier claiming to be "*metabolically* cured" by the apomorphine treatment.[211] Reading over his own letters prior to his cure, for the "Introduction" to *Letters to Allen Ginsberg*, Burroughs was "forcefully reminded of de

Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*," in which de Quincey describes the "gloom, the oppression and feeling of death, brought on by heavy overdosage: 'like I was buried in a stone coffin in Neolithic mud'."[212] Echoing Lee's transition from the "insulation of junk to the land of the living like a frantic inept Lazarus", Burroughs' correspondence from September 1956 to March 1957 record his return to the world, and a period of "frantic" creativity. (*Queer*/12) As Oliver Harris writes, this time the cure "meant rebirth", and Burroughs returned to Tangier somehow different.[213]

Burroughs told Ginsberg that he had "entered a period of change more drastic than adolescence or early childhood. I live in a constant state of routine. I am getting so far out one day I won't come back at all [...]"[214] Burroughs' responses to Tangier were vital to that "period of change".[215] In October 1956, Burroughs described Tangier as his "dream town".[216] He recalled a "dream ten years ago of coming into a harbour and knowing that this was the place that I desired to be [...] Just the other day, rowing around in the harbour, I recognised it as my 'dream bay'".[217] Like Mexico, Tangier had a dream-like quality. Burroughs described it as "a dream extending from the past into the future, a frontier between dream and reality - the 'reality' of both called into question."[218] "No one here", he added, "is what they seem on the surface."[219] "The meaning of Interzone, its space-time location", he explained, "is at a point where three-dimensional fact merges into dream, and dreams erupt into the real world [...] In Interzone, dreams can kill [...] and solid objects can be unreal as dreams [...]"[220] The already somewhat blurred distinctions between dream and reality, or the literal and the metaphorical, at this stage collapsed even further for Burroughs, leaving him in a "constant state of routine",[221] in which there was "no line between 'real world' and 'world of myth and symbol'" (*Interzone*/128) "Objects" and "sensations" were experienced with the "impact of hallucination". (*Interzone*/128) Importantly, Burroughs again expressed his new perspective in the language of resurrection: "I see now", he explained, with the "Lazarus

eyes of return from the gray limbo of junk". (*Interzone*/128) Burroughs linked this "Lazarus"-like "return" with the ability to "see with the child's eyes", as if he had returned to a prior state of innocence and vision, associated with childhood. (*Interzone*/128)[222]

It was on his walks around Tangier that Burroughs' revelations often came upon him, leaving him feeling "swamped with material".[223] Sitting in an "Arab Café", for example, watching "a glass of mint tea on a bamboo mat in the sun, the steam blown back into the glass top like smoke from a chimney", Burroughs felt the glass had a "special significance like an object spotted in a movie."[224] This sense of the world has little or nothing in common with traditional Western "either-or" thinking, whereby "object" and "symbol", or the "spiritual" and the "commonplace" are defined as opposites.[225] To a native American, the Western separation of object and symbol seems incomprehensible. For example, in an essay titled "The Meaning of Everyday Objects", included in *Symposium of the Whole* (1983), the Sioux medicine man, Lame Deer, describes "an ordinary old cooking pot, black with soot" in a way that echoes Burroughs' "glass of mint tea".[226] The cooking pot is "standing on the fire on top of that old wood stove, and the water bubbles and moves the lid [...]".[227] While the pot "doesn't seem to have a message", to the Sioux Indian, the "everyday things" are "mixed up with the spiritual", since they inhabit "a world of symbols and images where the spiritual and the commonplace are one."[228]

As Richard Slotkin suggests, white America had broken this connection to the "mythopoeic pole of the myth-making process".[229] Burroughs himself noted that the "contact with the myth that gives each man the ability to live alone and unites him with all other life" had been "cut off." (*Interzone*/108) In the opening section of *Naked Lunch*, Burroughs described a "Federal Nut House", which had been "specially designed for the containment of ghosts". (*Naked Lunch*/22) In the cell, which serves as a microcosm of deadened America, there is only the "precise, prosaic image of objects ...", the "washstand

... door ... toilet ... bars ... there they are ... this is it ... all lines cut ... nothing beyond ... Dead End ... And the Dead End in every face ...." (*Naked Lunch*/22) By contrast, in Interzone, the fourth dimension continually broke through, and the "very exaggeration of the routine", Burroughs' special form, was "intended to create this feeling."[230] In representing this dream world, Burroughs allowed his narrative to be entirely distorted by the logic of dreams, mutating from location to location, identity to identity like a fevered nightmare.[231] Burroughs' writing, his letters included, became more and more fragmentary, constructed from shards of sentences densely packed together. In a particularly fragmentary letter to Allen Ginsberg, Burroughs compared his missive to the utterances of the "Drunken Newscaster",[232] a reference to a tape Burroughs had heard that was "made by scrambling news broadcasts".[233] As Oliver Harris notes, this audio cut-up tape prefigured both Burroughs' "fragmentary routines" and his later "cut-up methods."[234] The problem with this level of fragmentation was its unintelligibility: Burroughs imagined the readers of his letter sighing, "At last, a sentence I can read..."[235]

The writing that Burroughs produced in Tangier moved decisively, to use Julia Kristeva's distinction, away from the Symbolic mode and towards the Semiotic. In Susan Stanford Friedman's précis of Kristeva's work, Kristeva argues that texts are a "dynamic site of dialectical interplay" between what she terms the Semiotic and Symbolic "modalities of language."[236] Following Jacques Lacan, Kristeva links the Symbolic with the oedipal stage, in which the child is ushered into a "realm of signification, governed by the 'Law of the Father'".[237] Texts that "foreground the Symbolic" therefore foreground "signification, linearity and causality."[238] The Semiotic is the "trace" of the "pre-Oedipal stage" which remains "largely unconscious" in both the psyche of the individual and within a literary text.[239] The Semiotic modality of language is characterized as a kind of "rhythmic space", and a text which is primarily Semiotic "lacks boundaries, temporality, spatiality, and causality", and instead foregrounds "sound, rhythm, repetition, movement,

color and waves of desire", qualities that are "anterior to signification."[240] Tangier fitted perfectly as the location for this uprising of the Semiotic, for, as Oliver Harris notes, the city had a "contrary quality" of its own, with its "artificially dense cultural juxtapositions," and its "fragmented expatriate society."[241] "A city so cosmopolitan, yet so small", Tangier "could almost shut out the individual past, but not quite sustain the present or build a future."[242] Like the Semiotic text, it lacked "boundaries, temporality, spatiality and casaulity."[243] In psychoanalytical terms, Tangier, the "dream town", served as a substitute for the lost mother, a reconnection to the hallucinatory creativity of the pre-oedipal stage.[244]

Burroughs' use of majoun, "hash" taken with "hot tea", also contributed to the hallucinatory creativity of this period of his writing.[245] As Catherine Stimpsom notes, Burroughs, like "other citizens of the drug culture", "feminized drugs and labeled marijuana 'Miss Green.'"[246] "Miss Green" is, Stimpsom continues, "unpredictable and sexy, an alluring *femme fatale* of altered consciousness". Burroughs writes of "Miss Green" in strikingly maternal terms. He describes, for example, the "curious illusion I get lately when I am a little lushed and swing on Miss Green's unnatural tit."[247] This "curious illusion" suggests the fecund creative powers of "Miss Green", since it concerns the feeling that "there is a Third Man in the room".[248] In his "Literary Autobiography", Burroughs claims to have taken majoun "every day" during this period, and admits that he "certainly would not have achieved what I did achieve without."[249] However, in his correspondence, Burroughs is often dismissive of "Miss Green", describing her as "that ubiquitous old voyeur bitch".[250] Burroughs also continued to feminize "junk". In "Ginsberg Notes", Lee links his desire to "leave" behind the "safe, warm place of junk" to a negro song about an "old spade" who wants to "go north for better pay" even though his wife, "Dinah", "begs" him not to. (*Interzone*/126) "Dinah", the wife who must be left behind, is described as Lee's "cellular representative of junk." (*Interzone*/126)

While Burroughs was happy to "swing on Miss Green's unnatural tit", the representations of actual women in his correspondence and writings from this period were often violently repudiatory.[251] In his essay on Tangier, "International Zone", Burroughs had noted how Arabian women were made to "carry huge loads of charcoal down from the mountains on their backs", while the men rode "on donkeys." (*Interzone*/56) He concluded that there was "no mistaking the position of women in this society." (*Interzone*/56) Burroughs gives no indication in his essay that he approved of this division of labour, but the representations of women in Burroughs' own "International Zone", as fictionalised in *Naked Lunch*, were also unrelentingly negative. In the "Hassan's Rumpus Room" section of *Naked Lunch*, for example, the "copulating rhythm of the universe" is described as flowing "through the room", providing a "moment of stillness and wonder." (*Naked Lunch*/74) Here is the cosmic energy of the Reichian orgone in all its glory.[252] However, the "great blue tide of life" brings with it not transcendence but a "horde of lust-mad American women", whom A.J., Burroughs' trickster figure, "begins decapitating" with a "cutlass", before bringing on "a thousand rutting Eskimos" to dispose of them. (*Naked Lunch*/75)[253] There are recurrent images of violence towards women in *Naked Lunch*: "Mary the Lesbian governess" is trampled to death by a "three-hundred pound fag" (*Naked Lunch*/106-7), a "young landlubber dons a southwester" and "beats his wife to death in the shower" (*Naked Lunch*/109), and Lucy Bradshinkel is cooked and eaten. (*Naked Lunch*/108-9)

Naked Lunch, then, continually enacts the violent suppression of women, consigning the female species to a darkened lower realm, from which they intermittently rise. However, the relation to the feminine in *Naked Lunch* is more complicated than this recurrent suppression might suggest. It has already been noted that Lee's routines in *Queer*, and his attempts to merge with Allerton, were, in part, an attempt to reestablish a relationship to the lost mother. It has also been noted that, during the writing of the

material in *Interzone* and *Naked Lunch*, Burroughs' need for a "receiver" for his "routines" was transferred from Allerton to Ginsberg.[254] In his Introduction to *Letters to Allen Ginsberg*, titled "Recollections of Burroughs Letters", Ginsberg described how Burroughs threatened to "'schlup' with me, i.e. devour my soul parasitically, as Bradley the Buyer does to the District Supervisor in *Naked Lunch*."[255] According to Ginsberg, many of the "routines" in *Naked Lunch* were "projections of Burroughs' love fantasies": "explanations and parodies and models of our ideal love schlupp together."[256] Ginsberg also notes, with regret, that Burroughs "censored" the "most extravagant passages, abject letters of complete schlupp-longing": some "lines blue-penciled", and a "few pages irrecoverably burnt."[257] Despite the attempt to cover up its author's extraordinary need for love, *Naked Lunch* still betrays that need, as Ginsberg suggests, in its recurrent return to the image of the "schlupp".[258]

As Robin Lydenberg observes, Burroughs in *Naked Lunch* seems to "escape the tyranny of the mother by appropriating her maternal and reproductive power for himself."[259] The beginnings of this process has already been noted: the naming of the Burroughs protagonist as "William Lee", Lee being Burroughs' mother's name. There were other emerging signs of Burroughs' maternal aspect throughout the writing of *Naked Lunch*. Sometimes, this appropriation of the mother's role is gleeful: in his letters to Ginsberg, for example, Burroughs began presenting himself as "Ma Lee"[260] In the "Hospital" sequence, Lee notices that the room that he had been "moved [...] out of yesterday" was now occupied by a "Maternity case". (*Naked Lunch*/60) He imagines that if someone came to visit him in his old room, they would "think I gave birth to a monster and the State Department is trying to hush it up..." (*Naked Lunch*/60) However, the relationship to the maternal sphere is unstable. In "Word", for example, there is a condensed rewriting of Melville's *Billy Budd*, in which Captain Vere "cannot find words" to express his disgust at the "foul and an unnatural act whereby a boy's mother take over

his body, infiltrate her horrible old substance right onto a decent boat". (*Interzone*/150) Here, the mother is an unwelcome presence. In the original *Billy Budd*, Vere defended his decision to hang Billy by asserting that, in judging him, the "heart", the "feminine in man", "must here be ruled out."[261] Similarly, in a letter to Ginsberg, written in January 1957, Burroughs identified himself as a "Modern Oedipus", and announced, in a Freudian repudiation of femininity, that he intended to "put down the old whore".[262]

As Robin Lydenberg observes, there is an "intimate link" in Burroughs' writing between "the maternal body and language".[263] In the "Benway" section of *Naked Lunch*, for example, the fear, often voiced by Burroughs, of being overwhelmed by his routines, is linked explicitly to the mother. The densely phrased sequence is best quoted in full:

> He turns into a Rock and Roll hoodlum: "I screw the old gash - like a crossword puzzle what relation to me is the outcome if it outcome? My father already or not yet? I can't screw you, Jack, you is about to become my father, and twere better to cut your throat and screw my mother playing it straight than fuck my father or *vice versa mutatis mutandis* as the case may be, and cut my mother's throat, that sainted gash, though it be the best way I know to stem her word horde and freeze her asset [...] (*Naked Lunch*/44-5)

Writing is represented here as an act of incest with the mother: to "screw the old gash". (*Naked Lunch*/44) As Kristeva writes in *Powers of Horror*, "writing causes the subject who ventures in it to confront an archaic authority", an authority whose "maternal connotations" Kristeva finds inescapable.[264] Further, writing is also related to the act of giving birth: that is, to become the Mother by usurping her procreative role. As Lydenberg goes on to point out, in the "Atrophied Preface" section of *Naked Lunch* Burroughs as author "claims for himself the 'word horde' which he has associated with the ambivalently revered and despised maternal figure"[265]: "Now I, William Seward, will unlock my word horde .... "(*Naked Lunch*/180) The paternal name "Burroughs" is strikingly absent here. The act of writing, however, leads into Kristeva's Symbolic realm, the realm of the Word, the Father. Hence the confusion: "My father already or not yet?" (*Naked Lunch*/44) The author, then, by his act of incest with the Mother, has given birth

to the Father, the Word. To give birth to the Word is to enter the realm of differentiation, and in particular, gender differentiation. This notion is densely expressed in the following phrase: "Male and female castrated he them." (*Naked Lunch*/44) The reference is, of course, to Genesis: "So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."[266] The implication, as Lydenberg notes, is that the "definition of sexual difference as binary opposition" serves as a form of "castration, a dismemberment or decapitation" that "disenfranchises both sexes."[267] The concept of God being evoked here is intimately related to language, since, as Burroughs notes in his essay "On Coincidence": "In the beginning was the word and the word *was* God."[268] As a writer, then, Burroughs is doomed to give birth to that which castrates him: the differentiation inherent in language.

Two possible solutions to this dilemma are offered in the "Rock and Roll hoodlum" sequence. The first is to symbolically kill the mother, to "cut" her "throat". (*Naked Lunch*/44) This would stem the initial source of the "word horde", but as Burroughs had found out, without the "word horde" of his routines, his life had become a "chronic nightmare"[269]. The second solution is to "cut" the "throat" of the father. (*Naked Lunch*/44) In the context of this passage, to cut the father's throat would mean to violate the text, to "fuck" the paternal "masterpiece", in order to break down its binary oppositions. (*Naked Lunch*/44) This is the preferred option, and it is the strategy that we can see at work throughout the text of *Naked Lunch*, in its disregard for continuity, and its disruption of conventional syntax. This strategy would reach its logical conclusion with Burroughs' adoption of the cut-up technique.

Ontological Frontiers

While Burroughs described Tangier as his "dream town",[270] and as a "frontier between dream and reality", and he also noted that this juxtaposition of "dream" and

"reality" called "the 'reality' of both" into "question".[271] Burroughs' creative transformation of Tangier into Interzone, which drew on these uncertainties about levels of reality, created an ontological frontier zone, a meeting point for mutually exclusive reality structures. In *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987), Brian McHale, defining an "ontological" space, quotes Foucault's definition of the "heterotopia": the "disorder in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry".[272] In this "heterotopia", it becomes "impossible to find a place of residence" for these "fragments", to "define a *common locus* beneath them all".[273] Heterotopias, Foucault continues, are "disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, because they destroy syntax in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and opposite to one another) to 'hold together.'"[274] In McHale's gloss on Foucault's definition, the heterotopia "violates the law of the excluded middle", making it impossible to draw one conclusion or another.[275]

As Oliver Harris points out, the crossing of "geographical frontiers" is often closely associated in Burroughs' writing with the crossing of "ontological borders".[276] In "Lee's Journals", there is an unfinished story about a man who takes the wrong passport out of a Turkish bath in the Russian zone of Vienna, and is "arrested and deported to Budapest, or somewhere far beyond the Iron Curtain." (*Interzone*/79) The story reflects the profound political importance of borders in the Cold War period, and relates the crossing of borders to the transition between psychological states of mind. However, its status as unfinished fragment suggests its author's sense of its limitations. The main character, Martin, has his "centres of caution" anesthetized by a series of brandies in a Vienna bar, and imagines the "warm embrace of steam, letting go, liquefying like an amoeba, dissolving in warmth and comfort and desire." (*Interzone*/78) Succumbing to his pleasure-seeking instincts leads Martin to lose his conventional identity, as symbolized by the passport. In a foreign

country, he learns "a new kind of freedom": "the freedom of living in continual tension and fear to the limits of his inner fear and tension, so the pressure was at least equalized, and for the first time he knew the meaning of complete relaxation, complete pleasure in the moment." (*Interzone*/79) This feeling of being "alive with his whole being" echoes Burroughs' claim to feel "completely alive in the moment" when fantasising about knife-fights in Arab cafés.[277] However, Martin is pursued: he hears steps on the stairs, and heads up to the roof. Here the narrative ends, with the decision to "*jump*" from the roof, and the sign-off line: "To be continued". (*Interzone*/80)

Given the reference in the story to the "two strangers" pursuing Martin, this brief narrative reprises the psychological dynamic set up in the "Chandler-style straight action story", in which the "2 detectives", representatives of the "conditioning forces that perpetuate submission to the reality principle", "come to arrest me."[278] However, as Oliver Harris notes, the "terminal narrative crisis" at the close of the story leaves the protagonist, and the reader, "awaiting entry into a new dimension, on the far side of its literal Zone and curtain."[279] Literally, the story does not lead anywhere. In terms of narrative, and in terms of ontological status, the story is defined by the pursuit of the "2 detectives".[280] As Oliver Harris notes, however, Burroughs "constantly returned to variations" on this "detective narrative," with its "Kafka-esque model".[281] Martin's story was "continued" in a brief sketch, "The Dream Cops", later included in *Interzone*. "The Dream Cops" features the ubiquitous two detectives, a "vaudeville-house detective" and a "plainclothesman", who burst into the room of the "Agent". (*Interzone*/104) The two detectives are nightmare figures of sexual anxiety: they examine "the Agent's penis". (*Interzone*/104) One of the detectives flourishes a "ten inch" cigar, which the Agent dismisses as a "dream cigar", and therefore also dismisses the detectives as unreal phantoms: "You can't touch me." (*Interzone*/104) However, when the Agent wakes up, he finds a "gold filling" left by one of the detectives, a final touch which questions the Agent's ontological certainties

about the distinction between dream and reality. (*Interzone*/105) As Burroughs had told Ginsberg, in Interzone "dreams can kill", and "solid objects can be unreal as dreams".[282]

To transform short fragments such as these into a complete work, Burroughs needed a location which enacted, rather than suggested, this ontological uncertainty. Burroughs' transformation of "Tangier" into "Interzone" was a vital part of this transformation. The name "Interzone" suggests its close connection with Tangier. Before leaving for Tangier, Burroughs had read Paul Bowles' *Let It Come Down* (1952), in which Tangier is evoked as an "International Zone", a "counterfeit" environment, a "waiting room between connections. a transition from one way of being to another".[283] As Oliver Harris suggests, Burroughs' Interzone shares with Bowles' "International Zone" the status of a location in which "the anarchic forces of the unconscious" break through "the restrictive layers of Western acculturation to challenge the certainties of imposed moral dualism."[284] The brief, modest sketch of Tangier life, a "Letter from Tangier", that Burroughs had written in January 1954, also borrowed its title from Bowles' depiction of the "International Zone."[285] Interzone does bear some resemblance to Tangier. Interzone has a political system partly derived from the conflict in Tangier between nationalism and the colonial powers. In the "Ordinary Men and Women" section of *Naked Lunch*, for example, the "Party Leader" of the "Nationalist Party" attempts to convince a "street boy" that the "French [...] Colonial bastards" are "sucking your live corpuscles." (*Naked Lunch*/102) In an early description of his "work in progress", Burroughs had evoked "vast Kafkian conspiracies", in which agents "continually infiltrate" to work for the "other side" and "rarely know which side they are working on".[286] The political confusion of Tangier was certainly not inimical to this Kafkaesque vision. In a letter dated November 1955, Burroughs wrote of Tangier that: "No one here is what they seem on the surface", giving the example of his "last doctor", who had pretended to "radiate high class Jewish honesty", but in fact was a "Collaborator who got out of Strasbourg just ahead of the

French Partisans".[287] However, the subtext for the dialogue between the "party leader" and the "street boy" in "Ordinary Men and Women" is the machinations of the mysterious Doctor Benway, a "manipulator of symbol systems" and "expert on all phases of interrogation, brainwashing and control", who works for whatever shady organisation engages his services, and whose precise origins or allegiances are never revealed. (*Naked Lunch*/31) In turn, the "exact objectives" of "Islam Inc", for whom Benway was supposedly working, are "obscure." (*Naked Lunch*/130) Burroughs' employment of such "Kafkian conspiracies", in which even the agents themselves "rarely know which side they are working on", suggests that the conflicts between Arab nationalism and the French colonists exist only as one front amongst many for the novel's various intrigues, the precise nature of which is constantly shifting.[288]

Despite the imprecision of its political structures, Interzone does also resemble Tangier in its depiction of economic forces moving out of control. Like the "vast overstocked market" of "International Zone", Interzone is a "vast market", a dream-like panorama of a city in which free market forces hold sway, populated by an array of confidence men, pushers and sellers:

> Followers of obsolete, unthinkable trades doodling in Etruscan, addicts of drugs not yet synthesized, pushers of souped-up Harmaline [...] black marketeers of World War III, excisors of telepathic sensitivity [...] sellers of orgone tanks and relaxing machines, brokers of exquisite dreams and memories [...][289]

However, the precise sources for these various "pushers" and "sellers" were not specific to the "International Zone" of Tangier. The "followers of obsolete, unthinkable trades" derive in part from the "type person", in *Junky* who "walks around in the places where he once exercised his obsolete and unthinkable trade." (*Junky*/112) The reference to "drugs not yet synthesized" recalls the "Chandler-style, straight, action story about some super Heroin".[290] The "brokers of exquisite dreams and memories" reactivates the "man" in *The Yage Letters* who "manufactures memories to order": "'Just an old second hand man

trading new dreams for old.'" (*Yage Letters*/6) Indeed, Interzone is, in Brian McHale's phrase, an "intertextual space": a "between-worlds space" which violates the "ontological boundaries between fictional worlds."[291] Interzone was a composite of various fictional cities, some written by Burroughs himself, and some borrowed from other writers.

One important literary influence was Jack Kerouac's "cityCityCITY", a science fiction story written in the spring of 1954 that had been "conceived in a dream about an overpopulated future society."[292] Kerouac must have sent an early copy of his story to Burroughs, since Burroughs refers to it, in a letter sent in May 1954, as a "dream of the iron racks and the tremendous, over-crowded cities of the future."[293] In return for Keroauc's story, Burroughs sent his own "dream routine", titled "Dream of the City by William Lee", which he claimed had been "derived" from Kerouac story.[294] This prose sequence was renamed "Iron Wrack Dream" by Allen Ginsberg, and eventually published in *Interzone*.[295] Another of the primary sources for Interzone was the "Composite City" Burroughs had visualized and described, in a "delayed reaction" to a dose of yagé, in Lima in 1953.[296] This city was an hallucinatory composite of various other cities: "Mexico City, N.Y., and Lima."[297] The "Composite City", which Burroughs had glimpsed in his yagé dreams, was an amalgam of cultures and races: "Near Eastern, Mongol, South Pacific, South American [...] all the Human Potentials are spread out in a vast silent Market."[298] The image of the "Market" is also present in the description, in the manuscript version of "Yage" held at Columbia University, of the "Wholesale Market-Mercado Mayorista" in Lima, which covered "several blocks."[299] In "South American towns", the narrator continues, the "market" is always the "centre of life", and the Lima market has "little bars and Chinese restaurants", "Peruvian folk music", and continual fighting and dancing.[300] As Barry Miles explains in his biography of Burroughs, another source for Interzone was the view from Allen Ginsberg's apartment on East 7th Street, New York, where Burroughs had stayed for a month in August 1953, before his move to

Tangier. The "futuristic vibrating city of Interzone", Miles writes, emerged, in part, from the "level upon level of apartment fire escapes and laundry lines" that crossed Ginsberg's backyard.[301] The effect of juxtaposing these various different 'textual' and 'real' locations into Interzone is to make it impossible, to quote Foucault once more, to "define a *common locus* beneath them all".[302]

However, while this montage of fictional and real locations that is Interzone has no single "*locus*", it does, like Burroughs' vision of an "infinite" series of "elusive substitutes" for himself,[303] nonetheless bear the "trace", to repeat Arnold Weinstein's notion, of the author.[304] Mary McCarthy famously evoked the world of Interzone as a "circus", an observation with which Burroughs has declared his agreement. Burroughs, though, provides a more culturally and historically specific origin for his imaginary world, describing the location for *Naked Lunch* as "a kind of mid-western, small-town, cracker-barrel, pratfall type of folklore, very much of my own background".[305] Claiming that this "world" was "an integral part of America" and "existed nowhere else, at least not in the same form", Burroughs, in his interview with Conrad Knickerbock in 1965, linked the attempt to reconstruct it in *Naked Lunch* with his own family's "southern" background, the "circuit-riding Methodist minister" who was his grandfather, and the family connection to "advertising and public relations".[306] These observations, it should be emphasised, do not provide a common locus for the heterotopic Interzone, but they do suggest that Interzone was, in part and in transmuted form, a reconstruction of an earlier environment that was closely related to remembrances of childhood and family. As with the "infinite" series of "elusive" selves Burroughs imagined, or the montage technique that he used to take apart and construct anew his most personal correspondence, the refusal of a common locus did not obliterate, but rather dispersed and transformed, the psychological dynamics caused by and related to childhood.[307]

The effect of a heterotopia, as Foucault suggests, is "to secretly undermine

language".[308] These disjunctions would, like the "sudden scene changes" Taussig observes under yagé, would break up "any attempt at narrative ordering".[309] However, in late 1956 and early 1957, Burroughs was flooded with narrative. He told Ginsberg he "would send along about 100 pages of Interzone, it is coming so fast I can hardly get it down".[310] At this point, Burroughs conceived of his new material as forming a unified whole: he insisted to Ginsberg that there was "no point" sending him "fragments" of the work since "it is all like in one piece and must be dug as a continuum."[311] A month later, though, Burroughs appealed to Ginsberg for assistance with editing the new work: Burroughs felt that some of the material "should be omitted" and the "whole put in some sort of order", but he was too busy "writing more" and had "no time to revise."[312] Therefore, the combination of the ontological uncertainty of Interzone as a fictional location with the disjunctions of "narrative ordering" created by the editing of Burroughs' "continuum" into narrative fragments would only begin in earnest with Allen Ginsberg's and Alan Ansen's attempts to organize Burroughs' materials in the spring of 1957.[313] However, Burroughs' initial, highly provisional, attempts to order this unruly narrative as he wrote it will be considered in the following section.

The Frontiers of Depravity

Burroughs' "Roosevelt after Inauguration" routine in *The Yage Letters* had ended with the president "looking off into space as if seeking new frontiers of depravity." (*Yage Letters*/39) The writing Burroughs produced in 1956 and 1957 explored those depraved frontiers. In the spring of 1957, Burroughs received a visit from Jack Kerouac, who attempted to help Burroughs by typing up his recent material. Kerouac did not find this task easy, and wrote a fictional account of it as part of his novel *Desolation Angels* (1960).[314] Part of what Kerouac recalls typing up was "Word". "Word", finally published as part of *Interzone*, was the first item in the original Interzone manuscript, assembled

with the help of Ginsberg and Alan Ansen in early 1958. Nearly sixty pages long, and lacking any coherent linear pattern, "Word" is, as James Graueholz notes in his introduction to *Interzone*, the "direct precursor of *Naked Lunch*". (*Interzone*/xxii) In *Desolation Angels*, Kerouac fictionalised a conversation he had with Burroughs, who is renamed "Hubbard", in which Hubbard explains the purpose behind his writing. "Why", the bemused narrator asks, "are all these young boys in white shirts being hung in limestone caves? [...] Why all this vile rheum [...]?".[315] Hubbard tells the narrator, Jack, that he is "shitting out" his "educated Middlewest background for once and for all. It's a matter of catharsis where I say the most horrible thing I can think of - Realize that, the most *horrible* dirty slimy awful niggardliest posture possible-"[316] "Word" is constructed, in part at least, from this "dirty slimy awful" material.[317]

Despite Kerouac's well known ability to fabricate events out of all recognition, this account of the writing of "Word" does bear some resemblance to other accounts. Burroughs himself had told Allen Ginsberg in January 1957 that his new work was "the most obscene thing" he had ever "read": "my power's really coming", he warned Ginsberg, and "I am subject to write something downright dirty."[318] According to Ted Morgan, Burroughs had "developed a method of meditation" during his stay in Tangier that allowed him to let his terrible fantasies seep through him, and to accept these fantasies as his own.[319] These fantasies, Morgan writes, "had to be let out in full force, rather than suppressed, no matter how painful. Only when they were accepted as true did they lose their horror and their force, which came from trying to deny them [...]"[320] "A lot of the time", Burroughs told Allen Ginsberg, "I just sit blank and narcotized letting sensations flow through me."[321] This process of "consciously running through your fantasies" promised "a great feeling of liberation, attaining the level of the impersonal watcher, benevolent and clear."[322] According to Morgan, Burroughs "had fallen into such despair in Tangier that he had finally prayed to God and been answered, and seen his

benevolent soul emerge."[323] Burroughs had, Morgan claims, found in "his own way" what Ginsberg had already experienced: a "vision of a large and peaceful central force."[324] Melville's Ishmael also perceives the presence of a benevolent centre to the universe in "The Great Armada" chapter of *Moby Dick*, in which the Pequod strays, caught up in the momentum of the hunt, into the "inner circle" of a group of "nursing mother" whales.[325] While all around them is "circle upon circle of consternation and affrights," in the centre of the storm is a "wondrous world", in which "these inscrutable creatures at the centre freely and fearlessly indulge in all peaceful concernments; yea, serenely reveled in dalliance and delight."[326] Burroughs was caught up in his own "circle of consternation and affrights", the turbulent ride on which his routines and his addictions had taken him.[327] Writing from a Tangier hospital, Burroughs told Kerouac and Ginsberg that they shamed him with their "Buddhistic love and sweetness, torn as I am by winds of violence and discord".[328] Burroughs intimated to his two friends that their recent letter had "thawed out" his "bleak, windswept psyche."[329] "Lately", he conceded, "I come on down right mean."[330] However, at the heart of these "winds of violence and discord", Burroughs believed he had found a "benevolent sentient centre to the whole Creation".[331]

Herman Melville, having completed *Moby Dick*, described the paradoxical process by which he had "written a wicked book", and yet could feel "spotless as the lamb."[332] This duality of wickedness and innocence is written into *Moby Dick*. As Michael Rogin notes, while Ishmael "enjoys his moment" of "mute calm" watching the "enchanted pond" of "pregnant, newborn, and nursing whales" in "The Grand Armada", a footnote to the main text describes how, if "by chance", a "hunter's lance" cuts a nursing whale's breast, the "pouring milk and blood rivalingly discolor the sea for rods."[333] This process of purification through violence, which also suggests the interconnections between purification and violence suggested by the image of mixed "milk and blood", was also enacted in the writing of "Word".[334] "Word" threatens its "gentle reader" with a "meat

cleaver", and promises to "flay" the reader "down to the laughing bones". (*Interzone*/136) As Oliver Harris suggests, Burroughs was "engaged in a cathartic liberation from anxieties and past conditioning, a process of self-evacuation whose effect was, in Alan Ansen's words, 'both conjuration and exorcism.'"[335] In Ginsberg's account, this process of "recognition and purification" lead to the "open blue space", the "Benevolent indifferent attentiveness", of Burroughs' later work.[336]

"Word" enacts the same dynamic that we find in Burroughs' relationship with his routines: the return to childhood, and to painful extremes of life and death, wonder and horror. Its narrative is compulsively nostalgic, and is trapped in a vicious circle.[337] The narrative, heralding "nostalgia's call", obsessively heads backwards in time, to a moment of innocence that promises regeneration and completeness: "the lonesome pines of Idaho, where boy hearts pulse on the Christmas trees", or the boy "so pure and alive in the moment", and the "house where young lust flares over the hills of home" (*Interzone*/179). However, having obeyed "nostalgia's call", the narrative presents us with "glittering worms", corrupted images of innocence. (*Interzone*/179) Staccato images suggest innocence stolen: "Black mustache and child screams after his lost balloon." (*Interzone*/188) The "pure sad" boy, "like a nun so pure and alive for the moment", is constantly disappearing: his "Boy grin dissolves slow into the sunlight over the bullhead hole, quarry, vacant lot with a pond in it." (*Interzone*/161) If not dissolving, the boy is wounded or damaged, examining, for example, "his bloody arms marked with needle-wound stigmata." (*Interzone*/187) Far from being regenerative, these memories of innocence and desire circle back into old age, decay, death: "Spurty boy comes, slower and slower turn into a long yellow beard in the old man's hands." (*Interzone*/160)

There are two opposed authorial impulses in "Word", and the interaction between these two impulses gives "Word" its, admittedly curious, shape. The first impulse leads towards complete inclusivity. As the opening page of "Word" suggests, the text spills

"out in all directions" , as if its author, ignoring the impulse to organise his material, has instead registered the sense impressions that are going on around him, both external and internal, and recorded them as they happen. (*Interzone*/135) "Word" is therefore constituted from, among other sources, the noises and sensations of Tangier street life: the "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 pathic [...]" (*Interzone*/135)[338] However, the other, diametrically opposed, authorial impulse in "Word" is the attempt to control the material being produced.

It will be recalled that when Burroughs attempted to control his routines, to "impose some form" on them, or to "follow a line", he found himself catapulted "into a sort of madness where only the most extreme material is available to me."[339] This futile impulse to control is evident in the treatment of authorship and identity in "Word". In keeping with Burroughs' intention to "*include the author in the novel*", there is an "author" of "Word", who continually attempts to exert his control over the text.[340] "So glad to have you abroad", the "author" tells his "reader", "but remember there is only one captain". (*Interzone*/139) Despite this assertion, however, the acting out of multiple personalities is an important part of "Word", and the text often explicitly refers to the process.[341] The "author" claims at one stage to have "gathered his multiple personalities for a rally at Tent City on the banks of the river Jordan." (*Interzone*/171) In a section from *Naked Lunch*, which was almost certainly originally part of the "Word" manuscript, the author once more attempts to exert his authority:

> I, William Seward, captain of this lushed up hashhead subway, will quell the Loch Ness monster with rotenone and cowboy the white whale. I will reduce Satan to Automatic Obedience, and sublimate subsidiary fiends. (*Naked Lunch*/178)

The reference to the hunt of the "white whale", of course, explicitly echoes *Moby Dick*, and links "William Seward", the "author" of "Word", to Captain Ahab. While the author may frequently claim to be the "only one captain of this shit" (*Interzone*/139), he is also

forced to admit his dependence on his subsidiary personalities, since he needs "something artistic" from them. (*Interzone*/171)[342] Echoing Captain Ahab's attempt to "cowboy the white whale", the attempts at control in "Word" inevitably end in stillness, a reversion to nature. (*Naked Lunch*/178) The "thinking machine", for example, which "runs out of thought and sucks the brains out of everybody", gives way to the ominous phrase: "Outside, the dry husks of insects [...]" (*Interzone*/144) The entropic imagery of "Word" therefore echoes the earlier depiction, in *Junky*, of "New York in ruins" (*Junky*/28): "Only the dry hum of wings rub together and giant centipedes crawl in the ruined city of our long home."[343] (*Interzone*/142)

However, as Ken Kesey notes in *Demon Box* (1986), entropy is "only a problem in a closed system".[344] "Word", presenting a world deadened by thermodynamics, nonetheless derives its considerable energy from its own inclusiveness. Its refuses to exist within the closed system, the "dead [...] rigid and arbitrary" "form", of the conventional "novel". (*Interzone*/126) By simply transcribing "Lee's impressions", Burroughs was able to avoid the "dissipation of energy in fragmentary, unconnected projects."[345] It also, following Burroughs' meditative technique of accepting his own destructive fantasies, refused to exclude material on grounds of taste and decency. Indeed, "Word", formed out of these opposed impulses, is a textual battleground for the forces of creation and destruction, energy and entropy. However, as will be suggested in Chapter Five, "Word" was a transitional work, and the compositional and psychological developments Burroughs would make between 1958 and 1959 ensured that "Word", at least in its unified form, as a "continuum" to be experienced "in one piece", would be discarded.[346] Burroughs, in an essay titled "On Coincidence", would later identify language as an evolutionary impediment that leaves it victims obsessively and uselessly verbalizing: "In the beginning was the word and the word *was* God. And what does that make us? Ventriloquist dummies. Time to leave the Word-God behind."[347] Burroughs, having

cathartically regurgitated his "educated Middlewest background" in streams of prose, was moving on towards new territory. He would attempt to leave "Word", both in terms of his lengthy manuscript and in terms of the obsessive use of language it represented, behind.

1 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 29.
2 Ibid., 91.
3 Ibid.
4 Anzaldúa, "Preface", *Borderlands|La Frontera*.
5 Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 315.
6 Ibid., 316.
7 Burroughs, *Letters*, 195. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan. 26, 1954.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid. There are faint hints, in Burroughs' early letters from Tangiers, of the literary and personal breakthroughs that would mark Burroughs' four-year residency. "I have been doing some writing", he told Ginsberg, adding that Tangiers seemed "to have several dimensions." The link between fiction and place, that would become central to the writing of *Naked Lunch*, was established early on. Burroughs, *Letters*, 196. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.9, 1954.
11 In fact, "Ignorant Armies" was, at this stage, the title of a "great, gloomy, soul-searching homosexual novel" being written by a fictional character, "Adrian Scudder". Burroughs, *Letters*, 271. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated April 20, 1955. However, Burroughs did clearly consider it a possible title for his own "Interzone novel", even if, by October 1955, he had found a "better title". Burroughs, *Letters*, 294. Letter to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, dated Oct.23, 1955.
12 Ibid., 176. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Early July 1953.
13 Ibid.
14 Burroughs, Unpublished correspondence (Columbia University: Rare Book and Manuscript Library), letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.9. 1955.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., 254. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.9. 1955.
17 Ibid., 255. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.12, 1955.
18 Ibid.
19 Harris, footnote 21, *Letters*, 213.
20 Burroughs, *Letters*, pp. 213-4. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated May 24, 1954.
21 Ibid., 268. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.19, 1955.
22 Ibid., 269.
23 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 91.
24 Burroughs, *Letters*, 268. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb. 19, 1955.
25 Ibid., pp. 268-9.
26 Ibid., 262. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.7, 1955.
27 Ibid., 267. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated Feb.12, 1955.
28 Ibid. It is surely not coincidental that, in his letter to Ginsberg written five days previously, Burroughs had written, for the first time since the event itself, about the shooting of Joan Vollmer. "May yet attempt a story or some account of Joan's death", he told Ginsberg, relating a story he had read about two English "naval Lieutenants" who had enacted an equally disastrous "William Tell" act. Ibid., 262-3. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.7, 1955.
29 The segue begins with Nick's remark about his connection: "'What can I say to him? He knows I'll wait,' Nick laughed. Burroughs, *Naked Lunch*, 170. "The Conspiracy" begins: "Yes, they know we'll wait. How many hours, days, years, street corners [...]" Burroughs, *Interzone*, 106.
30 Burroughs, *Letters*, 267. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated Feb.12, 1955.
31 "Mary" is a curiously recurrent name in Burroughs' writing. Mary is the assertive partner in the pornographic section of "A.J's Annual Party", who becomes, intermittently, the devouring partner. Burroughs, *Naked Lunch*, pp. 79-89. In *The Place of Dead Roads*, Salt Chunk Mary, "mother of the Johnson family", is more directly reminiscent of Mary in "The Conspiracy". Burroughs, *Place of Dead Roads*, 113. It

may also be noted, in a biographical context, that Mary was the name of Burroughs' nanny. Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, pp. 30-2.
32 Burroughs, *Letters*, 262. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.7, 1955.
33 Ibid.
34 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 85.
35 Alan Ansen, "William Burroughs: An Essay" (Water Row Press, Sudbury, 1986), 30.
36 Burroughs, *Letters*, 236. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Early Oct., 1954.
37 Ibid., 235.
38 Ibid., 236.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 199. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated March 1, 1954.
41 There are distinct echoes between Burroughs' need for Ginsberg as a "receiver" for his routines" and Herman Melville's delight at his close, if brief, relationship with Hawthorne. Ibid., 201. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated April 7, 1954. Both Burroughs and Melville had a deep desire to be understood as completely as possible, a desire for the distinction between self and other, writer and reader, to fall away. This need seems simultaneously erotic and religious. On reading Hawthorne's response to *Moby Dick*, for example, Melville wrote that he felt Hawthorne's "heart beat in my ribs and mine in yours, and both in God's. A sense of unspeakable security is in me this moment, on account of your having understood the book." "By what right", Melville continued, "do you drink from my flagon of life? And when I put it to my lips - lo, they are yours and not mine. I feel that the Godhead is broken up like the bread at the Supper, and that we are the pieces. Hence this infinite feeling of fraternity." Melville, "Reviews and Letters by Melville", *Moby Dick*, 566. Letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, dated Nov.17, 1851.
42 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 20.
43 Harris, "Introduction", *Letters*, xxiv.
44 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 20.
45 Burroughs, *Letters*, 201. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated April 7, 1954.
46 It should also be noted that the only writing Burroughs did "between 1943 and 1949" was an attempt, while he was regularly using heroin in New Orleans, "to recapture the painful over sensitivity of junk-sickness, the oil slick on the river, the hastily-parked car." Burroughs, "The Name Is Burroughs", *The Adding Machine*, 9.
47 Burroughs, *Letters*, 201. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated April 7, 1954.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., 259, Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.7, 1955.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., 227. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated Aug.18, 1954.
58 Ibid., 241. Letter to Jack Keroauc, dated Dec.7, 1954.
59 Ibid., 242.
60 Ibid.
61 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 44.
62 Burroughs, *Letters*, 247. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Dec.30, 1954.
63 Ibid., 216. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated June 24, 1954.
64 Ibid., 169. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated June 6, 1953.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.

69 Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 75.
70 It will be recalled that, in 1952, in response to his publisher's demands for "biographical data", Burroughs had threatened to send them the "finger" story instead, using it as an "indicating set-up". The word "set-up" has, of course, at least two possible meanings, and this ambiguity is especially noticeable in its context here: Burroughs' attempt to avoid the publisher's demand, "Tell me about yourself." It is also worth noting that, while Burroughs claimed he would write a "short story" about this "indicating set-up", he also added, in parenthesis, that it would be "incomplete, of course". What exactly would Burroughs leave out? As ever, the reader faces mask within mask within mask. Burroughs, *Letters*, 120. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated April 22, 1952.
71 Morgan relates the finger-removal to a childhood trauma, in which, he claims, the young Burroughs was forced to fellate his nurses' boyfriend, and, in retaliation, bit the boyfriend's penis. Further, he claims that by taking the decapitated finger to his analyst, Burroughs was reenacting his attempts to tell his father about the trauma, but this time with "the evidence in his vest pocket." Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 75.
72 In a letter to Ginsberg, Burroughs writes: "I rewrote the story about the car wreck with Jack Anderson." Burroughs, *Letters*, 231. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated August 26, 1954. The earlier version of "Driving Lesson" was titled "The Hot Rod", and according to Oliver Harris, it "appears to have been first written in Mexico in 1952, then again in New York in 1953". Harris, footnote 41, *Letters*, 231. A copy of "The Hot Rod" is held at Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library.
73 Burroughs, *Letters*, 231. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated August 26, 1954.
74 Ibid.
75 In "The Hot Rod", where the "Bill" character is given the name "Bob", Bob says this in the "voice of an old whore." Burroughs, "The Hot Rod" (Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library: Ms. Coll. Ginsberg)
76 Burroughs, *Letters*, 231. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated August 26, 1954.
77 Ibid.
78 In a letter to Allen Ginsberg, Burroughs draws attention to what he describes as this "awkward" sentence. He clearly wished to dispense with the word "intellectual", since he considered it was "in disrepute", if not accompanied by a "qualification of some sort". He attempted to rewrite the line thus:

> "The other thin, intense, with the look of a tormented trapped animal."

but realised that "a basic split in Bill's character" had "been omitted." His eventual use of the word "intellectual" clarifies the importance of the split between mind and body in "Driving Lesson". Burroughs, *Letters to Allen Ginsberg 1953-1957*, pp.62-3. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Sept.3, 1954. In "The Hot Rod", the split is suggested by Bob's "smile", which "split his face down the middle as though the two halves did not fit together." Burroughs, "The Hot Rod", (Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library: Ms. Coll. Ginsberg).
79 In "The Hot Rod", the "Jack" character's eyes "were glazed over like the eyes of someone who had just died." Burroughs, "The Hot Rod" (Columbia University).
80 The opposition between the cerebral "Bill" and the physical "Jack" is unsubtly suggested in "The Hot Rod" by the naming of the "Jack" character as "Dick". Burroughs, "The Hot Rod" (Columbia University).
81 In "The Hot Rod", Bob's father is "severe and elegant in an old style chesterfield with velvet lapels, a starched white linnen [sic] collar and silk tie, talking to the cops, leaning on a precinct desk smoking an expensive Havana." Burroughs, "The Hot Rod", (Columbia University).
82 The mother is not mentioned at all in "The Hot Rod", although Bob's father does make the same, refused, offer of milk.
83 Boker, *The Grief Taboo in American Literature*, 5.
84 There are distinct mythic echoes here: in Greek mythology, as Charles Olson notes,

Kronos "castrated his father" with a "sickle". "Saturn", the equivalent character in Roman mythology, "used a pruning knife." According to Olson, Kronos committed this deed because he sought "to become a god". Olson, *Call me Ishmael*, 82. In *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, however, suggests that Kronos castrated his father on the "advice of his mother". *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 476. This raises the possibility that the castration of the father was, to use Freud's phrase, an act of "deferred obedience" to the mother. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 145. In *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, it is also stated that the myth of Kronos "is so extraordinary and unlike normal Greek mythology that it is pretty certainly pre-Hellenic", and Kronos himself may well have been a "god of the pre-Hellenic population." *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 476. That is, the myth of Kronos, like Aeschylus's *Oresteia* trilogy, is a vestige of pre-Greek mythology, in which, to quote Ann Douglas, "the female gods are as punitive to the male gods as the male gods are to them", and where the primary subject is "matriarchal rule and the deed of matricide that ends it". Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 234.

Olson's explanation that Kronos' act of self-mutilation is an attempt to "become a god", and Douglas' implicit suggestion that it is an act of "deferred obedience" to the mother, are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Olson, *Call me Ishmael*, 82, Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 240. Ernest Jones, in his essay "The God Complex", argued that the "main foundation" of a god complex was a "colossal narcissism". Ernest Jones, "The God Complex: The Belief That One Is God and the Resulting Character Traits", *Essays in Applied Psycho-analysis, Volume II* (New York: International Universities Press, 1964, quoted in Noll, *The Cult of Jung*, pp. 205, 364. In this context, the narcissism inherent in Lee's act of mutilation should be noted: his adoption of the dandy's "supercilious mask", and the fact that Lee looks "in the mirror" before hand. Burroughs, *Interzone*, 15. Freud, throughout his writings, links narcissism to the pre-oedipal phase, and implicitly to the relationship with the mother. For example, as we have already noted, in "The 'Uncanny'", Freud writes of the "unbounded self love" of "primary narcissism" which "dominates the mind of the child" in a "very early mental stage". Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", *Art and Literature*, pp. 357-8.

85 Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* [1916] (New York: Permabook, 1956), quoted in Susan Stanford Friedman, *Psyche Reborn: The Emergence of H.D.* [1981] (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 94.

86 In *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, Freud writes:

> Our plan of cure is based upon these views. The ego has been weakened by the internal conflict; we must come to its aid. The position is like a civil war which can only be decided with the help of an ally from without. The analytical physician and the weakened ego of the patient, basing themselves upon the real external world, are to combine against the enemies; the instinctual demands of the id, and the moral demands of the superego. We form a pact with each other.

Freud, *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1949), pp. 62-3.

87 Friedman, *Psyche Reborn*, 94.

88 Freud, "The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis" (1924), *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis,* selected and with intro. by Anna Freud [1986] (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 568.

89 Burroughs, *Letters*, 199. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated March 1, 1954.

90 Ibid., 243. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Dec.13, 1954.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid., 251. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.6, 1955.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid., 257. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.11, 1955.

98 Ibid,. 275. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated June 9, 1955.

99 Ibid., 277. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated July 5, 1955.

100 Ibid., 280. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Sept.21, 1955.

101 Ibid., 283. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.6, 1955.
102 Ibid., 280. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Sept.21, 1955.
103 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 90.
104 Ibid., 91.
105 Mary Louise Pratt, "Introduction: Criticism in the Combat Zone", *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 6.
106 Iain Finlayson, *Tangier: City of the Dream* [1992] (London: Flamingo, 1992), 25.
107 Ibid., 68.
108 Ibid., 71.
109 Malone, "Toward A New Approach to Western American History", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 152.
110 Iain Finlayson, *Tangier: City of the Dream*, pp. 75-6.
111 Burroughs, *Letters*, 205. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated April 22, 1954.
112 This meeting is fictionalised in *Interzone* as "Antonio the Portuguese Mooch". Burroughs, *Interzone*, pp. 96-100.
113 Burroughs, *Letters*, 205. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated April 22, 1954.
114 Burroughs allows Lee the final line. "You express the dilemma of the European, Antonio. You hate us so much *almost* you cannot pass around the hat." Burroughs, *Interzone*, 100.
115 The Russian intention was to "keep Spain out of Tangier", but this proved an impossible aim, given the "zone's large Spanish population" and dependency on Spanish food stuffs. The Russians "received political parity with the United States and Great Britain" on Tangier's "Committee of Control" and "Legislative Assembly" in the immediate post-war period, but did not fill these posts or concern themselves greatly with Tangier. Lawdom Vaidon, *Tangier: A Different Way* (Metuchen, N.J. and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1977), 244. Lawdom Vaidon is an anagram of David Woolman, a friend of Burroughs', referred to in Burroughs' correspondence as "the Captain". Burroughs, *Letters*, 218. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated July 3, 1954.
116 Ibid., pp. 257, 262.
117 The post-war boom and bust mentioned here recalls the depiction of economic stasis in the Rio-Grande Valley. It is noted, in the description in *Junky* of Lee's attempts to farm in the Valley, that a "lot of people made quick easy money during the War and the for several years after. Any business was good, just as any stock is good on a rising market. People thought they were sharp operators, when actually they were just riding a lucky streak. Now the Valley is in a losing streak and only the big operators can ride it out." Burroughs, *Junky*, 108.

However, Lawdom Vaidon suggests that the cause of Tangier's post-war bust was partially specific to Tangier: he notes that after the 1952 riots, related to nationalist unrest, caused the "flow of investments" through the city to "slacken alarmingly". Vaidon, *Tangier: A Different Way*, 262.
118 Burroughs, *Letters*, 215. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated June 16, 1954.
119 In a postscript that Burroughs added on, about nine months later, to the main text of "International Zone", Burroughs noted the continuing decline of the city: "Business has hit a new low. The tourist trade is falling off. Many of the residents are talking about leaving." Burroughs, *Interzone*, xvii.
120 Harris, "Introduction", *Letters*, xxix. The second quote is taken by Harris from Richard F.Paterson, *A World Outside: The Fiction of Paul Bowles* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 47.
121 Harris, "Introduction", *Letters*, xxix.
122 Michelle Green, "Prologue", *The Dream at the End of the World: Paul Bowles and the Literary Renegades in Tangiers*, xiii.
123 Ibid.
124 Burroughs, *Letters*, 198. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated March 1, 1954.
125 Ibid. Burroughs' letters describe his various meetings with these "displaced

personnel". Taylor, for example, who is a suspected "stool pigeon", "drags" Burroughs "to the bar", and "puts down a sincere routine" about his role as one of life's losers: "Life is rotten here, Bill. It's the end of the world, Tangiers. Don't you feel it, Bill? You have to have some ideal, something to hang onto [...]". Burroughs, *Letters*, 198. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated March 1, 1954.
126 Ibid., 61. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated Jan.1, 1950.
127 The avoidance of stasis was also a primary concern. Burroughs had told Allen Ginsberg that the "Composite City" was formed from the "Only places that don't give me stasis horrors" and he also noted the lack of "stasis horrors" in Tangier, comparing it with the static beauty of Venice: the "beauty" of Tangier was in its "changing combinations", while Venice was beautiful "but it never changes", and the "final effect" was "nightmareish". Burroughs, *Letters*, pp. 178, 329. Letters to Allen Ginsberg, dated July 8, 1953 and Oct.13, 1956.
128 Ibid., 254. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.9, 1955.
129 Ibid.
130 Burroughs, "Yage" article, (Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library), 17.
131 The excerpt continues: "Once that is done, you have no need to worry and you have nothing to say about what happens. Like meeting people. You will meet someone or not. This is fatalism connected with the *facts* of space/time positions and tracks." Burroughs, *Letters to Allen Ginsberg*, 45. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated July 8, 1954. P.S. dated July 10, 1954.
132 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 53.
133 Burroughs, *Letters*, 294. Letter to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, dated Oct.23, 1955.
134 Ibid.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid., pp. 294-5.
140 Ibid., 294.
141 Ibid.
142 Ibid., pp. 294-5.
143 Ibid., 295.
144 Ibid., 294. Burroughs' struggle with his own digestive system forms an insistent sub-plot in the first half of his published letters. This sub-plot includes a series of pivotal incidents, combining extreme discomfort and a certain comic ridiculousness. There is a bungled operation for piles in Panama heralded by the opening lines of *The Yage Letters*: "I stopped off here to have my piles out. Wouldn't do to go back among in Indians with piles I figured. Burroughs, *The Yage Letters*, 3. There is an attack of worms in Lima: "A horrible routine that ruined two days for me. It's one of those deals where it is close thing between you and the worms but you have the edge being bigger. Burroughs, *Letters*, 177. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated early July, 1953. The sub-plot concludes with another operation in New York that leaves the letter-writer a "shaky and bleeding". Ibid., 234. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated *Early* Oct., 1954. Appropriately enough, when Burroughs' writing of the Interzone materials began in earnest on his return to Tangiers, the digestive difficulties are no longer centre stage in the letters.

The occlusion of the ass-hole in the Sargasso sequence is a reversal of the famous "talking-asshole" routine, written in February 1955, in which it is the face, identified by Neal Oxenhandler as the "seat of orality", which is occluded. Oxenhandler interprets the talking-asshole routine as a "struggle between the oral impulse and the anal impulse." The anal impulse, Oxenhandler claims, is perceived as being "sadistic" and "searching for dominance". Oxenhandler, "Hearing Burroughs' Voice", *Surfiction*, 197. Certainly,

the asshole is associated with the "sadism" of the "American unconscious", and the asshole, at the end of the routine, does completely take over. Burroughs, *Letters*, 259. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.7, 1955. However, as Oxenhandler suggests, and the Sargasso sequence confirms, the apparent victory of the "anal impulse" in the "talking-asshole" routine is not final. The "buried oral material" retains its "power" and "reappears" in other forms. Oxenhandler, "Hearing Burroughs' Voice", *Surfiction*, 197.
145 Freud, "Anxiety and Instinctual Life", *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 131.
Distinctions between orality and anality are to the fore in a letter Burroughs sent to both Kerouac and Ginsberg in November 1955. The letter serves as genesis to Dr Benway, one of Burroughs' most famous fictional creations. Burroughs' starting point for Benway is a "real-life" doctor, "Dr Appfel from Strasbourg", who works in Tangiers. In his consideration of Appfel's dubious character, Burroughs notes his "careful, anal face", that doesn't betray "a trace of oral impulsiveness." Since he lacks "oral impulsiveness", Burroughs concludes that he cannot be an addict. Dr Benway, on the other hand, definitely is an "oral type". Burroughs, *Letters*, pp. 302-3. Letter to Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, dated Nov.2, 1955. In a recurrent spelling mistake in his writings, Burroughs writes "suck" instead of "such", a Freudian slip suggesting a repressed oral impulse. As, for example, in the reference, in a letter to Ginsberg, to being "tea high" and experiencing "suck (leave error) taste kicks." Burroughs, *Letters*, 216. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated June 24, 1954.
146 Ibid., 254. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.9, 1955.
147 Green, *The City at the End of the World*, 17.
148 Harris, footnote 20, *Letters*, 323.
149 Green, *The City at the End of the World*, 17.
150 Burroughs, *Letters to Allen Ginsberg 1953-1957*, 50. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated August 18, 1954.
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid., 51.
153 There are, however, clear signs from his letters that Burroughs was aware of this. He reassured Ginsberg and Kerouac, for example, about the safety of Tangiers: "ARABS ARE NOT VIOLENT [...] They do *not attack people for kicks or fight for kicks like Americans*. Riots are the accumulated, just resentment of a people subjected to outrageous brutalities by the French cops used to strew blood and teeth over a city block in the Southern Zone. There hasn't been a riot in Tanger since 1952, when one European was killed." Burroughs, *Letters*, 349. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.23, 1957.
154 Burroughs, *Letters*, 300. Letter to Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, dated Nov.1, 1955.
155 Ibid., 296. Letter to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, dated Oct.23, 1955.
156 Ibid., 297.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Burroughs, *Letters*, 319. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated May 15, 1956.
160 Ibid.
161 Ibid.
162 In the "Lee and the Boys" section of *Interzone*, Lee injures a young Arab boy by closing a shutter on him. The incident, which makes Lee feel "crude and detestable", causes him to recall the memory of a "round-faced heavyset American" in the West Indies who had "tossed" a "bouquet of flowers" back at a "little black girl", who had "turned around crying and ran away." In turn, this leads to past memories of violence: killing a "rattlesnake with a golf club" in the Rio Grande Valley, and feeling "an electric shiver" run "through him", and breaking the rib of a drunk on the New York subway, as described in *Junky*. This memory causes a "shudder of nausea." Burroughs, *Interzone*,

33. This pattern of memories links violence to deeply felt excitement, but also to regret, and self-loathing.
163 In the same letter, Burroughs gave an account of his travels through a number of zones of contact between "Arabs" and "Europeans", notably Tripoli and Algeria, and asserted that he was "definitely anti the Arab Nationalists and pro-French so far as the Algerian setup goes. You can't imagine what a pain in the ass these Nationalists are. Bastards, sons a bitches ..." Burroughs, *Letters to Allen Ginsberg 1953-1957*, pp.146-7. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Sept.13, 1956.
164 Burroughs, *Letters*, 336. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.29, 1956.
165 Ibid., 339.
166 Ibid., 337.
167 Ibid., 341.
168 Ibid.
169 Ibid. Two years previous, right at the start of the writing of the "Interzone" material, Burroughs had glimpsed a "new *dimension* of sex", in which sex was "mixed" with the "unmalicious, unstrained, *pure* laughter that accompanies a good routine, laughter that gives a moment's freedom from the cautious, nagging, aging, frightened flesh." Ibid., 245. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Dec.13, 1954. The effortless connection Burroughs envisioned between sex and the routine was the inevitable extension of his search for a "relationship on the level of intuition and feeling". Burroughs, *Junky*, 152. Writing to Allen Ginsberg, his reader as well as his potential lover, Burroughs noted how "angelic such an affair could be." Ibid., 245.
170 Burroughs, *Letters*, 341. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.29, 1956.
171 These took the form of four numbers sung by characters who had "got the Jihad jitters". For example, the "fag" sings: "The Istiqlal hates me, / The guides all berate me, / I'm nobody's sweetheart now. / I got the Jihad jitters, / I mean scared of those critters, / They's a-coming for to disembowel me." Ibid., 340.
172 Ibid., 341.
173 Ibid., 195. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.26, 1954.
174 Ibid., 295. Letter to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, dated Oct.23, 1955.
175 Ibid., 195. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.26, 1954.
176 Timothy Leary, *Flashbacks: A Personal and Cultural History of an Era; An Autobiography* (Los Angeles: J.P.Tarcher, 1983), 95, quoted in Douglas Kahn, "Three Receivers", *The Drama Review* (New York University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: vol.40, no.3, Fall 1996), 80.
177 Burroughs, *Letters*, 251. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.6, 1955.
178 Oliver Harris, footnote 40, *Letters*, 288.
179 Harris, "Introduction", *Letters*, xxxii.
180 Burroughs, *Letters*, 182. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated July 10, 1953.
181 Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*, 441.
182 Ibid.
183 Burroughs, *Letters*, 175. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Early July 1953.
184 Ibid.
185 Ibid., 161. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated March 1, 1953.
186 Ibid., 182. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated July 10, 1953.
187 Ibid., 289. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct. 21, 1955. Even in the context of Burroughs" Letters "A", "B" and "C", among the most exuberant of all Burroughs' communications, there is a negative side to this implosion of distinctions between 'fiction' and 'reality'. "I have wandered off the point", Burroughs writes to Ginsberg in "Letter C", "out of contact, fallen into a great gray gap between parenthesis ..." Ibid., 294. Letter to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, dated Oct.23, 1955.
188 Ibid., 251. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.6, 1955.
189 This planned employment of correspondence was "tentative". Burroughs planned to "alternate chapters of Letter and Journal Selections with straight narrative chapters".

Ibid., 288. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.21, 1955.
190 Ginsberg, "Recollection of Burroughs Letters", *Letters to Allen Ginsberg, 1953-1957*, 6.
191 Harris, "Introduction", *Letters*, xxv.
192 Burroughs, *Letters*, pp.162, 170, 177, 186.
193 Harris, "Introduction", *Letters*, xxv. In 1955, materials from these letters were incorporated into the straight, non-epistolary narrative of Burroughs' "Yage" article. In 1963, with the published version of *The Yage Letters* accredited to "William Burroughs" and "Allen Ginsberg", the confusion between protagonist and author became even more marked, since this accreditation had the effect of de-fictionalising the letters, and reasserting the authorship of "Burroughs" rather than "Willy Lee".
194 Burroughs, *Early Routines* (Santa Barbara, CA.: Cadmus Editions, 1981) , 41. Quoted in Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 106. Although Burroughs does not make any connection explicit, this detachment from the self might be linked to Burroughs' experience with yagé. In *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*, Taussig describes the sensation, provided in the "theater" of a "yagé night", of "oscillating in and out of oneself; feeling sensations so intensely that you become the stuff sensed". Taussig wonders if this "standing outside of one's now defamiliarized experience and analyzing that experience" is the "profoundest possible A-effect" of yagé. Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*, 443.
195 Burroughs, *Early Routines*, 41.
196 Ibid.
197 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 106.
198 Ibid.
199 Burroughs, "Remembering Jack Kerouac", *The Adding Machine*, 181.
200 Ibid.
201 Burroughs, *Letters*, 272. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated April 20, 1955.
202 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 106.
203 Ibid.
204 Ibid.
205 Ibid., 288. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.21, 1955.
206 The context for these observations is Weinstein's discussion of the presentation of identity in Hawthorne's short story, "Wakefield". Arnold Weinstein, *Nobody's Home: Speech, Self, and Place in American Fiction from Hawthorne to DeLillo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 25.
207 Ibid.
208 Burroughs, *Letters*, 320. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated June 18,. 1956.
209 Burroughs, *With William Burroughs*, pp.23-4.
210 Ibid., 24. In fact, Burroughs' trip to Scandinavia came later, in July 1957, following another trip to London. He had visited Scandinavia only in his imagination, writing a "Scandinavian chapter" for his projected "HELL IS WHERE YOUR ASS IS" opus, based on his meeting with a "Swede at a party", who told him that "in Sweden drug addicts are chained - chained yet - to the bed and left there until cured - or dead." "I begin to suspect", wrote Burroughs, "that all is not well behind that hygienic Scandinavian facade." Burroughs, *Letters*, 320. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated June 18, 1956.

When Burroughs did visit Copenhagen, in August 1957, he found that "Scandinavia exceeds my most ghastly imaginings". In fact, Scandinavia coincided with his "ghastly imaginings": "Curious that I should have known without having been here that the place is a series of bars along a canal." Ibid., 363. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated August 20, 1957.
211 Burroughs, *Letters*, 325. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Sept.16, 1956.
212 Burroughs, "Un Homme de Lettres. Un Poème Moderne", Preface to *Letters to Allen Ginsberg 1953-1957*, 3.

213 Harris, "Introduction", *Letters*, xxxiii.
214 Burroughs, *Letters*, 329. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.13, 1956.
215 Ibid.
216 Ibid., 330.
217 Ibid., 330. By what was, as Oliver Harris notes, an "odd coincidence", another resident of Tangier's "writers colony", Paul Bowles, had a similar dream of Tangiers at about the same time as Burroughs had his. Harris, Footnote *Letters*, 330. Bowles' dream, in which he walked through a "changing succession of streets", left him with a "residue of ineffable sweetness and calm." On waking, Bowles "realized with a jolt that the magic city really existed. It was Tangier." Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping* (New York: Putnam's, 1972), 274.
218 Burroughs, *Letters*, 302. Letter to Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, dated Nov.2, 1955.
219 Ibid., 302.
220 Ibid., 300. Letter to Jack Keroauc and Allen Ginsberg, dated Nov.1, 1955.
221 Ibid., 329. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.13, 1956.
222 Burroughs would later develop the theory that during withdrawal from junk "*substances similar to LSD6 are released in the body*". Burroughs, *Letters*, 412. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated April 2, 1959. Such a theory would make sense of the link between "junk sickness" and "heightened sensitivity on the level of dream, myth, symbol." Burroughs, *Interzone*, 72.
223 Burroughs, *Letters*, 295. Letter to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, dated Oct.23, 1955.
224 Ibid., 300. Letter to Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, dated Nov.1, 1955.
225 Lame Deer, "The Meaning of Everyday Objects", *Symposium of the whole: a range of discourse toward an ethnopoetics*, ed. and with commentaries by Jerome and Diane Rothenberg, (Berkerley, University of California Press, 1983), 172.
226 Ibid.
227 Ibid.
228 Ibid.
229 Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 11.
230 Burroughs, *Letters*, 300. Letter to Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, dated Nov.1, 1955.
It is instructive to compare Burroughs' technique in creating "this feeling", the eruption of the dream world into the "three dimensional" world of "fact", with that of his friend and contemporary, Paul Bowles. For the most part, Bowles' technique is very different, and we can perceive the difference in the two novelists' approach to letter-writing. We are greatly assisted here by the recent publication of Paul Bowles' letters, in a volume titled *In Touch: The Letters of Paul Bowles*. The first letters we have written by Bowles are flamboyant, yet self-conscious attempts, influenced by surrealism, to recreate the language of the unconscious. "O sugar babe!", begins the first letter of *In Touch*, written by Bowles in Summer 1928, "O girl of my dreams! Oyez! Oyez! How is hell o sugar babe o beloved since I met your sweet lips o blue eyes o red lips! How much is gas? O girl of my Sigma Chi the damned things won't work o sugar babe! O Monticello! O dream river!" Paul Bowles, *In Touch: The Letters of Paul Bowles*, ed. Jeffrey Miller [1994] (London: Flamingo, 1995), 3. Letter to Daniel Burns, dated Summer 1928. Bowles, who had connections with the surrealist movement while living in Paris as a high-school student, had written a series of poems "without conscious intervention" for the famous literary magazine, *transition*. Jeffrey Miller, "Foreword", *In Touch*, viii. By contrast, Burroughs' initial letters in Oliver Harris' volume, dating from 1945 and 1946, are slightly affected, but far more to the point. As Oliver Harris notes, their "language is stilted," and their "tone almost formal". Harris, "Introduction", *Letters*, xvii. They resemble conventional letters, since their purpose is to transmit information at a rational level.

As Bowles matured as a writer, the letters of *In Touch* become less flamboyant, less affected, and more formal, polite, even gossipy. They can be read, if not fully understood, on the level of social interaction, and polite conversation. Likewise, most of Bowles' fiction has a conventionally 'realist' form, a surface narrative concerned with details of environment and interaction. In a draft letter to James Laughlin, the novel's publisher, Bowles explained that *The Sheltering Sky* was an "adventure story" which took place "on two planes simultaneously: in the actual desert and in the inner desert of the spirit". Paul Bowles, draft letter to James Laughlin, quoted in Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno, *An Invisible Spectator: A Biography of Paul Bowles* [1989] (London: Paladin, 1990), 271. To the reader of *The Sheltering Sky*, the most visible of these two "planes" that form the novel is its smooth 'realist' narrative. Beneath this smooth surface, the world of social behaviour, however, lies a darker, dream-like world, that continually rises up from subterranean depths. The novel's characters act "unthinkingly" or "unconsciously", unaware that their actions are determined by the novel's other narrative, which, characterised by dream-logic and the unacknowledged, entwines with the surface narrative. Kit, for example, walks "through the streets, *unthinkingly* seeking the darker ones, glad to be alone, and to feel the night air against his face." (Italics mine.) Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky* [1949], (London: Paladin, 1990),19. . Dreams themselves form minor eruptions into the supposedly rational narrative, and are analyzed, or suppressed, by the novel's characters:

> Port said: 'I had a strange dream yesterday. I've been trying to remember it, and just this minute I did.'
>
> 'No!' cried Kit with force. 'Dreams are so dull! Please!' Ibid.,16.

Occasionally, in Bowles' fiction, and his letters, the dark dream world erupts upwards, takes over the whole narrative. One such eruption takes over a letter Bowles wrote, under the influence of mescaline, to Ned Rorem in August, 1963. In that letter, an extended exposition of nausea, the world of polite appearances is obliterated for a time by a "stench" of horror and emptiness that he felt had been brought in with the "tide". Bowles, *In Touch*, 358. Letter to Ned Rorem, dated August 27, 1963. There is a similar eruption of horror at the close of *Let It Come Down*, with Dyar's hallucinatory act of violence, the murder of Thami. Bowles, *Let It Come Down* [1952] (London: Abacus, 1990). Finding it hard to write Port's death scene in *The Sheltering Sky*, Bowles decided to "hand the job over to the subconscious", and took a quantity of "*majoun*" before completing the scene. Bowles, *Without Stopping* (London: Peter Owen, 1972), 279. For the most part, however, Bowles' letters, and his fiction, are formed around a smooth, decorous surface, and the chaotic darkness is submerged, though always tangibly present. (One important exception to this generalisation was Bowles' collection of stories, *A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1962), which were, to quote Gore Vidal, "written to demonstrate that by using 'kif-inspired motivations, the arbitrary would begin to seem natural, the diverse elements could be fused, and several people would automatically become one.'" Gore Vidal, Introduction to Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories* (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1986), 9.)

By contrast, as Burroughs matured as a writer, his letters, and his fiction, became, superficially at least, less and less decorous and controlled. Burroughs' writing, after *Junky* and *Queer*, rarely employed the veneer of a 'realist' narrative so carefully manipulated by Bowles.

231 By contrast, Bowles, for the most part, employed conventional syntax and sentence structure. Again, however, there are complicated exceptions: the murder sequence, in the final phase of *Let It Come Down*, for example, a 'realistic' presentation of the murder itself is juxtaposed with the infantile "mass of words" that "bubbled forth" from Dyar's unconscious: "'Many Mabel damn. Molly Daddy lamb. Lolly dibble up-man. Dolly little Dan,' he whispered, and then he giggled. The hammer was in his right hand, the nail in his left." Bowles, *Let It Come Down*, 309.

232 Burroughs, *Letters*, 334. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.13, 1956.

233 William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin, *The Third Mind* (London: John Calder,

1979), 89.
234 Harris, footnote 33, *Letters*, 334.
235 Burroughs, *Letters*, 334. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.13, 1956.
236 Friedman, *Penelope's Web*, 94. The following account of Kristeva's theory is indebted to Friedman.
237 Ibid.
238 Ibid.
239 Ibid.
240 Ibid. The relationship between the oedipal "Symbolic" and the pre-oedipal "Semiotic" phases in Kristeva's work is complex and interdependent. A text is never, therefore, simply "Semiotic" or "Symbolic" but is, rather, formed in the conflict between both realms.
241 Harris, "Introduction", *Letters*, xxxi.
242 Ibid.
243 Susan Stanford Friedman, *Penelope's Web*, 94.
244 Burroughs, *Letters*, 330. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.13, 1956.
245 Ibid., 353. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.31, 1957.
246 Catherine Stimpsom, "The Beat Generation and the Trials of Homosexual Liberation", *Salmagundi* (1982-3), pp.381-2.
247 Burroughs, *Letters*, 327. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Sept.16, 1956.
248 Ibid.
249 Burroughs, "Literary Autobiography", *A Descriptive Catalogue of the William S. Burroughs Archive*, compiled by Miles Associates for William Burroughs and Brion Gysin (London: Convent Garden Press, 1973), 77.
250 Burroughs, *Letters to Allen Ginsberg 1953-1957*, 146. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Sept.13, 1956.
251 Burroughs, *Letters*, 327. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Sept.16, 1956.
252 Burroughs' deep resistance to the Reichian "great blue tide of life" is evident in a letter to Jack Kerouac dated February 1955. With the letter, Burroughs enclosed a skit, based on Paul Bowles, in which a "female Reichian" attempts to "cure" a homosexual by attaching "electrodes to his penis", sticking an "orgone sprayer up his ass" and urging him to "relax and let the 'orgasm reflex' take over." Burroughs, *Letters*, 266. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated Feb.12, 1955. This results in a "dislocated spinal disc" which requires "prolonged chiropractic treatment." Ibid., 266. The patient decides to "let his woman desiring maleness suffer inside him and emerge when it was ready." Ibid., 266. The skit suddenly switches to a flashback of a "tremendous scene in Mexico", in which the protagonist finds a "huge centipede under a stone". Ibid., 266. The flashback describes the protagonist's profoundly sexual, and violent, response to the centipede: he "jerks in uncontrollable spasms" before tearing "the centipede to pieces". Ibid., 266. Having committed this violent act, the protagonist feels "an overwhelming torpor", and falls asleep "on his side" and sleeps "till sundown." Ibid., 266. Neal Oxenhandler, who takes a psychoanalytical approach to Burroughs' writing, argues that the "giant crabs and centipedes who loom up and attack victims" are "images of the enveloping or choking" pre-oedipal relationship to the mother. Oxenhandler, "Listening to Burroughs' Voice", *Surfiction*, 192.
253 Perhaps A.J. is an echo of the school director at Los Alamos, A.J. Connell, who, as Ted Morgan notes, was a "confirmed misogynist who never married and was convinced that women were the destroyers of boys". Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 47.
254 Burroughs, *Letters*, 201. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated April 7, 1954.
255 Ginsberg, "Recollection of Burroughs Letters"(1981), *Letters to Allen Ginsberg 1953-1957* (New York: Full Court Press, 1981)., 5.
256 Ibid., 6
257 Ibid., 8.
258 Ibid.

259 Robin Lydenberg, *Word Cultures: Radical Theory and Practice in William S. Burroughs' Fiction*, 169.
260 Burroughs, *Letters*, 297. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct. 23, 1955. Interestingly, the context is Burroughs' re-energised condition after going through the "withdrawal doldrums" Ibid., 292. "And then I took Ma Lee's Orgone Yeast! Wow!" Ibid., 297.
261 Melville, "Billy Budd Sailor: An Inside Narrative" (1924), *Billy Budd and Other Stories*, edited by Harold Beaver (London: Penguin Books, 1967), 388.
262 Ibid., 353. Letter to Jan.31, 1957. The context is Burroughs' self-analysis using "*majoun*", and his anxieties over his sexual orientation:

> Quotes from last night's *majoun* high: "So what's holding him up? - homosex orientation - Some tired old synapse pattern won't go to its long home like it's supposed. [...] Ibid., 353.

Burroughs clearly felt, at this stage at least, that if he could "put down the old whore", or in psychoanalytical terms, sort out his mother-complex, he could lose his "homosex orientation", or in his own words, "hump some young Crete gash". Ibid., 353.
263 Lydenberg, *Word Cultures*, 169.
264 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 75.
265 Lydenberg, *Word Cultures*, 170.
266 "The Story of Creation", Genesis 1.1, 27, The Old Testament, *Good News Bible: Today's English Version* (New York: Collins and Fontana, 1977)
267 Lydenberg, *Word Cultures*, 162.
268 Burroughs, *The Adding Machine*, 103.
269 Burroughs, *Letters*, 201. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated April 7, 1954.
270 Ibid., 330. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.13, 1956.
271 Ibid., 302. Letter to Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, dated Nov.2, 1955.
272 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon, 1970), xvii. Quoted in Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* [1987] (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 44.
273 Ibid.
274 Ibid.
275 Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* [1987] (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 44.
276 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 29.
277 Burroughs, *Letters*, 297. Letter to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, dated Oct.23, 1955.
278 Ibid., 262. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.7, 1955 and Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 85.
279 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 100.
280 Burroughs, *Letters*, 262. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.7, 1955.
281 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 101.
282 Burroughs, *Letters*, 300. Letter to Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, dated Nov.1, 1955.
283 Paul Bowles, *Let It Come Down* [1952] (London: Abacus, 1990), 151.
284 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 90.
285 Burroughs, *Letters*, 256. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.12, 1955.
286 Ibid., 269. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.19, 1955.
287 Ibid., 302. Letter to Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, dated Nov.2, 1955.
288 Ibid., 269. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.19, 1955.
289 Burroughs, *Interzone*, 54 and Burroughs, *Naked Lunch*, 93.
290 Burroughs, *Letters*, 262. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.7, 1955.
291 Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction*, 58.
292 Gerald Nicosia, *Memory Babe*, 463. Kerouac told Ginsberg that he "wrote it during the Army McCarthy hearings and so it has wildly hip political flavor." Keroauc, *Selected Letters 1940-56*, 495. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated July 14, 1955. Tom Clark also notes that Kerouac was haunted by the "hallucination of nuclear holocaust"

during the writing of the story. Tom Clark, *Jack Kerouac: A Biography* [1984] (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 135. Given that "cityCityCITY" was an influence on Burroughs, we can observe the indirect process by which contemporary American politics were reflected in "Interzone".
293 Burroughs, *Letters*, 213. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated May 24, 1954.
294 Ibid. In May 1955, Kerouac sent Burroughs a second version of "cityCityCITY" as a "story that I think we could collaborate on, for a full novel, making the first truly literally valuable book written by two men." Kerouac felt that the story would provide "the basic scene for many hilarious satires." Kerouac, *Selected Letters 1940-1956*, 480. Letter to William Burroughs, dated mid-May 1955. "cityCityCITY" presents a world in which the city is everywhere, "every square inch covered with electrical steelplate." This world-city is constructed on three levels, "one tenement ten miles high; the second, fifty miles; the third a hundred miles [...]" Kerouac, "cityCityCITY", *The Moderns: An Anthology of New Writing in America*, ed. and with intro. by Leroi Jones, [1963] (London: MacGibbon and Koe, 1965). Burroughs expressed his admiration for the piece, claiming that it had distracted him from his "sickness for a while", and noted that it coincided with many of his own "kicks, control through broadcast of feeling, etc." Burroughs, *Letters*, 275. Letter to Jack Keroauc, dated June 9, 1955. "cityCityCITY", as it was published in *The Moderns*, is an unfinished work, essentially being a series of speculative digressions, only loosely connected by a narrative. It ends abruptly, with few of its narrative threads tied up. Burroughs told Kerouac that he "must concentrate on specific characters and situations involving them." Ibid., 275. However, since so many of its ideas coincide with Burroughs' representation of Interzone, it could be argued that Interzone was, in part, the end product of Burroughs' collaboration with Keroauc.
295 Burroughs, *Interzone*, pp. 112-6. "Iron Wrack Dream", set in a "vast network of levels [...] connected by gangways and cars that run on wires and single tracks", is a dream-like farce of confused identities, gender switches and missing persons. The first person Bill meets is "a sexless character who wears men's clothes, but may be man or woman. Nobody knows for sure." Ibid., 112-3. At the address Bill is given to find Jim, he is met by a man who is "Effeminate, but not queer." Ibid., 114. The protagonist, Bill, is sent into the City to find "Jim". When Bill finds Jim, Jim is looking for "Polly". The description of "Jim" is a direct echo of the description of "Jack" in "Driving Lesson": Jim and Jack are both "beautiful", but have the kind of face that shows "every day that much older." In "Driving Lesson", Jack has a "weak and beautiful" face, "with a beauty that would show every day that much older." Ibid., 21. In "Iron Wrack Dream", Jim "is beautiful but has the kind of face that shows every day that much older." Ibid., 115. This echo suggests that Bill's search for Jim is the search of the mind for the body. At Jim's "place on the roof", they "sleep together for twelve hours", Bill calming Jim's nerves. "Jim is trembling convulsively. 'I'm scared Bill,' he says over and over. I hold him, and stroke his head, and undress him. Ibid., 115. However, this image of apparent union, this healing of the split, is not the end of the dream. The search for "Polly" leads them back into the city. Polly is eventually found in "Cliff's place", a room that "shifts from time to time, with a creak of metal." "This place is too good to last, kids," Cliff says, "laughing." Polly is a "dark Jewish girl", who resembles a photograph of "Allen Ginsberg on the beach when he was three years old." Ibid., 115. When Bill presses Jim's "extra key" into "her hand", however, Polly responds as a mother might to her son, kissing him "lightly on the lips", and "murmuring 'Billy Boy'". Ibid., 116. Burroughs sent this dream to Jack Kerouac at the resolution of his anxiety at Ginsberg's supposed disappearance in Mexico. His letter to Kerouac begins: "Allen is all right and probably in Mexico City by now [..] Thank God he is O.K. I don't know what I would do without him. Burroughs, *Letters*, 213. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated May 24, 1954. It seems possible, therefore to link the search for "Polly" to Burroughs' need for Ginsberg as a receiver for his routines. The confusion of identity represented

by Polly, first a young Allen Ginsberg and then an affectionate mother-figure, further suggest that Burroughs' routines were a bizarre attempt to secure maternal approval. "Iron Wrack Dream" suggests one important aspect of "Interzone": its status as a dream city, where identity and gender is subject to sudden and disconcerting shifts.
296 Burroughs, *Letters*, 182. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated July 10, 1953.
297 Ibid., 178. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated July 8, 1953.
298 Ibid., 183. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated July 10, 1953.
299 Burroughs, "Yage" manuscript (Columbia University), 16.
300 Ibid.
301 From that view, Miles claims, Burroughs conceived of a city made up of a "great labyrinth of alleyways and hallways; a city so old that it had been rebuilt layer after layer." Miles, *William Burroughs: El Hombre Invisible*, 71.
302 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xvii. Quoted in McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction*, 44.
303
304 Mary McCarthy, "Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*" (1963), in *William S. Burroughs at the Front: Critical Reception 1959-1989*, 35.
305 Burroughs, "The Art of Fiction XXXVI", *Paris Review* (Fall 1965), 31.
306 Ibid.
307 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 106.
308 Ibid.
309 Arnold Weinstein, *Nobody's Home: Speech, Self, and Place in American Fiction from Hawthorne to DeLillo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 25.
310 Burroughs, *Letters*, 346. Letters to Allen Ginsberg, dated Dec.20, 1956.
311 Ibid.
312 Ibid., pp. 356-7. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.23, 1957.
313 Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*, 441 and Burroughs, *Letters*, 346. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Dec.20, 1956. It should be noted that "Word", the primary product of this period of writing, is in itself fragmentary. Burroughs, writing in Oct.29, 1959, on the verge of the "new method of writing" that was the cut-up technique, announced he "had it in mind to re-edit WORD" and described the "missing passages" he had in mind as "landmarks for the present work." This suggests a certain continuity between the fragmentary narrative of "Word" and the cut-ups. Burroughs, *Letters*, 434. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.29, 1959. However, the primary purpose of "Word", as James Grauerholz suggests, was its "willfully disgusting and violent purgative regurgitation of seemingly random images." Grauerholz, "Introduction", *Interzone*, xxii. The spontaneity of its composition suggests that it did not aim, to quote Foucault, to "secretly undermine language" in the same premeditated manner as the narrative juxtapositions and omissions found in Burroughs' writing 1958-1959, as examined in Chapter Five.
314 He claimed that typing Burroughs' writing "neatly double space for his publishers" gave him "horrible nightmares". Jack Kerouac, *Desolation Angels* [1960] (London: Mayflower Books, 1968), 315.
315 Ibid.
316 Ibid.
317 Ibid.
318 Burroughs, *Letters*, 350, 351. Letters to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.23, 1957 and Jan.28, 1957.
319 Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 281.
320 Ibid., 282.
321 Burroughs, *Letters*, 327. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Sept.16, 1956.
322 Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 282. Closely linked to this practice, and to the courage necessary for it to prove successful, was the religious breakthrough that Burroughs wrote of, if briefly, in his letters to Ginsberg. Having initially dismissed Arabian culture, by January 1957, Burroughs was even was writing of Islam in religious terms,

claiming that he could "never have made my connection with God ANYWHERE EXCEPT HERE." "I owe a great debt to Islam", he told Ginsberg. "I realize how much of Islam I have absorbed without spitting a word of their appalling language." At the top of this letter, Burroughs wrote: "No Moslem or anyone else who has glimpsed the truth of God can ever again pity himself *under any circumstances*. There is *one misfortune: Not to know God*." Burroughs, *Letters*, 349. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.23, 1957. Despite Burroughs' promise to explain further "when I have a free moment", this curious announcement to Ginsberg of a "connection with God" is never explicitly returned to. Ibid. Exact details of the nature of this breakthrough are hard to reassemble from these notes for, as Burroughs explained to Ginsberg in an earlier letter, he had experienced "a Revelation," but he couldn't "verbalize it." Burroughs, *Letters*, 328. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Sept.16, 1956. However, Burroughs also writes the following in his letter to Ginsberg: "I have never even glimpsed peace of mind before I learn the real meaning of 'It is as Allah Wills.' Relax, you make it or you don't , and since realizing that, whatever I want comes to me. If I want a boy, he knocks on my door, etc. I can't go into all this and [it's] all in the M.S. [...] And remember, 'God is as close to you as the vein in your neck' - Koran ..." Ibid., 350. This suggests that a correspondence, at least in Burroughs' perception, between the Arabian saying 'It is as Allah Wills', and the South American concept of "manâna": the "way of letting things take their course", as opposed to "result seeking, use seeking, question asking Western thought". Burroughs, "Yage" (Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library: Ms. Coll. Burroughs), Beginning (II), 1 and Main Manuscript, 17.

323 Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 281.

324 Ibid.

325 Melville, *Moby Dick*, 325.

326 Ibid., 326.

327 Ibid.

328 Burroughs, *Letters*, 293. Letter to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, dated Oct.23, 1955.

329 Ibid.

330 Ibid. Burroughs revealed that he jumped "all over the Arab servants. I am the most unpopular patient in this malodorous trap." Ibid., 293.

331 Miles, *William Burroughs: El Hombre Invisible*, 91.

332 Melville, "Reviews and Letters by Melville", *Moby Dick*, 566. Letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, 566.

333 This "milk" is "very sweet and rich; it has been tasted by man; it might do well with strawberries." Melville, footnote, *Moby Dick*, 326.

334 Ibid.

335 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 44.

336 Ginsberg, "Recollection of Burroughs Letters", *Letters to Allen Ginsberg 1953-1957*, 7.

337 This is, of course, a familiar pattern of American fiction: nostalgia leading backwards into horror. In *Love and Death in the American Novel*, Fiedler notes how Mark Twain's "mature mind", and his fiction, returned often to the "idyllic era of his childhood", only to "discover that the era had been lived out in a society marred by disorder and violence and slavery." Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 257. His evocation of the deep and tranquil ecstasy of life on the Mississippi was therefore always haunted by black shadows. Thus, as Fiedler points out, we face the paradox of a book such as *Huckleberry Finn*, which reminds us of "how truly wonderful it is to remember our childhood; and yet how we cannot recall it without revealing to ourselves the roots of the very terror, which in adulthood has driven us nostalgically to evoke the past." Ibid., 269.

338 Burroughs explained in a letter to Ginsberg that the "slamming steel shutters" of Tangiers shops, mentioned in this introduction to "Word", heralded a "*jihad*".

Burroughs, *Letters*, 339. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.29, 1956. "Word" is further described as being the "Revelation and Prophecy of what I can pick up without FM on my 1920 crystal set". Again, what is striking is the passivity of the author: he is not imposing an order on his material, but rather registering what he "can pick up". What the author can "pick up" is a bewildering multitude of voices and images. Images and voices drift by, as if obeying a curious, compulsive logic. There are links that the reader can make, but they are not the linear connections of conventional narrative. Instead, themes emerge by repetition and association, motifs reoccurring in different contexts. Burroughs, *Interzone*, 136.

339 Burroughs, *Letters*, 262. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.7, 1955.

340 Ibid., 251. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.6, 1955.

341 As Barry Miles recounts in his biography of Ginsberg, Burroughs' hypnosis sessions with Dr. Leo Walberg in 1945 uncovered "many different personality layers". Miles writes:

> The top layer was Burroughs, the distinguished scion of an old St. Louis family. Below that was a nervous, possibly lesbian, English governess with a prissy, self-conscious, simpering personality. Below here was Old Luke, the tobacco farmer, who just sat in his rocking chair on his front porch [...] Old Luke had the personality of a psychotic Southern sheriff. Beneath them all was an implacable, silent Chinaman, sitting starving, skull-headed, [...] with no ideals, no beliefs, and no words [...]" Miles, *Ginsberg: A Biography*, 71.

Some of the voices in "Word" seem to connect with Walberg's personality layers. The "implacable Chinaman", for example, makes a brief, if unpopular, appearance:

> "Yonny, glo home."
> "This *is* my home, you Chinaman cocksucker [...]" Burroughs, *Interzone*, 171.

342 "Come in, please! Come in, please!", he appeals. "Can't move a cell of my body without got the Word." Burroughs, *Interzone*, 173. The attempt to exert control in "Word" is visualized in the image of the "Black yen". Burroughs, *Interzone*, 165. Burroughs told Ginsberg that the "basest instinct [...] is the yen to control [...] And remember, when the control yen rips through your bones like a great black wind, you have connected for Pure Evil ..." Burroughs, *Letters*, 334. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Oct.13, 1955. This "Black yen" is a recurrent image throughout "Word", reiterated as the "Black Wind Sock of the Insect Trust", the "black bone yen", and the "great black tornado" that has "sucked meaning from the Cyclone belt", leaving its citizens to "crawl out of the cellar in a blighted subdivision, looking after the cyclone with canceled castrate eyes." Burroughs, *Interzone*, pp. 142,153,150. Burroughs also linked the image of the "black yen" to the United States, noting the "colony of Americans" in Tangier, who were "on the lam" from the "black tornadoes" that "sweep the land of the free and suck all the meaning and beauty". Burroughs, *Letters to Allen Ginsberg 1953-1957*, 178. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.28, 1957.

343 Indeed, "Word" presents a world which is inevitably running down, as if the deadening outcome has already been decided: "Thermodynamics has won at a crawl ... Orgone balked at the post ... Christ bled ... Time ran out." Burroughs, *Interzone*, 142.

344 Ken Kesey, "The Demon Box: An Essay", *Demon Box* [1986] (London: Meuthen, 1987), 349.

345 Burroughs, *Letters*, 251. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Jan.6, 1951.

346 Ibid., 346. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Dec.20, 1956.

347 Burroughs, "On Coincidence", *The Adding Machine*, 103.